



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS  
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

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## **Europêche position on ICCAT negotiations 2019**

### **North Atlantic Albacore Tuna**

#### **Recital:**

- Noting the outcomes of the last SCRS stock assessments of the North Atlantic Albacore Tuna (ALB) which indicated that this stock has improved and is most likely in the green area of the Kobe plot, and the following adoption of Recommendation 16-06 on a multi-annual conservation and management program for North Atlantic Albacore;
- Considering that Rec. 16-06 requested the SCRS to refine the testing of candidate reference points (e.g.,  $SSB_{THRESHOLD}$ ,  $SSB_{LIM}$  and  $F_{TARGET}$ ) and associated harvest control rules (HCRs) that would support the management objective, a set of alternative HCRs were tested by projecting a wide range of simulated albacore populations in a management strategy evaluation (MSE) framework;
- Observing that the HCR selected in 2017 by Recommendation 17-04, on a provisional basis for the period 2018-2020, resulted in a short-term TAC of 33600 t which stemmed from applying the maximum 20% increase to the previous TAC (28000 t) and conforms to the positive stock status estimated in the 2016 assessment;
- Noting that since 2018, an external peer review of the HCR was conducted where SCRS indicates that additional analyses carried out by the species group are based on the same Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) framework and suggests that the Commission could adopt any of the variants (a, b or c) mentioned in paragraph 16 of Rec. 17-04, which would provide additional stability to the fisheries while meeting management objectives (SCRS 2018, Management recommendations for North Atlantic albacore tuna, page 82).

### **EUROPECHE recommendation:**

Based on the 2018 catch figures and the TAC for 2019, it is possible to make projections of the different TAC scenarios for 2020 (Rec. 16-06 §7, underage or overage of catches). Namely, if the TAC is fully utilised in 2019 and 2020, cumulative aggregated catches (2018-2020) would then be slightly above 94 000 tons, i.e. 84.7% of the maximum sustainable catches for this stock (37 082 tons/year; ALB - *SCRS 2018, summary page 83*). In this way, if the ICCAT recommendation is not adjusted for 2020, the actual catch volumes will be significantly lower than the management optima.

As the current adopted HCR is provisional, it is necessary to consider corrective mechanisms that should be put in place for 2020 before the new stock assessment is produced.

**Europêche advocates the adoption of variant c) of Rec. 17-04 in 2020 which lays down a 25% maximum TAC increase when the current biomass is estimated higher than  $B_{LIM}$ . This proposal respects the biological objective of the ICCAT recommendation (60% in the green area of the Kobe plot) and represents a TAC of 35 000 tons for 2020 (28 000 + 25%).**