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Commissioner Kadis
European Commission - DG MARE
99 rue Joseph II 1019 BRUSSELS
BELGIUM

In Lorient, on October 9th, 2025

Subject: Restrictions on the representation of Advisory Councils at the ICCAT plenary meeting

Dear Mr Kadis,

We would like to draw your attention to the recent decision limiting the Advisory Councils in-person participation at the 2025 ICCAT plenary meeting. Noting that the rules were not applied uniformly across all Advisory Councils — some were instructed to be represented only by the secretariat, while others were allowed both the chair and the secretariat.

We wish to express our strong disagreement with this restriction with both approaches, as we believe that such restrictions constitute interference in the internal functioning of our bodies. Indeed, it should be up to the Advisory Councils themselves to determine the most competent and legitimate person to represent their work and positions. In the case of the SWWAC, this is the Chair of our Pelagic Species Working Group, whose expertise and involvement are essential to effectively represent the interests of our members during these discussions. Her in-person participation is essential to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of our contributions, enabling meetings with ICCAT experts and thus the creation of a network of scientific expertise for the Advisory Councils and their participation in our working groups. Limiting this undermines the very mission entrusted to the Advisory Councils by the European Union. Unlike other international meetings, the ICCAT plenary session is a week-long, highly technical and particularly demanding event. It requires the presence of representatives with in-depth knowledge of the issues at stake, in order to follow the debates continuously and ensure credible representation of the work of the Advisory Councils.

We would also point out that, given the drastic limitation on the number of participants per Member State, it is not feasible to refer the participation of Advisory Councils in these delegations to them, as they do not represent the interests of their Member State of origin.

Any representative of an Advisory Council at external meetings is subject to the guidelines and principles of that Advisory Council: they therefore represent neither the interests of their organisation nor those of a particular sector, but rather those expressed by all members in consensually validated opinions.

We therefore request that:

- 1. Advisory Councils be free to appoint their representatives to participate in person at ICCAT.**

2. The Commission adopt a transparent and predictable framework for participation rules in the future, respecting the autonomy of each Advisory Council.

We remain at your disposal to engage in dialogue with your services in order to find a solution that respects the principles of representativeness and good governance.

We look forward to your response. Yours faithfully,

Antonio Marzoa Notlevsen

Chair of the MEDAC



Sergio Lopez

Chair of the SWWAC

