Management, conservation and control measures applicable in the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Convention area

2020/0139(COD) - 14/07/2020 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to transpose into EU law the control, conservation and management measures adopted by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC).

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), to which the Union has been a contracting party since 2006, is the regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO) responsible for the management of resources of tuna and tuna-like species in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, established by the Convention for the Strengthening of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission established by the 1949 Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica (the IATTC Convention).

The IATTC is empowered to adopt decisions (resolutions) to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources in the IATTC Convention Area. IATTC resolutions are binding on the Contracting Parties. They also impose obligations on private operators (e.g. vessel masters).

The EU has an average of three purse-seiners and thirty-some longliners operating in the IATTC Convention area. The main stocks targeted by the EU fleet are tropical tunas and swordfish.

The provisions of some IATTC Resolutions were last transposed through Title IV of Council Regulation (EC) No 520/2007 of 7 May 2007 laying down technical measures for the conservation of certain stocks of highly migratory species. The proposal aims to take into account changes that have occurred since the adoption of that Regulation but which have not yet been covered by EU law.

CONTENT: the proposal for amendment of Council Regulation (EC) No 520/2007 lays down management, conservation and control measures relating to fishing in the IATTC Convention Area and for stocks of tuna and tuna-like species, other species of fish caught by vessels fishing for tuna and tuna-like species and species belonging to the same ecosystem. The Regulation shall apply to EU vessels fishing in the IATTC Convention area.

The proposed Regulation:

- deals with conservation and management measures, including provisions relevant to purse-seine vessels fishing for tropical tuna, prohibition of fishing on data buoys, provisions concerning fishing in the vicinity of Fish Aggregating Devices, their deployment, design and set of rules for transhipment in port;

- sets out measures designed to protect certain marine species present in the area covered by the IATTC Convention, such as oceanic white-tip, silky, and hammerhead sharks and mobulid rays. These measures include data provision and release duties, as well as measures related to the protection of sea turtles and seabirds;

- contains provisions for the IATTC observer scheme;

- sets vessel requirements, including those related to the IATTC Regional Vessel Register, to reporting duties and to the protocol for the sealing of wells;

- contains information on the reporting duties related to the data statistical programme, and requirements for the bigeye tuna document programme;

- provides for delegated powers granted to the Commission to cater for amendments to measures, which are expected to be frequent and to make sure that Union fishing vessels are put on equal footing with vessels of other Contracting Parties to the IATTC.