Tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

Fishing is illegal if:
- no authorisation
- against conservation and management measures by Regional fisheries management organisations (RFMO)
- against national laws or international obligations.

Fishing is unreported if:
- not reported, or the reporting contravenes international, RFMO or national laws and regulations.

Fishing is unregulated if:
- the fishing vessel has no nationality
- fishing activities jeopardise fish stocks.

IUU fishing practices:
- €10 billion every year worldwide (estimated)
- 19% of the worldwide reported value of catches (estimate)
- serious threat to sustainable fishing
- damages the marine environment
- affects socio-economic conditions

The EU’s fisheries control system:
Aims to ensure that only fish caught in accordance with applicable conservation and management measures reaches the EU market. This applies to all, EU and third countries producers.

1. The “IUU regulation”: establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing - Regulation (EU) N°1005/2008

Cooperation between the EU and non-EU countries:
The EU works closely with non-EU countries to promote compliance with international rules.

Why?
IUU fishing affects legitimate operators who are hit by unfair competition and threatens food security and socio-economic conditions.

Key tool
All fishery products imported in the EU must be accompanied by an EU catch certificate confirming the legality of the fishing activity.

If a third country has problems fulfilling international rules:

Pre-identification
The European Commission opens a formal dialogue during minimum 6 months.

If the country improves its situation, the 6 month period can be prolonged and ultimately the pre-identification can be removed.

Identification
A ban of all products for which the catch certificate is validated after the decision enters into force.

Listing by the EU
Fisheries products caught by fishing vessels flying the flag of these countries cannot be imported into the EU while the countries remain listed.

Thanks to this cooperation, more than 50 countries have improved their systems to fight IUU fishing.

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