Mr. Vasco Alves Cordeiro,

It is with grave concerns that we, the national and international signatories of this open letter addressed to you, the President of the Local Government of the Azores, would like to address a distressing development in the Azores and their territorial waters (EEZ, Exclusive Economic Zone). In the Atlantic ecosystem the Azores play an existential role for nature and all living creatures, both above and below the water. The preservation of this unique and essential ecosystem is crucial for human survival. Conversely, the destruction of this system can have far-reaching consequences, not only for the Azores, but for all of humanity.

With regard to future generations and with regard to the transgenerational, sustainable treatment of nature in the Azores, we call upon you to fundamentally change your policy on environmental and marine protection.

For many years, both the local government and the individual administrations of the nine islands have, in cooperation with experts, established marine protection areas and nature reserves in the sea both around the Azores and also directly on the islands – but, unfortunately, only on paper. Nature reserves around the Azores have been legally recognised as of 08 July, 2008 (1). What, however, is the use of establishing marine protection areas when the same laws exclude pelagic species such as sharks, swordfish and tuna from protection, or if illegal fishing is not stopped in practice, and if marine protection areas are not respected but, despite many indications and requests for change, are still exploited by fishing?

The same applies to the waters of the 200-mile zone, the EEZ of the Azores, in which both domestic and foreign fishing fleets are ruthlessly exploiting the stocks of large fish such as sharks, swordfish, blue and white marlin and tuna. There are also no qualms had about fishing in protected areas such as the Princess Alice Bank or Condor Banks.

Drastic changes must be made if we are to secure not only the future of the ocean and its inhabitants, but also subsequent generations of mankind.

The government of the Azores has applied for the internationally recognised GSTC certification for sustainable tourism and is currently in the process of certification. On the surface, the marketing strategy “Green Islands with Sustainable Tourism” works well. But if you take a closer look, the reality of what happens on the islands often has nothing to do with sustainable action. The time has come to bring change to the ocean and to openly and honestly exhibit truly sustainable living… for the future. Within the context of the certification, a drastic change must take place, not only in the behaviour of the fisheries but, more importantly, in the behaviour of the government of the Azores, i.e. their politics.

Hereinafter we have listed seven areas, supported by examples, which, among other things, bring to light how the seas surrounding the Azores are being exploited, up until now with the knowledge and consent of the local government.

We ask you, Mr Vasco Alves Cordeiro, to address these exact points and to make lasting changes for the future.

(1) Decreto Legislativo Regional n.° 19/2008/A, 8 de Julho de 2008.
1. **Fishing and landing of the Spanish longline fleets in the Azores**

**Fact:** For many years (and as of 2012 specifically observed and documented by the internationally active eNGO SHARKPROJECT) the Spanish longline fleet has docked in the port of Horta with the main goal of offloading blue sharks, mako sharks and some swordfish. SHARKPROJECT estimates the amount of sharks landed annually at approx. 5,000 tonnes based on rough estimates, on the loading capacity, and on the fluctuation of individual ships seen frequently returning. \(^{(2)}\)

According to international maritime law, Spanish fishing vessels are obligated to permanently switch on their AIS/VMS (Automatic Identification System). Current information shows that this is not the case. The Caixa Velho (3a Vi 7-4-92) landed blue shark and swordfish in Horta on 30 April, 2019. The AIS/VMS data of this ship is glaringly incomplete, indicating that the AIS/VMS was periodically inactive. According to local observers, the Ribel Tercero (3a Vi-7-3554) regularly unloads blue shark and mako shark in Horta, the last time was on 24 May, 2019. As of October 2017 no AIS/VMS data exists for this vessel. It is, therefore, not verifiable whether or not this vessel is fishing in protected zones, including those within the EEZ of the Azores, rendering its activities illegal. \(^{(3)}\)

**Background:** Originally licenced to catch swordfish, many of the 300 Spanish longliners land their catches in Horta all year round so that they do not have to travel the economically unprofitable route to Vigo (home port and largest shark offloading site in Europe). This means that they can set sail again directly from Horta to fish the waters around the Azores, especially south of the Azores and off Newfoundland in the Gulf Stream. Up to 100 kilometres of longlines fitted with up to 20,000 hooks are used to catch marine cosmopolitans such as swordfish and sharks. The target catch of the Spanish longliners was originally swordfish, marlin and some mako sharks. Blue sharks were also caught on the longlines, but were unwanted by-catch. They were (according to ICCAT, International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna: 80-88% of the animals) mostly thrown overboard again, dead or dying. ICCAT has been keeping statistics on catches of tuna, shark and swordfish in the Atlantic since 1966. According to ICCAT statistics, the longliner fleets landed only 3560 tons of blue shark in the North Atlantic in 1992 and only 10 tons in the South Atlantic in 1993. In 2011 it was 73,192 tons, in 2016 it was 66,273 tons of shark. \(^{(4)}\)

Drastically declining stocks of swordfish, whose stock has decreased by about half from the 1990s to 2016, and of blue and white marlin, whose stocks have declined during the same period to a quarter of what they were, mean that blue shark and mako shark have increasingly become targeted as the main catch. Blue shark, which was viewed as inferior meat and thrown back into the sea as by-catch in the 1990s, was becoming more sought-after by China’s aspiring and increasingly wealthy middle classes with their hunger for shark fins. In this case, their particularly large, long fins have sealed the fate of the blue sharks and created a lucrative business for the Spanish and Portuguese fishing industry. The “finning” ban in the EU, which came into force in June 2013, has changed nothing.
Even though the fins have since then had to be landed attached the body of the fish, techniques have been developed over time to keep the "body mass" as low as possible by cutting off the head of the animals directly behind the pectoral fins and gutting the animal as much as possible. The only purpose of the low quality body meat is to implement the EU regulation “fins naturally attached body”. The price for gutted blue sharks including fins in Vigo/Spain is about 1.00 € per kilogram of blue shark. (5)

A noticeable number of juvenile sharks are caught and unloaded by these vessels, which may be due to the fact that the Azores are the main area for the development of young animals. This is where the blue sharks, who move throughout the Atlantic, return to in order to give birth. Their offspring continue to live near the islands and southwestern areas of the Azores (6). This applies not only to the population of blue sharks, but even more so to protected species such as smooth hammerhead sharks and thresher sharks (CITES App.II and CMS listed), which are not allowed to be landed in the EU, but which also hang on longlines, mostly dead, and are thrown overboard without any control.

**Demands:**

1. **Stop the landings of the Spanish shark fishing fleet in the port of Horta and in all other ports in the Azores as soon as possible.**
2. **The disclosure of all annual tonnages offloaded in Horta by the Spanish shark fishing fleet from June 2013 onwards, including vessel identification, names, tonnages of vessels and weight of fish offloaded (mostly sharks) in tonnes.**
3. **Disclosure of the destinations of all overseas containers containing sharks and swordfish landed by the Spanish fishing fleet from June 2013 onwards.**
4. **Establishment of a marine protection area the size of the 200-nm EEZ of the Azores, in which neither sharks nor swordfish may be caught by EU fleets.**

---

(2) Extensive documentation on routes (AIS/VMS data) and offloading of the Spanish fleet in the North Atlantic showing Horta as the port of destination (photo documentation)Quelle Global Fishing Watch, Daten der Schiffe aus den Jahren 2017-2019
(4) Auction Prices Large Fish Auction Vigo November 2017, ZDF Research on site for the documentation “Das Geschäft mit dem Gütesiegel” (The Business with the Seal of Quality)
(5) Conservation of pelagic sharks and Rays in the Azores, DOP; Pedro Afonso, Frédéric Vandeperre, Jorge Fontes, Filipe Porteiro, 2012
2. Fishing and landing of large fish (sharks, swordfish, marlin) by the Portuguese mainland fleets on the island of Horta and Sao Miguel

**Facts:** In contrast to the Spanish fleet, which only occasionally fishes close to the islands, the Portuguese mainland fleet not only uses the ports of Horta and Ponta Delgada as offloading stations for sharks and swordfish, but also fishes very close to the coast and directly in front of the islands of the Azores within the 200-nm-EEZ. This also includes fishing in protected areas such as the Princess Alice Bank (*7).

On April 29, 2019 the longline vessel MESTRE BOBICHA (VP-204-C), registered on the Portuguese mainland with home port "Vila do Porto", unloads sharks and marlin in the port of Ponta Delgada. Blue sharks and, according to the workers, blue marlin are shipped in a container of the company "Transinsular" No. TMYU 900054-6.

It is immediately noticeable that almost all of the animals are very young and therefore not sexually mature. It is easily discernible that blue sharks (BSH) are being loaded with fins attached to the gutted body. A portion of the mako sharks are labelled as Blue Marlin (SWO), but the fins on the body are still easily recognizable. Extensive research has shown that the MESTRE BOBICHA fishes almost exclusively within the EEZ of the Azores, in the exact areas which form the "nursery" of most shark and marlin species. Here, protected areas such as Princess Alice, Acores Banks, Condor Banks and the Don Joao Castro Bank are targeted. During certain periods this vessel also offloads in Vigo / Spain. (*7)
**Background:** This vessel is just one example out of approximately 100 longlining vessels from the Portuguese mainland which are officially allowed to fish the seas surrounding the islands. This instance also raises questions regarding the protected species which have not been offloaded. Smooth hammerhead sharks, thresher sharks and other protected shark species live around the Azores. Protected areas are being systematically exploited, and apart from that the same problems arise as with the Spanish longline fleet.

**Demands:**

1. **An immediate halt to landings by the Portuguese longline fleet from the mainland in all ports in the Azores.**

2. **Disclosure of all annual tonnages offloaded by the Portuguese longline fleet as of June 2013, with the identification of the vessels, their names, tonnages and the weight of the fish unloaded in tonnes.**

3. **Disclosure of the logbooks showing endangered species which were caught but not landed and which are protected by CITES APP. II. (Protected shark species / sea turtles / seabirds etc.)**

4. **Disclosure of the destinations of all overseas containers holding sharks and swordfish after being unloaded from vessels of the Portuguese longlining fleet, and that from June 2013 onwards.**

5. **The establishment of a marine protected area the size of the 200-nm EEZ of the Azores in which neither sharks nor swordfish may be caught by Portuguese mainland fleets. In this protected area it should be consistently enforced that only local, demonstrably sustainable fishing may take place outside the local protected areas (protected areas close to the island and PMA 1 - PMA 11) and on a seasonal basis.**

6. **Pelagic species such as sharks, swordfish and tuna, as well as all other fish species within the specifically designated, pre-existing, marine protected areas (PMA 1 - PMA 11), may not be caught at any point during the year.**

(6) Complete AIS/VMS (Automatic Identification System) data of the MESTRE BOBICHA (VP-204-C) from the Portuguese mainland with home port "Vila do Porto", made available from September 2016 and proving infringements in nature reserves of the Azores. Additional photo documentation of the unloading in Ponta Delgada. Here only a screenshot:
3. **Consistent enforcement to the marine protected areas off the Azores and consistent prosecution of any infringements**

**Facts:** The protected areas established by law do not provide the protection for which they were originally established. By permitting resource management and therefore fishing to take place, the relevant regulatory authorities are not allowed to take action. On the other hand, it should be noted that the majority of the procedures established by the competent supervisory authorities do not tend to result in the enforcement of penalties, which increases the impunity of offenders. The negative effect in this respect is caused by the fact that the proceedings are the responsibility of the supervisory authorities, while the imposition of penalties is the responsibility of the government.

**Demands:**

1. *Existing marine protected areas on and around the islands, but also those such as Princess Alice, must be protected more consistently in future. The supervisory authorities should be responsible for imposing penalties, not the government. The constant lack of punishment, which is actually prescribed by law, causes impunity and constant non-compliance.*

2. *The enforcement of the obligation for all fishing vessels to own and operate AIS/VMS, together with the obligation to proceed directly to the nearest port to have the system inspected if it ceases to function for any reason whatsoever.*
3. **Prohibiting the passage of fishing vessels through the protected areas - only in this way and through the analysis of the AIS/VMS Protocol by the relevant authorities is it possible to ensure that these vessels do not engage in fishing activities in the prohibited zones.**

4. **Illegal local fishing for protected species**

**Facts:** The Alves (VV-46-C) was filmed during a trip in 2016. The crew of the longlining vessel, coming from the island of Terceira, specifically baits surface longlines using large hooks (J-Hooks) for shark and swordfish. The 45-minute documentary features scenes in which the crew pulls in the longlines. Blue sharks are brought on board in the most brutal way and killed under gruesome circumstances. Many animals are, after being abused and speared with harpoons and hooks, then beaten with clubs and have their stomachs slit open while still alive. One verifiable scene shows a female mako shark still breathing despite this horrific torture and long after having its stomach slit open.

In the course of this fishing trip at least six smooth hammerhead sharks (CITES APP. II and CMS) and one adult female thresher shark (CITES APP. II and CMS) are illegally hoisted on board and stowed in the holds. (*)

According to expert eyewitness reports, blue sharks and illegally caught smooth hammerheads (CITES App. II and CMS) were landed in Rabo de Peixe in October 2018. (*)

**Background:** Fishing for blue sharks on the Azores is a relatively new "phenomenon". Traditionally shark is not eaten in the Azores. The only exception is the "Cação", (*Galeorhinus galeus*), which is quite popular on the mainland and offered from time to time at fish counters and auctioned in the LOTA. But there are also plenty of protected species which are caught on the surface longlines of the fishermen and which are either illegally landed or thrown back into the sea by the fishermen without any control or records. Since there is no way of controlling the species hanging on the longline, this method of fishing is one of the most non-selective and brutal of its kind.

The case of the Alves (VV-46-C) came to light internationally and regionally in 2016. To date, the crime has not been prosecuted. Unfortunately, we must assume that this is not an isolated case, but part of a system present on the islands. According to local citizens, the Alves continues to fish for sharks with surface long lines. She is certainly not the only vessel.
Demands:

1. Prohibition of targeted surface longlining for sharks and swordfish / marlin by the local fishermen of the Azores.
2. Efficient controls by the port authorities during offloading to prevent breaches of species protection laws.
3. Draconian punishment of violations of the Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and CMS.
4. The enforcement of the obligation for all local fishing vessels to own and operate AIS/VMS, together with the obligation to proceed directly to the nearest port to have the system inspected if it ceases to function for any reason whatsoever.
5. Prohibiting the passage of local fishermen through the protected areas - only in this way and via the analysis of the AIS/VMS protocol by the relevant authorities would it be possible to ensure that these local fishermen do not engage in fishing activities in the prohibited zones.
6. We demand that criminal proceedings are able to be directly initiated by the supervisory authorities, such as the Maritime Police and the Republican National Guard (GNR), without the need for them to be filed by regional authorities. This will avoid both the loss of time and the disregard with which the initiated proceedings are handled by these authorities. This will also prevent the proceedings from being closed or abandoned, as it so often happens.

(7) The complete 45-minute documentation is available and can be considered conclusive evidence.
5. **An immediate ban on the landing or auctioning of blue sharks, mako sharks, swordfish and marlin at the LOTA (State Auction), and an immediate end to the inclusion of blue sharks into the catch lists for EU subsidies in compliance with the actual regulation**

**Facts:** Sharks and swordfish from local longlining fisheries are auctioned via LOTA (Lotakor). In the period January to October 2018 4.09 tons of mako shark with a total value of 16,686.00 € and 29.17 tons of Blue Shark with a total value of 9,296.00 € were auctioned. This corresponds to a total value of € 26,000.00, a negligibly low value in relation to tuna fishing, for example, which, in the same period, generated well over 2 million euros in the LOTA Sao Miguel (1-10/2018) alone. \(^{(1)}\) Blue shark, in particular, only fetches average prices of 0.12 € to 0.36 € and cannot be lucratively marketed.

In one specific case, in the LOTA of São Miguel, only 0.07 € was paid per kg of blue shark. This is mainly due to EU subsidies, which also encourage fishermen to catch these species. For every tonne of fish caught, fishermen receive €714 in subsidies. According to Directive 46/2016 of 20 May 2016, blue shark is not included in EU subsidies, but has nevertheless been included...
in this local programme. It is worth noting that it is precisely for this reason that blue sharks are caught, because the real value, which is unprofitable in LOTA, is increased by subsidies which make the catch lucrative.

**Demands:**

1. The enforcement of the obligation for all fishing vessels to own and operate AIS/VMS, together with the obligation to proceed directly to the nearest port to have the system checked if it ceases to function for any reason whatsoever.
2. Prohibiting the passage of fishing vessels through the marine protected areas - only in this way and through the analysis of the AIS/VMS protocol by the relevant authorities is it possible to ensure that these vessels do not engage in fishing activities in the prohibited zones.
3. A ban on the landing of blue sharks, mako sharks, swordfish and marlin in the ports of the Azores.
4. No EU subsidies for blue sharks and mako sharks.

(9) Available figures for period 1-10/2018 of LOTA Sao Miguel, Faial and Terceira.

6. **Promoting local sustainable fisheries**

**Facts:** The local traditional pole-and-line fishery in the Azores operates seasonally using only low levels of bait fish (live anchovies) and generates no by-catch. They selectively fish for yellowfin tuna and bonito, abiding to official and strictly regulated catch quota. This fishery is one of the most sustainable of its kind, and can be sold lucratively on the international market using sustainability seals for fishermen.

**Background:** For many years, the tuna stocks of the Atlantic have been heavily overfished by international fleets. The local pole-and-line fishermen of the Azores are also suffering as a result. The years 2014 and 2015 were catastrophic for the local fishers targeting bonito and tuna. With no other options available, local fishermen also started fishing in marine protected areas and thus destroy the last stocks. Areas such as Formigas are currently being monitored with cameras to stop illegal fishing (although it appears that they are not currently in operation). This also applies to pole-and-line fisheries. Local small-scale fishermen are sometimes forced to bypass the LOTA and sell tuna illegally. All these facts show that fishing in the Azores suffers from the partly self-inflicted practices and international catch pressure.
Demands:

1. **Subsidies for local pole-and-line fishing, as long as they comply with legal requirements and avoid marine protected areas and their catches are solely marketed through LOTA.**

2. **100% electronic monitoring of pole-and-line vessels or, alternatively, by independent observers.**

3. **The enforcement of the obligation for all fishing vessels to own and operate AIS/VMS, together with the obligation to proceed directly to the nearest port to have the system inspected if it ceases to function for any reason.**

4. **Prohibiting the passage of fishing vessels through the protected areas - only in this way and through the analysis of the AIS/VMS Protocol by the relevant authorities is it possible to ensure that these vessels do not also engage in fishing activities in the prohibited zones.**

5. **The establishment of closed and appropriately monitored areas in ports to prevent the constant bypassing of LOTA.**

7. **Shark fishing versus tourism**

**Facts:** For many years, people have been coming to the Azores to enjoy nature. Whale watching and shark diving are a very important part of tourism. While whale watchers mainly stay on land and take part in other activities while on holiday, divers (usually experienced ones) come to the Azores, first and foremost, to dive. (*11) Shark diving plays a central role in their decision to come here. For almost ten years shark diving tourism has been an integral part of the income of the population in the Azores. Especially in the central group it has a great importance. Divers are not only an important economic factor for the dive centres. All industries in the Azores profit from them. Every living blue shark is an economically important factor for the Azores. A living animal has a far higher value than 12 euro cents per kilo of meat. Studies from other marine areas such as the Bahamas show an enormous economic benefit due to live animals. In the Bahamas, longline fishing was banned as far back as the early 1990s. Since 2011, all shark fishing in Bahaman waters has been banned and an extensive sanctuary has been established. The annual turnover of the diving industry, mainly through shark diving, is 113.80 million US $ per year. (*12) DOP studies show similar findings for the Azores. (*13)

**Background:** For years divers worldwide have been observing the "clearance sale " of nature in the Azores. The diving media regularly publish reports (*14) about the excessive shark fishing around the Azores, the support of the local government for this fishery and its effects on diving tourism, but above all on the ecosystem of the Atlantic Ocean.

In the years 2014 - 2017 the sightings of blue sharks around the central group of the Azores collapsed dramatically. In 2015, virtually no sharks were sighted. Today, protected areas such as the Condor Banks and the Azores Banks are literally "swept clean". Fishermen have been regularly spotted in protected areas such as Princess Alice. Pelagic protected areas (PMA 1 -
PMA 11) were established and fishing banned, but with exceptions for migratory species such as shark, swordfish and tuna. This is a contradiction in terms: what is the use of pelagic protected areas if the migratory species visiting the protected areas are not protected in them but may be caught with longliners? (7) For ten years now, the fishing grounds around the Azores have been increasingly overfished, controls are virtually non-existent, and the shark population, which is so important for the ecosystem as well as for tourism, is being wiped out. Around the island Santa Maria the shark sightings collapsed within 2 years by 80 percent. (15)

Another example of how tourists are deceived is the "Aquario de Porto Pim" on Faial. It gives the appearance of being a sanctuary for injured turtles and other sea creatures, but in reality it is run by a fish trader for aquariums, who even sells protected species via his website. All large aquariums in the world have already been supplied by this trader. In the portfolio of this company, with the suitable name "Flying Sharks", you will find, beside all manner of Atlantic fish (e.g. also moon fish), listings of blue sharks, houndsharks, cat sharks and various ray species. Blue sharks, in particular, only survive in captivity for hours or days, and in the best case scenario a few weeks (16).

But there are also quite open announcements on the website of "Flying Sharks" that they are able to supply species such as manta, mobula rays and smooth hammerhead sharks. These species are protected by the Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and are listed in Appendix II, so they may only be traded in exceptional cases if it is proven that the population from which the animals are taken is healthy. There is no question that this is not the case around the Azores. Another point is the very questionable practice of keeping pelagic species such as sharks and rays in aquariums. Large ray species and hammerhead sharks, in particular, do not have a long life expectancy in aquariums. Their trade is therefore highly questionable and incompatible with values of sustainability.
Demands:

1. The promotion of sustainable tourism and the diving industry in the Azores.
2. The consequent protection of the shark population around the Azores within the EEZ (200 NM).
3. Stopping the sale of common mola, blue sharks and CITES App. II species by the company "Flying Sharks".
4. The enforcement of the obligation for all fishing vessels to own and operate AIS/VMS, together with the obligation to proceed directly to the nearest port to have the system inspected if it ceases to function for any reason whatsoever.
5. Prohibiting the passage of fishing vessels through the protected areas - only in this way and through the analysis of the AIS/VMS Protocol by the relevant authorities is it possible to ensure that these vessels do not also engage in fishing activities in the prohibited zones.

(10) Managing marine wildlife tourism activities: Analysis of motivations and specialization levels of divers and whale watchers, Julia Bentz, Fernando Lopes, Helena Calado, Philip Dearden


(12) "Sustaining marine wildlife tourism through linking Limits of Acceptable Change and zoning in the Wildlife Tourism Model", Julia Bentz, Fernando Lopes, Helena Calado, Philip Dearden.

(13) Europe wide reports (excerpt):
With all of the aforementioned facts we have proven categorically that the political system in the Azores is currently NOT sustainable. Laws and reforms must be permanently enacted with the goal of protecting the ocean and thereby securing the income of the people of the Azores for all future generations. All of the conditions required are present in the abundance of nature and it cannot continue to be exploited, as is presently happening, but must be purposefully protected.

As finally disclosed and confirmed by the UN in its latest report, species are facing extinction worldwide (17). The direct exploitation of fish and seafood has the greatest impact on the oceans. The last 50 years of large-scale fishing have had the greatest impact on biodiversity in marine ecosystems. 33% of fish stocks were already overfished by 2015 and nearly 33% of reef-forming corals, sharks and rays and over a third of marine mammals are threatened with extinction!

(16) IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, publicado em 6 de maio de 2019

Do not let the Azores contribute to this extinction in such a sad way, but be exemplary. Scientists around the world are calling for a greater number of marine protected areas, areas where marine life can recover. All global research shows that if consistent protection of marine areas is enforced, sustainable fishing will benefit in the long term.

Let the Azores lead by example for the future of our ocean and our children and grandchildren. You have the power to make these changes and to establish a truly sustainable maritime policy in the Azores. We call on you to do so.

We respectfully ask you to respond to this letter within four weeks, at the latest by 1 October 2019. Please send your reply to the email address acores@sharkproject.org or by post to:

SHARKPROJECT Germany e.V.
Ottostraße 13
D-63150 Heusenstamm

If we have not received a positive reply within this period, we will have no other choice but to disclose all the facts listed under points 1-17, which are only attached in excerpts in this letter, to the certifier GSTC.
Recipients:

Vasco Alves Cordeiro  
President of the Local Government of the Azores

5 Ministeries of the Azores

Sérgio Humberto Rocha de Ávila  
Vice-President of the Local Government of the Azores

Andreia Martins Cardoso da Costa  
Secretary of Social Affairs

Avelino de Freitas de Meneses  
Secretary for Culture and Education

Gui Manuel Machado Menezes  
Secretariat for Maritime Affairs, Science and Technology

Ana Rêgo-Costa Amorim da Cunha  
Secretary for Transport and Infrastructure

The Signatories:

Alexander Smolinsky  
Sharkproject International e.V.

Friederike Kremer-Obrock  
Sharkproject Germany e.V.

Herbert Futterknecht  
Sharkproject Austria

Denise Smolinsky  
Verein Sharkproject Switzerland

Other Signatories:
Birgit Braun
Executive Board Member
Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz e.V.
Germany

Katrien Vandevelde & Jan Wouters
Founders
Blue Shark Conservation
Belgium

Candace Crespi
Campaign Manager
Blue Sphere Foundation
CA, USA

Isabel Naranjo
President
CREMA (Centro Rescate Especies Marinas Amenazadas)
Costa Rica

Ulrike Kirsch
Foundation Board Member
Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz e.V.
Germany

José Truda Palazzo, Jr.
Head Consultant
Divers For Sharks
Brazil
Alexander Endl
Founder and Chair
The Dolphin’s Voice e.V.
Germany

Felipe Vallejo
Executive Director
Equilibrio Azul
Ecuador

Billo Heinzpeter Studer
President
Fair Fish International Association
Switzerland

Randall Arauz
Policy Advisor
Fins Attached Marine Research and Conservation
CO, USA

Valeska Diemel
Director
FishAct
Germany

Sandra Bessudo Lion
Fundadora/Directora Ejecutiva
Fundación Malpelo y Otros Ecosistemas Marinos
Colombia
Louie Psihoyos  
Executive Director, 
Oceanic Preservation Society  
CA, USA

Cristina Mittermeier  
Co-founder & Vision Lead at SeaLegacy  
Sea Legacy  
USA

Alex Cornelissen  
Chief Executive Officer  
Sea Shepherd Global

Jamie Pollak  
Director  
Shark Angels  
NY, USA

Fernando Reis  
Executive Director  
Sharks Educational Institute  
Spain

Fabienne Rossier  
President  
Sharks Mission France  
France
Sabine Falk
Board
Shark Savers Germany e.V.
Germany

Julian Engel
Second Chairman
Stop Finning Germany e.V.
Germany

Dr. Andrew Venter
Chief Executive Officer
WILDTRUST
South Africa

Dive Centers Azores Portugal + Dive Centers Madeira Portugal

Rui Cabral de Melo
AZORES SUB -DIVE CENTER
Azores Portugal

Paulo Reis
Associação Operadores Marítimos dos Açores – AOMA
Azores Portugal
Bruno Sérgio
Best Spot Ponta Delgada
Azores Portugal

Carlos Paulos
Espírito Azul
Azores Portugal

Rui Cabral de Melo
MAR À VILA –
ASSOCIAÇÃO DE UTENTES DAS ZONAS DE DOMÍNIO
Azores Portugal

Alexandre Jacinto
Octopus Diving Center Terseira
Azores Portugal

Carlos Paulos
Wind + Water
Diving Liveaboards and Charters
Azores Portugal

Steffen Ehrath
Wahoo Diving Santa Maria
Azores Portugal
Marco Klenk
Owner
Porto Santo Sub Dive Center
Portugal

Stefan Maier
Owner
Manta Diving Madeira
Portugal

Carlos Manuel Marques
Owner
Mero Diving Center Madeira
Portugal

Urs Moser
Owner
Urs Moser Diving Center Porto Santo
Portugal

Luis Miguel de Brissos de Matos
Owner
Rhea Dive Porto Santo
Portugal

Marco Klenk
Owner
Diving Center Atalaya
Portugal