ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

**Tuna fisheries long term sustainability in the Indian Ocean depends on compliance by all fleets**

*Brussels, 5 May 2026*

The 30th session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) will take place in Malé, Maldives, from 11 to 15 May 2026.

Yellowfin and skipjack tuna stocks are currently in a healthy state, bigeye is showing signs of recovery, all stocks being under catch limits and/or management procedures. These positive results reflect significant efforts and sacrifices, especially from the European tropical tuna purse seine fleet, which should be taken into account on the coming yellowfin tuna allocation scheme.

**Enabling supply vessel renewal to support decarbonisation and modernisation**

The current quota-based management system provides a comprehensive framework to ensure sustainability, opening the way to remove additional capacity-related restrictions, particularly for purse seine fisheries whose catches are almost exclusively limited to the three tropical tuna species already under management.

"*Management decisions must remain consistent with the positive development and governance of the fishery*" said Xavier Leduc, President of Europêche Tuna Group. "*Restricting the replacement of supply vessels in IOTC is unjustified: renewal is essential to keep ensuring crew and equipment security, as well as to deliver on decarbonisation objectives. Priority must be given to full implementation of existing measures, including catch limits by all fleets*."

**Strengthening monitoring and compliance across all fleets for long-term sustainability**

European purse seine vessels operate under some of the highest standards worldwide, including 24/7 monitoring, near real-time reporting, 100% observer coverage, a strict prohibition of at-sea transhipment, and strong social and environmental certifications.

To ensure long-term sustainability and fairness across fleets, key priorities include:

- Increasing observer coverage across all fleets (at least 25% as a first step).
- Establishing a robust regional VMS system under IOTC control.
- Ensuring a complete and accurate register of all fishing vessels.
- Strengthening action against non-compliance, including illegal driftnet use.

**Ensuring continuity of local investments**

Since the European fleet has begun fishing in the Indian Ocean in the 1980s, coastal states have developed an economic sector based on tuna and companies have settle investments that now contribute substantially to their economies. European companies[1] operate 41 vessels from EU Member States (France, Italy and Spain), SIDS and developing coastal States, including Kenya, Oman, Mauritius, Tanzania and Seychelles[2], employ over 1500 ACP fishers, generate port activities, tax and licence revenue. They also support 10 000 indirect jobs in processing, as they supply a significant share of local canneries' needs and contribute to infrastructure development in Seychelles Mauritius, Kenya and Tanzania. The fleet also lands species intended for local markets, contributing to food security.

Partnership arrangements, including chartering and local investments, are a key component of these partnerships, ensuring both high standards of control and tangible local benefits. Their framework must be robust and preserve their practicality and effectiveness.

"*Our operations are built on long-term cooperation with coastal States and tangible economic contributions at local level*," said Anne-France Mattlet, Director of Europêche Tuna Group. "*This approach supports jobs, food security and industrial development, while maintaining high standards of sustainability and accountability.*"

ENDS

**Press contacts:**

Anne-France Mattlet, Europêche Tuna Group Director: +33 6 78 11 63 01 anne-france.mattlet@europeche.org

[1] Albacora, Atunsa, CFTO, Echebastar, Inpesca, Europea de Tunidos, Pevasa and SAPMER

[2] Detailed information available on each company's website