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Date: 19 February 2008
Our reference: PRAC07.63/AC
Subject: Response to consultation on the Action Plan for Sharks

Dear Mr. Fernandez-Aguirre,

The Pelagic RAC appreciates this opportunity to comment on the European Commission's stakeholder consultation paper for development of a Community Plan of Action (CPOA) for Sharks.

The Pelagic RAC is generally supportive of the Commission's proposed objectives to develop a deeper understanding of sharks and their roles in ecosystems and fisheries, and to manage sharks in a sustainable way, consistent with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy. However, since the fleets of the Pelagic RAC are not involved in directed shark fisheries, and since experience shows that the by-catch of elasmobranchs is not an issue in the fisheries that regard the Pelagic RAC, we don't feel it appropriate to comment in detail on the proposals.

Wherever pelagic fleets are going to be involved in these bycatch monitoring programs, the Pelagic RAC will encourage these fleets to share data with the relevant scientists, in order to contribute to improved data collection.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Aukje Coers
Pelagic RAC secretariat

c.c. Mr Fokion Fotiadis, Mr Reinhard Priebe, Mr Emilio Mastracchio