

November 8, 2016

Veronika Veits  
Head of Unit  
International Affairs and Markets  
European Commission  
DG MARE  
Rue Joseph II 99  
B - 1049 Brussels



Dear Ms. Veits:

Based on our concern over the lack of science-based fishing quotas and poor compliance with best practices that leave inherently vulnerable Atlantic sharks in a precarious state, we encourage European Union efforts to ensure that 2016 meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) results in more responsible shark fisheries management.

**Specifically, we urge continued EU leadership toward establishing at this year's ICCAT meeting:**

- **A prohibition on removing shark fins at sea, and**
- **Precautionary catch limits for blue sharks.**

We are pleased that the EU is collaborating with the US and a remarkable number of countries in proposing the best practice for finning ban enforcement (requiring that all sharks be landed with fins naturally attached) at Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) around the world. An ICCAT **ban on at-sea shark fin removal** would bolster such bans adopted in northwest and northeast Atlantic RFMOs, help to prevent this wasteful practice throughout the Atlantic, and set a key precedent for the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

We are disappointed that ICCAT has yet to establish limits for heavily fished **blue sharks** (*Prionace glauca*). We maintain that immediate blue shark landings caps are supported by scientific advice from the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), the precautionary approach, and the benefits of consistent action across the Convention Area. We urge the EU to work with other ICCAT Parties, as a matter of priority, to propose and secure North and South Atlantic blue shark limits at or below the average landing levels for the SCRS reference period (2009-2013).

Given that Spain and Portugal are the main players in high seas Atlantic fishing for most shark species, the EU clearly has a key role in negotiating ICCAT restrictions for sharks, as well as an important responsibility to work to ensure the sustainability of these vulnerable species. Moreover, adherence to scientific advice and the precautionary approach is integral to the European *Community Plan of Action for Sharks*. We are hopeful that, with your leadership, ICCAT will next week take these groundbreaking shark conservation steps.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Ali Hood.

Ali Hood  
Shark Trust

Handwritten signature of Ania Budziak.

Ania Budziak  
Project AWARE

Handwritten signature of Sonja Fordham.

Sonja Fordham  
Shark Advocates International

Handwritten signature of Katie Schleit.

Katie Schleit  
Ecology Action Centre