



30 September 2021

**IOTC CIRCULAR  
2021-53**

Dear Madam / Sir

**A COMMUNICATION FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION REGARDING A PROPOSED SPECIAL SESSION OF IOTC**

Please find attached a communication from the European Union in response to IOTC Circular 2021-48 *Regarding a proposed special session of the IOTC*.

Yours sincerely

Christopher O'Brien  
Executive Secretary

**Attachments:**

- Letter from the EU

Distribution

**IOTC Contracting Parties:** Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, Eritrea, European Union, France (Territories), India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Senegal. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. Chairperson IOTC. Copy to:** FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES  
International Ocean Governance and Sustainable Fisheries  
Regional Fisheries Management Organisations

Brussels,  
MARE B2/MV/ARES(2021)

Ms Jung-re Riley Kim  
IOTC Chairperson

**Subject: Proposal for a Special Session of the IOTC dedicated to FAD**

Dear Ms Jung-re Riley Kim,

Thank you for consulting us on the proposal to hold a Special Session of the IOTC dedicated to the follow-up of the vote taken at S25 on the proposal PropE Rev2.

First of all, we would like to thank you for taking into account our suggestion that any future determination on the matter should be taken after the meetings of the FAD Working Group and the Scientific Committee. We consider this as an essential condition to ensure that any potential decision is based on solid scientific and technical foundations.

On the request of holding a Special Session in January, we will reiterate what was already said in the Heads of Delegation meeting on 8 September: we consider that the most appropriate setting to formally decide on a possible revision of the existing FAD resolution should remain the Annual Meeting of the Commission, already scheduled for May 2022.

This position is justified by several reasons: (a) giving the CPCs more time could help us move towards a consensual approach based on a new revised proposal (the EU is willing to promote new ideas in this direction), (b) the last annual session in June has shown the limitations of virtual meetings to solve very controversial issues, and holding this discussion during the regular IOTC Annual Session should hopefully increase the probability of having an in-person meeting, which could potentially be combined with an increase in the number of days dedicated to the session, (c) any new resolution on FAD would in any case need a certain implementation period, most probably until January 2023 at the earliest, thus de facto reducing the practical benefits of anticipating the decision through a Special Session.

For the reason exposed here, the EU is of the view that there is little or no utility in investing the limited resources of the Secretariat in convening a Special Session just few months before the regular Annual Meeting and would rather suggest to promote an inter-sessional working meeting among interested parties in spring to prepare the discussion on FADs and put the Commission in the condition to finalise the decision in its meeting of May 2022. On

the contrary, scheduling a special session without the appropriate preparation only risks to increase the existing tension within the organisation and could have lasting effects on the working climate for years to come.

I would kindly ask you to share this reply with the other CPCs.

Yours sincerely,

Marco VALLETTA  
Head of the EU Delegation to IOTC

Cc: A.C. Jessen, L. Marot, B. Marcoux