



European Court of Auditors report

EU action to combat illegal fishing - Control systems in place but weakened by uneven checks and sanctions by Member States

Inter-AC meeting – 9 March 2023

Scope

- effectiveness of control systems for preventing the import of fishery products stemming from IUU fishing
- effectiveness of Member States' control systems for checking national fleets and waters

Main findings

- IUU catch certification scheme
- EU action towards third countries: IUU 'Carding' system
- Member States' implementation of EU fisheries control rules
- EU financial support towards Member States control systems: EMFF
- Member States sanctioning systems

Recommendation 1: Monitor that Member States reinforce their control systems to prevent the import of fishery products stemming from IUU fishing

- (a) pursue the digitalisation of the catch certification scheme and develop automated checks and risk alerts to support control activities
- (b) work with Member States towards the uniform use of risk identification criteria and monitor whether checks and verifications by Member States focus on the risks identified
- (c) monitor that the scope and quality of checks applied by Member States are sufficient to address the risks, and take necessary action to remedy any shortcomings.

Target implementation date 2026

➤ Recommendation 2: Member States to apply dissuasive sanctions against illegal fishing

(a) checking that Member States apply sanctions for serious infringements

(b) checking that the value of the sanction applied by Member States is no less than the economic benefit derived from the infringement and is dissuasive enough to prevent repeat infringements

(c) checking that Member States to apply dissuasive sanctions against illegal fishing

Target implementation date 2024

(d) take necessary action to remedy any shortcomings

Target implementation date 2026

Commission reaction and next steps

- Acceptance of recommendations in relation to the legal framework currently in force within its role and scope of action.



Thank you