



September 7th 2020

Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius,
European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

Dear Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius,

We write with urgency to request your support of immediate protection for Endangered North Atlantic Shortfin Mako Sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) through upcoming annual negotiations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The regional retention ban advised by scientists has been supported by sixteen ICCAT Parties and is consistent with commitments associated with the species' inclusion in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) one year ago. The European Commission's resistance to the recommended action is serving to delay the start of a recovery period that already spans fifty years and is exacerbating the risk for irreparable collapse.

Shortfin Mako Sharks are particularly valuable, vulnerable, and threatened. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classified the species as globally Endangered on the IUCN Red List. ICCAT scientists have documented serious overfishing and depletion of the North Atlantic population and have recommended a complete ban on retention since 2017. Last year, adoption of a proposal to heed this advice - offered by ten ICCAT Parties and supported by at least six more - was stymied by the EU, leaving the population woefully under-protected. In just the first half of this year, vessels from Spain alone exceeded the mako catch levels associated with recovering the population over five decades (300t).

The EU and its Member States were proponents of the CITES listing for Shortfin Makos and yet the EU continues to drive overfishing of the North Atlantic population and lead the opposition to the ICCAT remedy. Your help in changing this dangerous course on mako fisheries management is particularly important at this critical time.

Specifically, we urge you to immediately and actively pursue a North Atlantic Shortfin Mako ban as a priority action for ICCAT's 2020 virtual forum.

We look forward to hearing about your efforts toward sustainable Mako Shark exploitation, consistent with ICCAT and CITES mandates.

Signatories overleaf

Sincerely,



Ali Hood
Shark Trust



Sonja Fordham
Shark Advocates
International



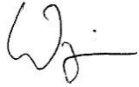
Shannon Arnold
Ecology Action Centre



Ian Campbell
Project AWARE



Irene Kingma
Dutch Elasmobranch
Society



Simon Weigmann
DEG



Alexander J. Godknecht
Shark Foundation



Ioannis Giovos
iSea



Alex Bartoli
Submon



Adi Barash
Sharks in Israel



Kevin Flannery
Irish Elasmobranch
Group



Luis Alves
APECE



Alexis Wagniez
APECS

Claudia Junge
President,
European
Elasmobranch
Association

Fulvio Garibaldi
President
GRIS

cc.

Mr Marius Vaščega, Head of Cabinet Sinkevičius

Ms Carmen Preising, Deputy Head of Cabinet Sinkevičius

Mr Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director-General for Environment

Mrs Charlina Vitcheva, Director-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Mrs Veronika Veits, Director International Ocean Governance and Sustainable Fisheries

Mr Anders Jessen, Head Regional Fisheries Management Organisations

Mr Arnaud Peyronnet, International Relations Officer

Mr Matthias Leonhard Maier, Team leader - CITES and EU Wildlife Trade policy

Sender: ali@sharktrust.org