



LIFE Platform
Low Impact Fishers of Europe

Mr Karmenu Vella
Commissioner for Environment
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 17 October 2016

Dear Commissioner Vella

Bluefin Tuna: A Fair Quota for Small Scale Low Impact Fishers

LIFE is delighted by the successful implementation of 2006 ICCAT Multiannual Plan for the Recovery of Bluefin Tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, which is now bearing fruits in terms of an increased TAC for 2017.

However, we are concerned that small scale, low impact fishing operations, rooted in centuries old traditions, are once again being discriminated against unfairly. Prior to 2006, along European Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, diverse polyvalent and hook and line small scale fishing operations caught Bluefin tuna, both as a target species, and as bycatch. In many cases, under the 2006 ICCAT plan, these activities were curtailed or ceased. We understand that the benefits of the increased TAC will only go to those industrial fishing operations with historic catch records for the period 1 January 2007 to 1 July 2008. This will discriminate unfairly against these small scale operations, which have the lowest impact on the tuna stocks, but which would benefit enormously from being granted access to the increased quota.

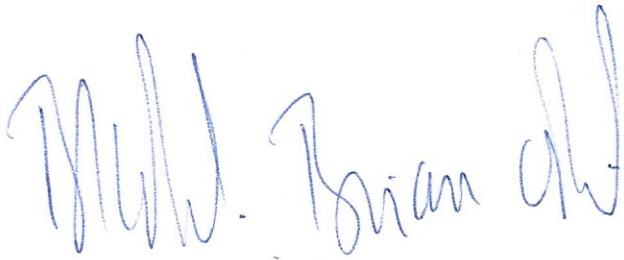
We are advised that ICCAT has the mandate to impose a requirement on states to assign a minimum Bluefin tuna quota to small scale fisheries, both as a targeted catch and as bycatch. We therefore propose to request such a quota for small scale polyvalent and hand line fishing operations.

Such a step would be in line with both the spirit and letter of the law, as laid down in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2016/1627 of 14 September 2016 on a multiannual recovery plan for Bluefin tuna

in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean. This advocates that national quotas be distributed fairly among the various fleet segments giving consideration to traditional and artisanal fisheries, and providing incentives to Union fishing vessels deploying selective fishing gear or using fishing techniques with reduced environmental impact.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you and your services next week on October 19 at the DG Mare stakeholder consultation ahead of the 20th Special Meeting of ICCAT in Portugal, November 14 to 21.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mr. Brian O'Riordan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" being the most prominent part.

Brian O'Riordan
Deputy Director
Low Impact Fishers of Europe