



Press Release

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

Recommendations to strengthen EU import controls and transparency to address risks in global squid fisheries

Brussels & Madrid, 13 July 2026

The **Market Advisory Council (MAC)** and the **Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC)** delivered recommendations to the **EU Member States** and to the **European Commission** calling for the **strengthening of EU import controls and transparency to address risks in global squid fisheries**.

In the recent years, worldwide, fishing effort and landings of squid increased significantly. The majority of the effort occurs in the high seas with a fragmented governance framework, resulting in oversight, transparency, and enforcement gaps. According to various sources, there can also be cases of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and labour abuses, including forced labour, unsafe working conditions, and fishing in unauthorised areas. Fleets with significant fishing efforts targeting squid in the high seas include China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The Chinese distant-water fleet has been by far the largest contributor to the surge in global squid fishing pressure. Globally, the European Union is the largest importer of squid and cuttlefish products with Spain as the main gateway. While Spain, whose authorities are recognised for their strict enforcement of catch certification requirements, anchors the majority of its imports in regulated and traceable squid supplies, some sources may still carry potential risks.

In the view of MAC and LDAC members, the following should take place:

- **Enhanced scrutiny of squid imports originating from China and high-risk fleets** targeting poorly managed or unregulated stocks, including through verifications of consignments, audits, and investigation of suspected cases of IUU fishing and forced labour.
- **Prioritisation for inspection of vessels fishing in unregulated areas**, including through equitably effective measures on domestic and foreign vessels, to ensure that IUU caught fish does not reach the market.

- **Strengthening of the flag State responsibility of third countries** through improved oversight and control of fishing vessels targeting squid in the high seas or in their Exclusive Economic Zones, including on international labour and human rights responsibilities.
- **Stronger management measures for squid fisheries in Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and the establishment of a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation in the South West Atlantic** to contribute to the sustainability of squid fisheries, tackling uncontrolled fisheries in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Yobana Bermúdez, Chair of the MAC, highlighted: *“As the largest importer of squid and cuttlefish globally, the European Union plays a pivotal role when addressing IUU fishing and human rights risks in global value chains. The EU imposes high standards of legality, traceability, and documentation, which translates in the strict enforcement of catch certification requirements. Nevertheless, there can still be uneven enforcement and lack of effective implementation in the Single Market for certain species of squid. Therefore, strengthened controls of squid products originating from high-risk fleets, including through the prohibition of imports of products associated with verified abuses, should be pursued, while also cooperating with third countries to ensure respect for international standards”.*

Iván López, Chair of the LDAC, highlighted: *“The European Union has long been a leader in shaping the international governance of the Ocean in general and Fisheries in particular. As treaties and agreements such as BBNJ, CBD and the ILO188 convention are moving into the implementation phase, it is fundamental that the EU, both as a leader and the world's largest seafood market, must ensure that imports are free from illegal fishing, forced labour and environmental degradation due to overexploitation of resources. This can only be done by strengthening import controls, improving traceability and enforcing existing legislation consistently across all Member States. This is the best way for the EU to show its full commitment and continue its work in leading and working with international partners to improve governance of largely unregulated squid fisheries, promote science-based management and create a level playing field for responsible operators. Sustainable trade can only be built on transparency, accountability and respect for people, marine ecosystems and the rule of law”.*

Full advice:

- MAC website:
 - <https://marketac.eu/addressing-risks-in-global-squid-fisheries-strengthening-eu-import-controls-and-transparency/>
- LDAC website:
 - [https://ldac.eu/images/MAC_LDAC_Advice - Addressing Risks in Global Squid Fisheries 01.07.2026.pdf](https://ldac.eu/images/MAC_LDAC_Advice_-_Addressing_Risks_in_Global_Squid_Fisheries_01.07.2026.pdf)

Information Note – 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, including organisation of the value chain, international trade, and consumer and food safety rules. The MAC is composed of organisations representing the entire value chain (primary producers, auctions, processors, traders, suppliers, retailers, trade unions) and other interest groups (environmental and development NGOs, consumer groups). At present, the MAC is composed of 77 member organisations from 13 Member States. The MAC is co-funded by the EU.

Information Note – 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 Organisations (RFMOs) in which the EU is a contracting party, or with international organisations 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 of 55 member organisations including the fishing sector (including catching, processing and marketing sectors, and trade unions), and other groups of interest (environmental NGOs and civil society) from 11 EU coastal Member States.