

MEDIA ADVISORY

Europêche and environmental NGOs join forces to demand modern, effective and simplified EU fisheries control rules

A robust EU control system is critical to ensure that seafood products sold in the EU are sustainably sourced, fully traceable and properly monitored by Member States.

In the context of the ongoing revision of the EU fisheries control system,¹ the fishing industry association Europêche² and the EU IUU Coalition³ have released a [joint statement](#) addressed to EU decision makers.

While acknowledging the clear contribution of the current Control Regulation to improve compliance with fisheries rules, they call on Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and EU fisheries Ministers to resolve the shortcomings.⁴ Particularly, the current lack of harmonised sanctions for infringements, insufficient data exchange, ambiguity of legal provisions, and disparities in the level of scrutiny in the implementation of control measures and traceability across Member States are creating a complex and uneven playing field for operators, leaving the system open for abuse. These issues highlight the need for simplification and harmonisation, and must be addressed in the future Control Regulation. The upcoming votes on the Regulation in the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers happening towards the end of the year are important opportunities for change.

The organisations call on EU decision makers to enhance and digitise traceability of seafood products, simplify and better align control measures, require additional information for imported fisheries products, require tracking and electronic catch reporting for small-scale fishing vessels (taking into account the specifications of the fishery), and provide more public information on the implementation of enforcement measures by Member States. This will create a true level playing field on EU control efforts so all fishers are fairly and equally treated.

Daniel Voces de Onaindi, Managing Director at Europêche said: *“The current EU fisheries control system is one of the most advanced in the world and has undoubtedly contributed to step up compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy and to the sustainable management of our fish stocks. Now, both Europêche and NGOs call for improvements to modernise and simplify the existing framework and overcome implementing flaws to render the system more effective. Our fishermen need clear and efficient rules uniformly applied across the EU to guarantee equal treatment, reduce bureaucracy and make their life easier.”*

The EU IUU Coalition said: *“It is critical that the revision of the fisheries Control Regulation ensures the sustainability objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy are met. The revised rules must strengthen compliance, modernise data management, intensify the fight against illegal fish products and guarantee a level playing field for all stakeholders in the EU. A powerful signal is being sent to EU decision makers today, with NGOs and Europêche united in proposing solutions for effective rules on fisheries control, monitoring and enforcement. We are counting on EU decision makers to ensure that the legal and implementation deficiencies are addressed, and that the future Control Regulation creates a harmonised system that secures sustainable fisheries in Europe.”*

Notes to editors

1. The current fisheries Control Regulation has existed since 2010 and aims to create an EU-wide control system that ensures the sustainability objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy are met. Legal and implementation flaws of the current control system, however, make clear the need for necessary improvements to modernise and simplify the way in which fishing rules are monitored and complied with in the EU. The current revision is: 2018/0193(COD) Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, and amending Council Regulations (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1005/2008, and Regulation (EU) No 2016/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards fisheries control.
2. Europêche is the representative body for fishermen and fishing vessel owners in the European Union.
3. The Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), Oceana, The Nature Conservancy, The Pew Charitable Trusts and WWF are working together to promote EU leadership in improving global fisheries transparency and governance to end illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
4. European Court of Auditors, special report No 08/2017, EU fisheries controls: More efforts needed and Commission Staff Working Document Impact Assessment SWD/2018/280 final.

Contact:

For Europêche
Rosalie Tukker
Policy Advisor, Europêche
Rosalie.tukker@europeche.org
+32 2 230 48 48

For the EU IUU coalition:
Irene Campmany
Communications Officer, Oceana Europe, on behalf of the EU IUU coalition
icampmany@oceana.org
+34 911.44.08.80 and [+34 682.622.245](tel:+34682622245)