



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

EP(17)85

Commissioner Karmenu Vella,
European Commission,
Rue de la Loi 200,
1049 Brussels,
Belgium,

Brussels, 19 January 2018

RE.: Revision of IUCN Red List as regards Atlantic Bluefin Tuna

Dear Commissioner Vella,

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List is recognized by many stakeholders as a guide to the status of biological diversity. Back in 2011 the Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) was listed by IUCN as endangered and therefore included in the Red List of Threatened Species. This decision was exclusively adopted on the basis of IUCN's own scientific data and criteria.

To date, this emblematic species continues to be red-listed despite the huge improvements experienced during the last decade thanks to the concerted efforts by all parties. In fact, during the last International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) Annual Meeting it was agreed to gradually increase the total allowed catches (TAC) reaching a maximum of 36,000 tonnes in 2020 (28,200t in 2018 and 32,240t in 2019). I would therefore like to remind the Commission of its own words and I quote: *"This increase reflects a widely recognised improvement in the overall situation for Atlantic tuna stocks, compared to a decade ago."*

The fishing industry represented by Europepeche expresses serious concerns over the non-recognition of the successful recovery of this species by IUCN. Despite of this impressive progress officially acknowledged by all stakeholders, RFMOs, governments, scientists and civil society groups; IUCN still considers that this species is endangered.

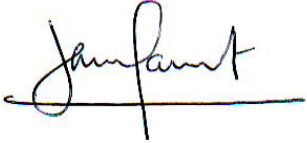
We are well aware that IUCN decisions are guided by their own scientific data and criteria. We also recognise that IUCN is an organisation that follows its own rules and procedures. However, in view of the above developments, we believe that IUCN needs to urgently reassess the status of the Bluefin tuna.

I am sure you understand this situation entails huge commercial implications for our companies since NGOs are still launching big campaigns against the consumption of Bluefin tuna around the globe, driven by IUCN Red List and putting pressure on retailers and restaurants.

Europêche finds this situation unacceptable, particularly in view of the actual state of the stock and the sacrifices made by our companies to make the recovery possible. We therefore call on Commissioner Vella, as the highest European Commission representative for both fisheries and environmental affairs, to address a letter to IUCN Director General, Ms Inger Andersen to express concern over the current stand still situation and request an official explanation on IUCN on their plans to scientifically reassess the Atlantic Bluefin tuna stock status.

We trust you will devote particular attention to this matter in order to safeguard the interests of the European fishing industry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Javier Garat', is written over a horizontal blue line. The signature is cursive and fluid.

Javier Garat
President of Europêche