

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002723/24
to the Commission
Nora Junco García (NI), Diego Solier (NI)
(2 December 2024)**

Subject: Ensuring fair trade and protecting Spanish and European fisheries

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing undermines fair trade and economic stability, directly threatening the livelihoods of European fishers in coastal regions. After attending the EU IUU Fishing Coalition meeting, we must highlight the lack of uniform accountability within the EU. Insufficient inspections of imports, especially from China, where checks are often minimal or inconsistent, pose a significant risk to our fishing industry and consumer confidence.

China's failure to ratify coalition agreements and its avoidance of yellow or red card sanctions create a troubling imbalance. Non-compliance by countries outside the EU gives them an unfair advantage, while European fishing communities face economic losses. It is crucial to strengthen efforts to ensure that Member States honour their commitments and to improve cooperation between international agencies to verify shipping data. Without full participation and transparency, trust in the system is eroded, leaving European fishers at a disadvantage.

Therefore, we ask the Commission:

1. How does it plan to address China's non-compliance and its impact on EU markets?
2. What initiatives are being implemented to enhance traceability in the seafood supply chain and safeguard European fishers?

Submitted: 2.12.2024

**Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(11 February 2025)**

Since 2015 the EU and China cooperate in fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing through a working group under the bilateral Ocean Partnership ⁽¹⁾.

It facilitates exchanges on the respective anti-IUU policies, the implementation of the EU catch certification scheme and on Chinese investigations and actions regarding alleged and confirmed IUU fishing activities of their distant waters fleet. The group meets at least once a year but intersessional exchanges are continuous regarding new cases of traceability or law enforcement.

The IUU working group has been successful in increasing transparency and encouraging China to go into concrete results in fighting IUU fishing.

One of the deliverables has been to trigger investigations and sanctions by Chinese authorities on national vessels that had perpetrated IUU fishing.

Another important deliverable of the IUU working group is the adoption by China in 2023 of a dedicated legal basis for sanctioning non-compliance with the EU catch certification scheme.

Since then, seven Chinese companies had their export permits revoked thanks to joint investigations by the Commission, Member States and other market states. Controls by Member States at EU borders are crucial to enhance traceability in the seafood supply chain.

The digitalisation of the EU catch certification scheme, which was agreed by co-legislators in the revised Fisheries Control Regulation, will become effective in January 2026 and will further strengthen traceability and help safeguard European fishers.

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/mare/document.cfm?doc_id=53843