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Bluefin tuna

New EU rules the bare minimum but fall short for saving Atlantic bluefin

The European Parliament today adopted new legislation, implementing internationally-agreed rules on bluefin tuna fishing (1). The Greens expressed regret that the legislation merely implements the international standards and fails to adopt more ambitious measures to truly tackle the critical status of this endangered iconic fish species. Speaking after the vote, Green MEP **Raül Romeva**, who shepherded the proposals through the parliament as its rapporteur/draftsperson, stated:

"The sorry state of bluefin tuna in the Atlantic and Mediterranean is well known and the EU, as the main fisher of the stock, must accept a large chunk of responsibility for driving bluefin to the brink. What has been adopted today represents the bare minimum and is no more than a minimalist implementation of the international ICCAT recovery plan. This falls far below what scientists believe is necessary to give the bluefin stock a fighting chance of recovery. In that sense, this represents a missed opportunity for the EU to take meaningful steps to prevent the demise of bluefin.

"If the EU wants to get serious about saving bluefin, this means closing areas to fishing - particularly during the breeding season - as well as adopting more stringent measures to close some of the loopholes, which exacerbate the over-exploitation of the stock. Tougher controls of the fleet and the related industry are also necessary to prevent illegal fishing and over-fishing.

"The EU will again have the opportunity to push for more stringent quotas and regulations, in line with the scientific recommendations, when ICCAT meets in November this year. If it is not too late already, there will not be many more chances to prevent the demise of bluefin."

(1) The measures were agreed in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT).

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