



Published on *Fisheries* (<https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries>)

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## Commissioner Damanaki attends ICCAT meeting in Cape Town, South Africa

15/11/2013

Ahead of the annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to be held in Cape Town on 18-25th November 2013, the European Commission has reemphasised the importance of ICCAT continuing to manage fish stocks in a way that allows for sustainable yield for fishermen and ensures a stable flow of products to the markets.

European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Maria Damanaki, said: *"The fishing sector has made significant and painful sacrifices over the past years to allow bluefin tuna to recover. The excellent news is that these efforts have started to bear fruit and ICCAT has played a leading role in these green shoots of recovery. However, much work remains to be done and we must all maintain our efforts to keep up the momentum"*

At the meeting, the EU will highlight the need for ICCAT to continue its path towards the best science, to keep better compliance and enforcement high on the agenda and to ensure that this year's management decisions are fully in line with scientific advice. In particular this relates to those stocks for which new assessments have been undertaken, namely Atlantic albacore and Atlantic swordfish. The EU also believes that the precautionary approach should guide ICCAT in discussions on stocks, such as Eastern and Mediterranean Bluefin tuna, until new advice is available.

Although the EU welcomes the recovery trend started last year, now confirmed by new data, it notes that significant uncertainties identified still cannot be accounted for and do not provide a full picture of the speed and magnitude of the recovery. The EU therefore supports the Scientific Committee's calls for stability in the management of the stock, including for the TAC, to allow for better assessments, with fewer uncertainties, in the future.

Next to its efforts for the recovery of bluefin tuna, the EU will continue to push for the protection of vulnerable shark species and will work with the other Contracting Parties to support ICCAT measures that ban shark finning, in line with the EU rules adopted recently.

### Background

ICCAT is an inter-governmental fishery organisation responsible for the conservation of tunas and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean composed of 47 members. The EU is a member and the European Commission negotiates on behalf of the EU at ICCAT.

[ICCAT website](#) [1]

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**Links**

[1] <http://www.iccat.int/en/>