

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004676/25
to the Commission**

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(24 November 2025)

Subject: The recovery of bluefin tuna stocks and the need to adopt new national quotas for all fleet segments

Reports from the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) confirm the remarkable recovery of bluefin tuna stock in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, following strict management and control measures applied by the contracting parties to the ICCAT, in particular the EU and its fishers.

Parliament has repeatedly called for full implementation of Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 ⁽¹⁾, requiring Member States to use transparent and objective environmental, social and economic criteria when allocating fishing opportunities, and to ensure a fair distribution of national quotas among all fleet segments.

Given the socioeconomic importance of bluefin tuna for many coastal communities, and considering the species' role as a key predator amid risks of decline in other small pelagic stocks, the Commission is asked:

1. Does it intend to support an increase in the total allowable catch for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean in the light of the sustained improvement of the stock?
2. Does it intend to support additional by-catch quotas for bluefin tuna to address situations where fishers catch this species without targeting it?
3. What measures does it intend to take to protect EU fisheries and the EU market from illegal, unreported and unregulated activities carried out by non-EU vessels in EU waters?

Submitted: 24.11.2025

Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission

(14 January 2026)

1. The Commission negotiates and aims to secure the best possible quotas for the EU in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). Based on the best available scientific evidence, and defending the EU's interests, the Commission has strongly advocated — and obtained — a substantial increase in fishing opportunities for bluefin tuna (BFT).
2. The decision on how quotas are allocated internally, including for the fleet that catches BFT as by-catch, is a prerogative of the Member States. According to the EU legislation, they must use transparent and objective criteria, including those of an environmental, social and economic nature when taking such decisions. The Commission considers that the Member States are best placed to determine the most effective ways to allocate fishing opportunities. The Commission recently published guidelines ⁽¹⁾ seeking to help Member States in supporting small-scale fishers and enhancing transparency and good governance in the allocation of fishing opportunities by Member States.
3. The Commission is fully committed to combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. It supports the annual deployment of numerous inspection and control means under the Joint International Inspection Scheme for BFT, coordinated by the European Fisheries Control Agency. The Commission ensures the implementation and continuous improvement of the ICCAT electronic Bluefin Catch Document as a tool to guarantee the traceability of traded BFT. For other species, the Member States also have the EU catch certification scheme to prevent entry of fishery products stemming from illegal activities, and can use the mutual assistance system to target consignments at risk.

¹ OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1380/oj>.

⁽¹⁾ Communication from the Commission for enhanced transparency and good governance in the allocation of fishing opportunities by Member States: A vademecum on the application of Articles 16 and 17 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, OJ C, C/2025/6227, 17.11.2025.