



COSTAS KADIS
Commissioner for Fisheries and
Oceans

Brussels
Ares(2025)11751758

Mr Antonio Marzoa Notlevsen
Chair of the MEDAC
c/o Ministero delle Politiche Agricole, Alimentari,
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Mr Sergio Lopez
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Dear Mr Marzoa Notlevsen,

Dear Mr Lopez,

Thank you for your letter dated 9 October 2025.

Allow me to start by clarifying that there was no decision to restrict the representation of Advisory Councils. Rather, a decision was made to limit the physical participation of EU stakeholders as part of the EU delegation at the upcoming annual meeting of ICCAT in Sevilla.

The EU delegation has grown significantly in recent years. Last year, for example, the EU delegation was eight times larger than the next biggest delegation. This has led to concerns, not only about the surging costs that are preventing countries from hosting the ICCAT annual meeting, but also about the increased workload for a limited-in-number Commission staff to manage a delegation of such size.

It cannot be stressed enough that this limitation applies only to the physical participation to the ICCAT meeting. The Commission has not refused any stakeholder as part of the EU delegation for virtual participation, unless that stakeholder or their organisation was already represented (or would very likely be by the time of the meeting) in ICCAT as observer in

their own right. ICCAT does not have parallel sessions, so even with virtual participation any stakeholder will be able to follow any or all discussions that are of interest to them. This allows for full transparency and information.

I hope it is clear that this is in no way a decision that targets Advisory Councils. On the contrary, the Commission has clearly indicated it would accept one representative of an Advisory Council as a member of the EU delegation for physical or virtual participation upon simple request. Given the representational function, this was understood to be either the President or the executive secretary. All other members of advisory councils are linked to an organisation that has its roots in a Member State, and they should contact the national administration should they wish to be included in the EU's delegation – be it for physical or for virtual attendance. This was applied uniformly for all Advisory Councils. So, chairs of sub-bodies of an Advisory Council, who are by essence stakeholders emanating from a Member State, could either be registered as online participants or could be nominated for in-person attendance by their referee Member State. All Advisory Councils have been treated the same way.

I would like to reassure you that the Commission is committed to finding a balance between the need to manage the EU delegation and the need to engage and involve EU stakeholders in the decision-making process.

We remain of course open to discuss improvements to the proposed formula in view of future meetings of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and we thank you for your pertinent advice and recommendations to let the Advisory Council be free to appoint one representative of their choice to participate in person. This is certainly a constructive and practical suggestion that we have taken good note of.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Costas Kadis

