



Press Release

Market Advisory Council (MAC) and Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC)

Recommendations for harmonised import controls to prevent the entry of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the EU market

Brussels & Madrid, 25 April 2023

The **Market Advisory Council (MAC)** and the **Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC)** delivered recommendations to the **EU Member States** and to the **European Commission** on the need for **harmonisation of import controls to prevent products of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing from entering the European Union market**. In the view of MAC and LDAC members, the following should take place:

- **Development and application of standardised EU-wide risk analysis criteria** and of clear benchmarks for the verification of high-risk catch certificates (import documents) and for the inspection of consignments.
- **Accountability for Member States that fail to uphold key requirements of the EU legislation**, including the potential initiation of infringement procedures.
- **Increased transparency on the implementation of the EU legislation against IUU fishing**, including through publicly availability of the implementation reports submitted by the Member States to the Commission and the provision of comprehensive data.
- **Swift adoption and operationalisation of the CATCH IT system**, the new digital database for catch certificates, which is part of the ongoing revision of the EU Fisheries Control Regulation, including familiarisation by national authorities and by third countries.
- **Allocation of sufficient capacity, resources and support**, both at EU and national levels, with the involvement of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), to ensure effective implementation of the current legislation as well as an effective delivery of the new system.



Yobana Bermúdez, Chair of the MAC, highlighted: *“While significant improvements to import controls are expected with the entry into force of the CATCH IT system, it is essential that the Commission and the Member States adequately prepare for its operationalisation as well as to keep working on the implementation of the current legislation, which will be in force for several more years, so that EU consumers have access to traceable products”.*

Vanya Vulperhost, First Vice Chair of the LDAC, commented: *“As indicated in the European Court of Auditors Report on EU action to combat IUU fishing, increased efforts are needed from both the European Commission and the Member States to improve both internal and external level playing field to prevent import of IUU caught fishing products into the EU markets and ensure that dissuasive sanctions are in place. Improved import control systems are crucial for EU credibility in the international arena and to implement the EU’s zero tolerance policy against illegal fishing”.*

Full advice:

- MAC website:
<https://marketac.eu/harmonised-import-controls-to-prevent-iuu-fishing-products-from-entering-eu-market/>
- LDAC website:
[https://ldac.eu/images/MAC_LDAC_Advice - IUU Import Controls 21.04.2023.pdf](https://ldac.eu/images/MAC_LDAC_Advice_-_IUU_Import_Controls_21.04.2023.pdf)



Information note about the MAC:

As foreseen by Article 43 of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation, the Market Advisory Council (MAC) provides advice to the European Commission and EU Member States on the market of fishery and aquaculture products. The MAC is composed of organisations representing the entire value chain (primary producers, processors, traders, suppliers, retailers, trade unions) and other interest groups (environmental and development NGOs). The MAC is co-funded by the EU.

Information note about the LDAC:

The Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC) is an EU fisheries stakeholder body which provides evidence based advice to the European Commission and EU Member States on matters related to Fisheries Agreements with Third Countries, relations with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) in which the EU is a contracting party, or with international organizations in whose waters the EC Fleet operates, as well as other policy aspects such as fight against IUU fishing, social dimension or labour rights..

The LDAC is currently made up by 54 member organisations including fishing sector (including catching, processing and marketing sectors, and trade unions), and other groups of interest (environmental NGOs and civil society) from 12 EU coastal Member States.