

**STATEMENT IN RELATION TO STACFAD**  
(Submitted by the European Union)

**SCRS RESEARCH ACTIVITIES REQUIRING FUNDING FOR 2021**

(Document STF-209/20)

The European Union continues to be concerned about the gap between the financial resources available for SCRS activities under the Commission budget, and the annual requests from SCRS. These concerns were already highlighted in previous years.

The over-reliance on voluntary contributions from the CPCs is not sustainable in the long term. This requires an increase of the allocation made under the Commission budget, as well as a concomitant prioritisation by SCRS of its requests, in line with the Commission demands. In 2019, the EU requested SCRS to conduct this prioritisation work in 2020 in order to avoid a similar mismatch between the resources requested and those available. Despite these concerns, this year the SCRS is requesting similar levels of funding, sometimes for activities which do not necessarily appear as priorities for the Commission.

The European Union would like to urge the Chair of SCRS to ensure that this prioritisation work is conducted prior to formulating requests for financial support in 2021.

**MEETING PARTICIPATION FUND**

(Document STF-206/20)

As a result of the Covid pandemic, and following the cancelation of most the meetings initially scheduled for 2020, the Meeting Participation Fund (MPF) is now in a healthy state. The measures proposed in the context of the revision of the *Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 11-26 on the Establishment of a Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties* (Rec. 14-14) and of the Rules of Procedure for the Administration of the MPF should help managing the fund in a more sustainable way. However, the European Union is of the opinion that the fund should not be totally used in 2021 and that only half or part of the surplus from 2020 should be used in 2021. This view is supported by the likelihood that no physical meetings will take place in the first half of 2021, potentially creating a backlog of meetings up to 2022.

**REPORT ON VIRTUAL WORKING GROUP FOR SUSTAINABLE FINANCING (VWG-SF)**

(Document STF-205/20)

The European union strongly supports the proposal from the ICCAT Virtual Working Group on Sustainable Financial Position for ICCAT regarding the eligibility criteria to receive financial assistance through the MPF. Although the carryover of funds unused in 2020 should ensure that there is no shortage in 2021, this is an exceptional situation, and the rational management of the funds remains an important objective to ensure the maximum participation by developing countries.

Regarding the draft rules of procedure for the administration of the MPF, the European Union would like to underline that the minimum criteria established in the Rec. 14-14 will need to be adhered to for the EU's voluntary contributions to be made available. For this purpose, all the applicants will need to provide the necessary level of information to facilitate the transfer of the funds from the EU to ICCAT to cover the expenses associated with their participation.

**DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE ACCUMULATED DEBT OF THE  
ICCAT CONTRACTING PARTIES & REVIEW OF THE PAYMENT PLANS OF PAST-DUE CONTRIBUTIONS**

*(Document STF-204/20)*

The European Union is concerned about the continued rise in arrears and its impact on the budget and the good functioning of the Commission. While welcoming the work of the VWG-SF on that issue, the EU takes the view that failure to regularise the situation must be considered a serious matter, and that further reflection is needed on possible further action that could be taken.