17 November 2026

IOTC CIRCULAR 2026-51

Dear Madam / Sir

RESPONSE BY THE EUROPEAN UNION ON THE REQUEST TO INVESTIGATE EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE THE YELLOWFIN TUNA CATCH LIMITS

Please find attached a communication from the European Union in relation to the information provided in IOTC Circular 2026-45.

As you will note in the attachment, the European Union (Spain) and Oman, have been requested to investigate the allegations presented therein, as provided for in paragraph 7 of IOTC Resolution 24/03.

The European Union have provided a reply in the attached Annexes as has the INPESCA Group.

Yours sincerely



Paul de Bruyn
Executive Secretary

Annex:

- Communication from the European Union
- Communication from the INPESCA Group

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, 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:** Liberia, Panama. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. Chairperson IOTC. Copy to**: FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

This message has been transmitted by email only

Annex 1: Communication from the European Union

Ref. Ares(2026)10663430 - 16/11/2026

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

International Ocean Governance and Sustainable Fisheries
Regional Fisheries Management Organisations

Brussels
MARE.B.2/MV

Reference: Request to investigate alleged efforts to undermine the YFT catch limits

Dear Dr de Bruyn,

Thank you for your communication of 11 November 2026 (IOTC Circular 2026-49) concerning the request by the Federal Government of Somalia for the European Union (Spain) to investigate the allegations referred to in IOTC Circular 2026-45.

The European Union acknowledges receipt of this request and confirms that, together with Spanish authorities and in line with flag State duty, it will conduct a thorough analysis of the information provided, in accordance with paragraph 7 of IOTC Resolution 24/03, as referenced in your circular.

I wish to inform you that at the receipt of the IOTC Circular 2026-45, the European Union and Spain have immediately activated their internal control authorities to verify whether the anonymous allegations have any fundament. The European Union will submit the available results of this investigation to the IOTC Executive Secretary within the 60-day period indicated in your communication.

In the meantime, the INPESCA Group has issued a reply to these allegations. Without prejudice to the future results of our investigation, we believe that this reply provides relevant information and should be shared with the IOTC members in line with the right of reply of the company to defend its reputation against anonymous allegations. You will find this reply in Annex.

I would ask you to circulate our communication together with the referred annex to all IOTC Members through a Circular.

Yours sincerely,

Marco VALLETTA
Head of the EU delegation to the IOTC

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË – Tel. +32 22991111
Office: J-99 03/087 – Tel. direct line +32 229-59854

Annex: Response from the INPESCA Group to IOTC Circular 2026-45.

c.c.: Stijn Billiet, Jessica Demblon, Benoît Marcoux (MARE.B.2), Jerôme Broche, Fabio Galetti, Miguel Quintans, Thomas Ferron, Laura Rull del Aguila, Manuela Musella, (MARE D.4)

Electronically signed on 16/11/2026 11:05 (UTC+01) in accordance with Article 11 of Commission Decision (EU) 2021/2121

Annex 2: Communication from the INPESCA Group

Ref. Ares(2026)10663430 - 16/11/2026

INPESCA GROUP

To: Mr. Paul de Bruyn – Executive Secretary, IOTC
Subject: Response to IOTC CIRCULAR - 2026–45
Date:11 November 2026

Dear Mr. de Bruyn,

I am writing on behalf of INPESCA to formally respond to IOTC Circular 2026–45 where you have attached an anonymous complaint regarding allegations of irregular fishing practices. We categorically deny these accusations and wish to provide important context regarding their origin.

We have strong reason to believe that this misleading, inaccurate and incomplete email, is not from an actual employee, but is instead a retaliatory measure linked to ongoing civil litigation and other measures implemented in the labor realm.

INPESCA is currently pursuing a significant corporate liability action against our former General Manager. This complaint follows a series of documented efforts to try to pressure our company into withdrawing these legal proceedings.

Furthermore, we wish to highlight the following points regarding our operational compliance:

* **Quota Management: Contrary to the allegations, INPESCA strictly adheres to any quota limits. We are currently securing YFT quota in accordance with IOTC Resolution 19/04 on chartering agreements, specifically because our flag-state quotas are exhausted. Our Spanish vessel, ITSAS TXORI**, remains idle in port awaiting proper authorization.

* **Recent Inspections**: Between October 5 and October 12, 2026, our vessel **TXORI GORRI**, among other vessels, underwent a formal inspection by the Spanish General Secretariat for Inspection and the Fight Against Illegal Fishing. No irregularities were found (we refer to Report No. 3822298 whose copy can be provided by the EU/Spanish competent authorities).

COMPAÑÍA INTERNACIONAL DE PESCA Y DERIVADOS, S.A
N.I.F.: A48065015. www.inpesca.com e-mail: info@inpesca.com Telf.: 94618633
BO Mendekano Auzoa PG Lamiaran-Aranburu s / n48360
MUNDAKA (BIZKAIA) – ESPAÑA

INPESCA GROUP

* **Whistleblower Protocols**: INPESCA maintains a formal internal reporting channel in accordance with Spanish Law 2/2023. Any legitimate internal concern would have been processed through this audited system.

INPESCA remains fully committed to sustainable fishing practices and the regulatory framework of the IOTC. We are available to provide to the competent CPCs any further documentation or cooperation required to resolve this matter.

Sincerely,

General Manager, INPESCA

COMPAÑÍA INTERNACIONAL DE PESCA Y DERIVADOS, S.A
N.I.F.: A48065015. www.inpesca.com e-mail: info@inpesca.com Telf.: 94618633
BO Mendekano Auzoa PG Lamiaran-Aranburu s / n48360
MUNDAKA (BIZKAIA) – ESPAÑA