

EU intervention

Item III: [Addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the context of effective fisheries management](#)

1. Since 2010, the EU has been proactive in efforts to combat IUU fishing, promoting a zero-tolerance approach. The EU is the largest importer of seafood and needs to ensure a level playing field for legitimate operators and legal products on its market.
2. The document presented by FAO suggests that the term “illegal fishing” is the easiest of the three IUU fishing components to understand. However, all three components should be seen in relation to the serious infringements defined by the conservation and management measures in a given area.
3. A variety of methods and approaches for estimating IUU fishing should remain available for use according to the objective. In some cases, the missed gains estimation triggers more visibility, buy-in and political endorsement for resources and action.
4. We welcome FAO’s work on developing and using indicators of performance in fighting IUU fishing, including the proposed indicator framework for self-assessment and needs identification by fisheries authorities. We must remain conscious that its implementation is very much capacity dependent.
5. One of the key features of our EU IUU policy is the IUU dialogues with partner countries to strengthen their fisheries governance systems and capacities for monitoring, control and surveillance to enable them to assume their responsibilities as flag, coastal, port and market States.
6. Beyond these IUU dialogues, we support partner countries in strengthening their monitoring, control and surveillance capabilities through technical assistance and capacity building in all regions of the world.
7. At EU level, a new legislative package modernising the EU Fisheries Control system just entered into force, aiming at a gradual transition to the full digitalisation of the fishing sector from net to plate, digitalisation of catch reporting, digital traceability for all fisheries and aquaculture products fresh frozen or processed, imported or not. It is a key step towards a modern and digitalised fisheries control of the EU fleet fishing in or outside EU waters and also of third countries fleets fishing in EU waters.
8. The fishers will benefit from a fairer control system with a harmonised system of sanctions and infringement categories. A major achievement is the risk-based introduction of remote electronic monitoring and cameras on board to fight the illegal discarding of fish, which will be an incentive for selective fishing methods.
9. The EU would suggest to FAO members to examine this EU modernisation effort and possibly

take inspiration from it.

- 10.** The EU will strengthen its support to FAO and continue to provide dedicated funding to key international organisations and regional fisheries management organisations to help build the capacity of countries in monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities and in fighting IUU fishing.
- 11.** In that context, the full and effective implementation of international agreements is crucial. We welcome the recommendations agreed at the UNFSA Review Conference as well as the “Bali” Strategy adopted by the Parties to the PSMA last year. We note that the PSMA implementation is still mainly supported by extrabudgetary resources, and we insist for FAO and its members to consider additional and strengthened financing from the FAO budget. We also encourage countries which are not yet party to this important treaty to consider joining it, in order to reinforce the international regulation framework against IUU fishing.
- 12.** In relation to flag States Performance, the EU recalls the importance of the Compliance Agreement¹. At its 35th session, the COFI welcomed the release of a FAO study – funded by the EU – on this agreement, and called for considering options for its effective implementation and enforcement. We deeply regret that there has been no follow-up to date. We call on the FAO to act as soon as possible before COFI 36. We request the CCLM, at its upcoming 120th session in March 2024, to examine the institutional options to reinforce the implementation of this agreement.
- 13.** Finally, we welcome the adoption of UNGA Resolution 78/XXX (currently draft resolution A/78/L.25) on 18 December 2023 pertaining to the Third United Nations Ocean Conference co-hosted by France and Costa Rica, which will take place in Nice from 9 to 13 June 2025 to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. Noting the crucial role of sustainable fisheries for healthy marine environment and ecosystems, we encourage all relevant parties to seize the opportunity of this landmark conference to redouble their efforts in the fight against IUU Fishing.

¹ Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (The Compliance Agreement).