

Statement to Panel 2 by the European Union
(submitted by the European Union)

The European Union (EU) has been the biggest contributor to the recovery of bluefin tuna (BFT)—a recovery widely acknowledged as one of the great success stories of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

The EU wishes to reiterate that the only legal basis for any BFT allocation key remains the Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 13-07 to Establish a Multi-Annual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean (Rec. 14-04).

Yet, in the interest of political compromise and in the spirit of maintaining unity within ICCAT, the EU has for years refrained from obstructing a steady, pragmatic redistribution of quotas toward coastal contracting parties (CPCs). The number of CPCs receiving allocations has grown substantially from seven in 1999 to twenty as of 2026 and the share of the so-called ‘small harvesters’ has been steadily increasing as well. This clearly illustrates the substantial concessions the EU has made to accommodate the ambitions of other ICCAT CPCs.

The EU must underscore that its current share is wholly misaligned with its actual role and historical presence in the BFT fisheries. The EU comprises 20 coastal states—15 with established track records in BFT fisheries, many of them small-scale harvesters, and 10 with uninterrupted engagement in BFT fisheries over the entire 70-year period of collected statistics. The EU has also been the driver of scientific progress in BFT management, providing over 80% of all research funding since 2008. Moreover, the latest increase in TAC—achieved only after an extended and strict recovery period—was made possible through the substantial sacrifices borne by EU fleets.

Against this background and moving forward, the EU cannot accept that its share of the Eastern bluefin tuna TAC continues to decline. Beginning with Panel 2 discussions in 2026, the EU will continue to resolutely pursue a fair and proportionate allocation in line with the EU’s rightful share, taking into account the EU’s role in the fisheries and its contribution to scientific research on bluefin tuna (to the benefit of all CPCs) as well as to control efforts (also benefiting all CPCs through protecting the integrity of our joint efforts). The EU cannot and will not accept further reductions in its shares while others demand increases or stability.