

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

93RD MEETING

San Diego, California (USA)

24, 27 – 30 August 2018

PROPOSAL IATTC-93 E-1

SUBMITTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ON MARINE POLLUTION

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Every year very large quantities of plastic waste leak into the environment from sources both on land and at sea, generating significant economic and environmental damage. Globally, 5 to 13 million tonnes of plastics — 1.5 to 4 % of global plastics production — end up in the oceans yearly. It is estimated that plastic accounts for over 80 % of marine litter.

Plastic debris is then transported by marine currents, sometimes over very long distances. It can be washed up on land, degrade into microplastics or form dense areas of marine litter trapped in ocean gyres. UNEP estimates that damage to marine environments is at least USD 8 billion per year globally.

The current EU proposal establishes a regulatory framework on the marking of fishing gear and the discharge of plastics from fishing vessels in the IATTC Convention Area in order to limit the negative effects of plastic residues in the ocean affecting marine life on shore and off shore.

Marine litter from sea-based sources is significant. While MARPOL bans the discharge of garbage from all ships, including fishing vessels, it provides no mechanism for monitoring the effective implementation of this obligation. RFMOs are then called to play an essential role in ensuring the application of the MARPOL obligations.

Fishing gear abandoned at sea can have particularly harmful impacts through entanglement of marine life. The implementation of the relevant provisions of the of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear by the IATTC would help in ensuring that all fishing gear is marked, and, if lost or discarded, could be traced back to its original owner.

The Inter–American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

RECALLING the mandate of the Commission under Article VII of the Antigua Convention to adopt, as necessary, conservation and management measures and recommendations for species belonging to the same ecosystem and that are affected by fishing for, or dependent on or associated with, the fish stocks covered by this Convention, with a view to maintaining or restoring populations of such species above levels at which their reproduction may become seriously threatened;

CONCERNED of the impact of Abandoned, Lost or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) and plastic residues in the ocean greatly affecting marine life and the need to facilitate the identification and recovery of such gear;

AWARE of Article 18(3)(d) of the United Nations Fish Stock Agreement (UNFSA) in relation to the

marking of fishing vessels and fishing gear for identification in accordance with uniform and internationally recognizable vessel and gear marking systems, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Standard Specifications for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear;

RECALLING that the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) seeks to eliminate and reduce the amount of garbage being discharged into the sea from ships and that its Annex V applies to all vessels but there is no monitoring mechanism provided for by MARPOL to ensure its effective implementation,

Agrees as follows:

Marking of fishing gear

1. Members and Cooperating Non-Members (CPCs) shall ensure that all fishing gear used by vessels flying their flag are clearly marked.
2. The Director shall develop a marking scheme for consideration and adoption by the Commission in 2019, in coordination with CPCs and taking into account the FAO voluntary guidelines on the marking of fishing gear.
3. The Director should consider, at a minimum, including the following elements in the marking scheme:
 - a. The marking should provide a s simple, pragmatic, affordable and verifiable means of identifying ownership and position of fishing gear and its link with the vessel(s) or operator (s) undertaking the fishing operation;
 - b. To the extent possible, be compatible with related traceability and certification systems;
 - c. When applicable, the marking should match the vessel's registration details (e.g. the vessel's port letters and numbers or International Radio Call Sign or IMO number, if issued);
 - d. Marker buoys and similar objects floating on the surface and intended to indicate the location and/or origin of fixed fishing gear shall be clearly marked at all times;
 - e. The identification should be easy to apply to the fishing gear and should be applied in such a manner that it will permit its identification or electronic recognition taking into consideration confidentiality safeguards and should not become unreadable or disassociated from the fishing gear.

Retrieval of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear

4. CPCs shall ensure that:
 - (a) vessels flying their flag operating with any gear on board shall make every reasonable attempt to have equipment on board to retrieve abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) and training available to facilitate the recovery of ALDFG ;
 - (b) vessels flying their flag that have lost gear shall not abandon it without making every reasonable attempt to retrieve it as soon as possible;
 - (c) no vessels flying their flag shall deliberately abandon fishing gear, except for safety reasons, notably in case of vessels in distress and/or life in danger;

- (d) if gear cannot be retrieved, a vessel flying its flag shall promptly notify its competent authority of the following information:
- i. the name, IMO number and call sign of the vessel;
 - ii. the type of lost gear;
 - iii. the quantity of gear lost;
 - iv. the time when the gear was lost;
 - v. the position (longitude/latitude) where the gear was lost;
 - vi. measures taken by the vessel to retrieve lost gear, and
 - vii. report, if known, the circumstances that led to the gear being lost, or abandoned for safety reasons;
- (e) following retrieval of any ALDFG, a vessel flying its flag shall notify its competent authority of the following:
- i. the name, IMO number and call sign of the vessel that has retrieved the gear;
 - ii. the name, IMO number and call sign of the vessel that lost the gear (if known);
 - iii. the type of gear retrieved;
 - iv. the quantity of gear retrieved;
 - v. the time when the gear was retrieved;
 - vi. the position (longitude/latitude) where the gear was retrieved;
and
 - vii. if possible, photographs of the gear retrieved; and
- (f) its competent authority shall without delay notify the Secretariat of the information referred to in paragraphs 4 (d) and (e).

5. Recovered ALDFG and fishing gear no longer in use should be recycled or disposed of responsibly on land. CPC should ensure the provision of adequate port reception facilities for the disposal of such fishing gear in accordance with MARPOL Annex V.

Special provisions

6. This Resolution is without prejudice to Resolution C-16-01 on Fish Aggregating Devices.

Discharge of plastics

7. Except as provided in paragraph 7 of this Resolution, CPCs shall prohibit vessels flying their flag from discharging into the sea any plastics¹, including but not limited to synthetic ropes, synthetic fishing nets, plastic garbage bags and incinerator ashes from plastic products. All plastics on-board shall be stored on-board the vessel until an on land location is reached where it can be safely disposed.
8. Paragraph 6 shall not apply to:
- (a) The discharge of all plastics from a vessel necessary for the purpose of securing the safety of a ship and those on board or saving life at sea; or
 - (b) The accidental loss of plastics resulting from damage to a vessel or its equipment, provided that all reasonable precautions have been taken before and after the occurrence of the damage, to prevent or minimize the accidental loss; or

¹ Plastic means a solid material which contains as an essential ingredient one or more high molecular mass polymers and which is formed (shaped) during either manufacture of the polymer or the fabrication into a finished product by heat and /or pressure.

- (c) The accidental loss of fishing gear from a vessel provided that all reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent such loss.