



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Commission warns third countries over insufficient action to fight illegal fishing

The European Commission has stepped up its action to fight illegal fishing worldwide by warning eight third countries that they risk being identified as countries it considers non-cooperative in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The countries in question are Belize, Cambodia, Fiji, Guinea, Panama, Sri Lanka, Togo and Vanuatu. Today's decision is the first of its kind and it highlights that these countries are not doing enough to fight illegal fishing. It identifies concrete shortcomings, such as lack of dialogue or lack of actions to address deficiencies in monitoring, controlling and surveillance of fisheries, and suggests corrective actions to resolve them. The decision will not, at this stage, entail any measures affecting trade. The eight countries have been notified and given a reasonable time to respond and take measures to rectify the situation. The Commission has also proposed an action plan for each country. Should the situation not improve, the EU could take further steps, which could entail trade measures such as a ban on selling fisheries products to the EU.

European Commissioner Maria Damanaki, in charge of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said: *"This is not a black list, but a yellow card. We want these countries as partners to combat illegal fishing. We want them to improve their legal and control systems as required by international rules. But we also want to signal to the world that the EU will not tolerate IUU fishing - a criminal activity which undermines the livelihood of fishing communities and depletes fish stocks. It must be eradicated by all means."*

The fight against illegal fishing is part of the EU drive to ensure the sustainable use of the sea and its resources. As the world's biggest fish importer the EU aims to close its markets to illegally caught fish. The Commission considers that the eight countries identified do not so far fulfil their duties as flag, coastal, port or market states in line with international law, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea or United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement. For instance, the countries need to amend their legal framework to combat IUU fishing, improve control and monitoring actions or take a proactive role in compliance of international law rules.

The Commission's decision is a result of a thorough analysis and it also took into account each country's level of development. The decision follows a long period of informal discussions with the countries in question. It now starts a formal procedure of dialogue and cooperation with these countries with the aim to solve the established shortcomings.

Background

Today's Decision is based on the EU's 'IUU Regulation', which entered into force in 2010¹. This key instrument in the fight against illegal fishing aims to allow access to the EU market only to fisheries products that have been certified as legal by the flag state or the exporting state concerned.

The estimated global value of IUU fishing is approximately 10 billion euros per year, and it is said to account for 19% of the reported value of catches. Between 11 and 26 million tonnes of fish are caught illegally a year, which corresponds to at least 15% of world catches. It is estimated that 16% of all sea-caught fish imported into the EU is caught illegally².

More information

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/illegal_fishing/index_en.htm

[MEMO/12/859](#)

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¹ [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1005/2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.](#)

² [European Parliament resolution of 17 November 2011 on combating illegal fishing at the global level - the role of the EU](#)
