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ADVICE ON BFT and SWO-MED

The Executive Committee adopted the advice proposed by Working Group 2 which convened on 15 October in Paris addressing the issue of BFT and SWO-MED and attaches two separate and distinct positions from the recreational fishing component and WWFⁱ whereas the members representing professional fisheries drafted the following opinion.

In light of the results of the SCRS Plenary Session of 2013 and in particular on Bluefin Tuna:

- “Nonetheless, the perception of the stock status derived from the 2012 updated assessment has improved in comparison to previous assessments, as F for both younger and older fish have declined during the recent years.”
- Although care is needed when considering estimates of catch using capacity measures, the Group’s interpretation is that a substantial decrease in the catch occurred in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea through implementation of the rebuilding plan and through monitoring and enforcement controls.”

The professional fisheries representatives of RAC MED deplore the fact, that despite the huge amount of financial resources already spent on assessing the state of stocks, an agenda planned for 2015 (finalisation of the model and new stock assessment) still does not make it possible to reduce the current high degree of uncertainty and that capture quotas of Bluefin Tuna are still not being increased despite the conspicuous increase in the fishery resource, which entails severe damage for various sectors, in particular those which are economically most fragile (such as artisanal fisheries) and exacerbates the competition between various capture systems (purse-seining, artisanal fisheries and recreational fishing). In consideration of the fact that this undermines confidence between fishers and European institutions, they express the hope that:

- an increase, however small, be established for the capture quota;
- that control and inspections bring about a clearer and unambiguous framework and also be applied to recreational fishing;
- that research times may be accelerated so as to make up for the delays and uncertainties which have accumulated, ensuring that the decision-making process be given a more transparent basis;
- that research make the requisite assessments of the effect of the BFT population in the food chain and of feeding competition with other species;
- that improved direct cooperation be established between SCRS/ ICCAT and tuna fisheries operators.



Referring to Mediterranean Swordfish taking into account that:

- available scientific data do not take into account the effect of measures already foreseen in the ICCAT Recommendation 11-03 and some of the measures only entered into force last year and others are in the course of implementation;
- further restrictive measures might reveal themselves to be needless harassment before the effects of those currently applied are properly evaluated;

We invite the European Commission to avoid taking any new measures with regard to Mediterranean swordfish until it has which can gauge recently implemented measures.

ⁱ The two positions mentioned above are attached.

