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Bluefin tuna

The EU Commission takes a step in the right direction?

Today, the European Commission reportedly gave its support to a proposal by Monaco to list bluefin tuna in Annex 1 of CITES (1) and ban the international trade of this endangered species.

Raül Romeva, Vice-President of the Greens/EFA Group and European Parliament rapporteur on the bluefin tuna issue, had sent a letter to the Commission on this issue last week. (2) He commented:

"It appears the EU Commission is giving only its qualified support for Monaco's proposal to ban the international trade in bluefin tuna. The Greens can therefore only tentatively welcome this position.

The EU bears a large share of the responsibility for the current disastrous situation of the bluefin tuna, by pushing for over-exploitation for many years in ICCAT (3) while simultaneously subsidising the build-up of the EU tuna fleets. Those same vessels that have been paid to send bluefin tuna to the brink of collapse will be requesting even more money from the EU budget to stop fishing. The current reform of the Common Fisheries Policy must ensure that such absurdities no longer occur.

We welcome that the Commission accepts, at last, the gravity of the bluefin tuna's plight, but we can only regret that it still refuses to commit to take the firm steps that are needed to save this fish. The Greens maintain their position that the fishery for bluefin tuna must be closed and international trade in these fish must be banned until the stock has clearly recovered."

Notes to editors

(1) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

(2) Read the Greens/EFA letter of 3 September

(3) The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna

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