

Management, conservation and control measures applicable in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Area of Competence

2021/0058(COD) - 11/03/2021 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to transpose into EU law the control, conservation and management measures adopted by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), to which the EU has been a contracting party since 1995.

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 and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) is the regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO) responsible for the management of tuna and tuna-like resources in the Indian Ocean. The IOTC adopts annual conservation and management measures (CMMs) through resolutions that are binding on Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Cooperating Parties to the IOTC, including the EU.

Several new resolutions were adopted at its last annual meeting, which took place in June 2019. The proposal aims to transpose the most recent version of the IOTC resolutions and to establish a mechanism to transpose and implement them in the future.

CONTENT: the proposal for the amendment of Council Regulations (EC) No 1936/2001, (EC) No 1984/2003 and (EC) No 520/2007 lays down provisions on management, conservation and control measures for fisheries in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Area of Competence. It covers measures adopted by the IOTC since 2008, as amended (in some cases) at its annual meetings.

The proposal contains provisions on:

- conservation and management measures, including provisions on fishing for tropical (e.g. yellowfin and bigeye) tunas, blue sharks, the deployment and design of fish aggregating devices, the prohibition of fishing on data buoys, and transshipment at port;
- measures to protect certain marine species (elasmobranchs, including sharks and rays) and to ensure the conservation of cetaceans, sea turtles and seabirds
- control measures, fishing authorisations, a regional observer mechanism and requirements for fishing vessel registers, communication, vessel monitoring system, management standards and vessel marking and chartering of fishing vessels
- controls on catch and effort data, obligations relating to access agreements, reporting obligations under the statistical document programme and requirements relating to the statistical document programme for bigeye tuna
- inspection and port State measures, as well as provisions on enforcement, infringements and illegal fishing;
- data reporting, confidentiality of reports and electronic messages.

- measures to protect certain marine species (elasmobranchs, including sharks and rays) and ensure the conservation of cetaceans, marine turtles and seabirds;
- control measures, fishing authorisations, a regional observer scheme and requirements relating to fishing vessel records, communication, a vessel monitoring system, vessel management standards and marking, and the chartering of fishing vessels;
- catch and effort data controls and lays down obligations relating to access agreements, reporting duties under the data statistical programme and requirements for the bigeye tuna document programme;
- port state measures and inspection, and lays down provisions on enforcement, infringements and illegal fishing;
- data reporting, the confidentiality of electronic reports and messages.

The proposal provides for delegated powers to the Commission to provide for (probably frequent) amendments to IOTC measures and to ensure that EU fishing vessels are treated on an equal footing with those of other contracting parties.

These measures include, for example, mitigation measures for marine turtles caught by certain fishing gears, information requirements for vessels fishing for tuna and swordfish, minimum observer and sampler coverage of certain fisheries, chartering conditions, a minimum level of information on intergovernmental agreements and foreign flagged vessels, and reporting deadlines.