



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS  
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

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## **Europêche position on ICCAT negotiations 2018**

### **Bigeye Tuna**

#### **Recitals :**

- EUROPECHE notes with concern the outcomes of the SCRS stock assessment for Bigeye Tuna (BET) which indicate that the Atlantic BET stock was estimated to be overfished and that overfishing was occurring in 2017. Maintaining the catches at 2016 and 2017 levels (78,500 tons) in the future, which exceeded the TAC of 65,000 tons by 18 %, would only reduce by 1% the probability of not achieving Convention objectives by 2033 ( $B > BMSY$ ,  $F < FMSY$ ) ;
- EUROPECHE recognizes that reduction of  $F$  cannot be achieved with current measures consisting on FAD area closures or changes in quota allocation alone, with the aim to end overfishing and allow stock recovery in accordance with Rec. 11/13 ;
- EUROPECHE notes with concern the increase in catches of tropical tuna stocks by other CPCs in recent years such as Senegal, China, Korea or Brazil. There is a lack of knowledge on the volume of total removals and the number of juveniles caught by these fleets. A global and integral approach is needed including all fleets targeting tropical tunas;
- EUROPECHE urges CPCs to take proportional effort and responsibility towards the positive evolution of the state of the stock. The management plan must concern all actors and also offer a certain degree of flexibility in its implementation ;
- EUROPECHE recommends that impact assessments should be done as much as possible before measures are imposed but accepts the idea of interim measures of urgency when needed ;
- EUROPECHE recalls that among these measures, it is essential to improve the definitions to implement the management plan and to developed the collection of the necessary fishing data ;
- EUROPECHE reiterates that it is essential that all measures are controllable and enforced.

## Measures proposed by EUROPECHE

### ▪ Catch limits

To end overfishing and allow stock recovery in accordance with Rec. 11/13, EUROPECHE proposes a **TAC of 65.000 tons for all CPCs that are catching at least 500 tons of BET in the recent period or flagging at least one large fishing vessel (>40 m), if not all CPCs.** Such TAC already implies a reduction of the current catches by 18%.

This allocation could take into account :

- Current reference period for current CPCs with a catch limit,
- A different and more recent reference period for current non-quota CPCs,
- An additional replenishment premium for developing CPCs, if the stock becomes reconstitute,
- Condition quota allocation to fisheries data reporting by the different CPCs (no data = no quota).

In addition :

- All CPCs flagging purse seiners or large longliners would be integrated in the CPCs' group subject to quota,
- Consequently CPCs would not be subject to quota if BET catches are below 500 tons,
- The maximum quantity that a CPC may carry over in any given year shall not exceed 5% of its annual initial catch limit.

EUROPECHE recalls that longline fleets account for about 50% of total catches of BET and that there are important gaps in terms of information regarding exploitation rates based on abundance indexes (CPUE), total removals and the number of juveniles caught by the non-EU longliners. This is mainly due to misreporting and non-reporting of juvenile BET tuna as a result of discarding.

In order to improve future BET SCRS assessment and avoid practices of high-grading, EUROPECHE proposes to extend ICCAT recommendation 17-01 on **prohibition on discards** of tropical tunas caught by purse seiners **to all vessels fishing bigeye tuna.**

### ▪ Capacity management measures

EUROPECHE proposes to apply an effective freeze on the capacity of the tropical tuna fleet to the current capacity limitation applied in Rec. 16-01, and giving the opportunity to developing countries to develop their fleet, provided they present a fleet development plan. Clear deadlines for the provision of active fleet should be established for those CPCs catching tropical tunas by all gears.

EUROPECHE proposes to **extend capacity management measures to all vessels > 20m LOA fishing bigeye tuna in the Convention area**, in order to avoid transfers from other oceans to Atlantic.

- **Management of FADs**

EUROPECHE recommends a balanced approach to tackle efficiently capacity issues and be cost-effective from a perspective of efficacy of monitoring, control and surveillance activities.

EUROPECHE notes that SCRS preliminary results show that the FAD closure set for the Gulf of Guinea has proved to be ineffective to reduce fishing mortality in the area, with an increase of effort displacement from fleets to areas outside the FAD closure area and/or future increases in effort (number of seiners, number of FAD operations, etc.) could render this measure ineffective unless additional measures are adopted to counteract these effects.

**EUROPECHE is opposed to an extension of a FAD closure to the ICCAT Convention area during three months.** This measure will have significant socio-economic and trade impacts, due to offer-demand imbalances.

Furthermore, EUROPECHE encourages the use of biodegradable FADs although emphasize that current trials confirm that good biodegradable materials do not exist yet.

- **Control measures**

EUROPECHE encourages the prohibition of transshipment operations at sea and supports the obligation to land in designated ports for all vessels.

EUROPECHE considers it essential to have controllable measures and proposes **to extend ICCAT regional observer program** to all CPCs for purse seiners (100%) and longliners (20% - especially since electronic observation allows real progress) authorized to fish BET.