



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRES AND FISHERIES

The Director General

Brussels
MARE.B3/KMF

Dear Ms. Bermúdez,

I would like to thank you for the recommendations of the Market Advisory Council of 31 July 2026 highlighting the concerns of its members regarding the liberalisation of canned tuna under the EU-Mexico Modernised Global Agreement (MGA) and Interim Trade Agreement (ITA).

As regards your first recommendations, concerning the **assessment process** that led to the conclusion of the negotiations for the modernised EU-Mexico Agreement, allow me to clarify that, as for any EU trade agreements, this involved several studies, including a sustainable impact assessment (SIA). The findings of the SIA carried out during the negotiations and finalised in 2019 confirmed the positive economic, environmental and social impacts that a comprehensive modernisation of the Agreement could have both in Mexico and in the EU.

More specifically on tuna, Mexico's exports of canned tuna to the EU have historically been extremely limited, despite existing preferential access under the EU-Mexico Global Agreement of 2000. The current tariff quota of 14,500 tonnes has remained largely unused in recent years, with imports not exceeding 35 tonnes annually over the last ten years and dropping to zero in the most recent period. Furthermore, Mexico is a net importer of EU canned tuna (198 tonnes in 2025).

Since most EU-Mexico trade had already been liberalised, this led the Commission to conclude that going a step further on tuna products would not imply a significant risk of increased competition. On the contrary, the size of the Mexican market and the positive trade balance indicate additional opportunities for the EU exporters of canned tuna under the new agreement.

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On the assessments related to sustainability, the negotiations were an opportunity to step up Mexico's commitments in all sustainability dimensions. Unlike the agreement currently in place, the modernised EU-Mexico Global Agreement includes a Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapter. The TSD chapter contains ambitious provisions on labour and the environment, including commitments on labour rights, biological diversity and sustainable fishing related issues. The agreement also provides for civil-society mechanisms (domestic advisory groups and a civil society forum) allowing to discuss any concerns as well as a dispute settlement to enforce agreed rules.

Regarding your second recommendation, on the close **monitoring of the agreement's impacts and potential use of safeguards measures**, a six-year transitional period for the liberalisation of tuna products provide a buffer for the EU industry. During this time, the Commission will closely monitor trade flows to detect any signs of market disruption. The agreement itself, as well as the EU's own trade defence toolbox, provide all the necessary tools to react quickly and decisively, should EU production come under threat.

In relation to **control of imported foodstuffs**, let me stress that the EU-Mexico agreement does not affect the application of the EU's strict food safety rules. The EU uses a comprehensive, risk-based system of official controls to ensure that food and feed imported from non-EU countries meet at least the same high safety, quality and traceability standards as those maintained within the EU. These controls include guarantees provided by non-EU countries before export, as well as systematic, risk-based checks at EU borders. Regulation (EU) 2017/625 on official controls provides the legal basis for this framework, supported by specific delegated and implementing acts. The European Commission regularly updates these rules, coordinates activities in the Member States and carries out controls to verify compliance and address emerging risks. This approach ensures that imported products are safe and traceable, protecting consumer health and supporting fair, smooth trade.

Regarding the Commission audit report 2022-7455 on Mexico's control systems for the production of fishery products intended for export to the European Union, the Commission always systematically reviews and follows up on the actions taken by non-EU countries to address any audit non-compliances.

On the sustainability side, the EU has been stepping up its control and traceability requirements through the revised EU Fisheries Control Regulation including the digital reporting of traceability information for imported fishery and aquaculture products, together with the reinforced controls on the legality of fish products through CATCH certification.

Finally, regarding the **International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 188 on Work in Fishing**, the EU will indeed encourage its ratification by Mexico, as it does with other trade partners, including through its participation in an ILO project to promote the ratification of C188 worldwide. In the meantime, the TSD chapter already provides a solid basis to work with Mexico on various aspects of labour sustainability across various sectors, including fisheries.

I would like to thank you once again for bringing the concerns of your members to our attention and I would like to inform you that following the signature in May this year, the EU has completed its ratification procedure for the ITA's entry into force and is awaiting Mexico's completion of its ratification procedure for the ITA to enter into force. Once the ITA enters into application, should any actual issues arise, my services will be open to discuss to find the best way to address them.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have further questions, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]
Charlina VITCHEVA

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