

24th January 2021

**Ministry for Fisheries
European Member State**

Dear Minister:

We write to underscore our concern about the lack of protection for endangered mako sharks and to urge your government to ensure that upcoming fisheries decisions align with scientific advice and obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Most urgently, we request that you actively support a complete, EU-wide retention ban for the exceptionally depleted North Atlantic population of shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) at the meeting of the EU Council of Fisheries Ministers.

Scientists associated with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) have recommended, since 2017, a retention ban to protect the dangerously overfished North Atlantic shortfin mako population. The European Commission has yet to propose this urgent advice as domestic policy and has prevented its international adoption by ICCAT.

At the same time, the EU successfully proposed listing mako sharks on CITES Appendix II. As a result, the EU Scientific Review Group (SRG) recently issued a negative [opinion](#) with respect to the Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) required for trading in North Atlantic shortfin makos. Accordingly, EU Member States should have already ceased all exports and imports sourced from this population – including landings from high seas fisheries – beginning January 1, 2021.

Given these developments, we fail to see how Member State governments can continue to support the European Commission's plan to allow 288t of North Atlantic shortfin makos to be landed this year. Scientists have demonstrated that rebuilding this population is already likely to take 50 years or more, even if all fishing nations immediately stopped exploitation. Further delays in implementing the scientifically advised ban put the population and associated fisheries at risk for irreparable collapse. Moreover, sound EU mako policies are key to securing the international safeguards necessary for effectively protecting this highly migratory species.

We request that you ensure [Member State] positions are in line with scientific advice and that you urge:

- **the Council to adopt an EU ban on retaining North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks;**
- **the European Commission to change course and promote the same position at ICCAT; and**
- **other countries to do the same.**

Thank you for your attention to this pressing shark conservation matter.

Sincerely,



cc. Environment Minister; CITES Authority; Fisheries Attaché