

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000175/25  
to the Commission  
Fredis Beleris (PPE)  
(16 January 2025)**

**Subject:** Violations of Greek and European territorial waters by Turkish fishing vessels and illegal overfishing

For a number of years, the ‘sea bream war’ has been raging in the Eastern Aegean, with Turkish fishing vessels active in Greek territorial waters without the permission of the Greek state and in breach of Greek and European law (Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009). Mass incursions of Turkish fishing vessels occur very frequently, and aggressive behaviour towards the Greek coastguard has repeatedly been observed. The Turkish coastguard systematically turns a blind eye to these violations.

Any fishing activity by third-country vessels in waters under the jurisdiction of an EU Member State, without its permission, is illegal. Overfishing in sensitive areas leads to a reduction in fish stocks, directly affecting the marine ecosystem and the economic life of local communities. The infringement of European law and European marine territorial waters by a candidate for accession is a matter for concern.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission intend to press Türkiye to align itself with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy and the regulation on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing?
2. Does it intend to step up the inspections to identify illegal catches on the European market and to achieve a level playing field for Greek fishermen?
3. Does it intend to reinforce the authority of the European Fisheries Control Agency and Frontex to stop illegal fishing within European borders?

Submitted: 16.1.2025

**Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission  
(7 March 2025)**

1. The Commission actively collaborates with all Mediterranean partners, including Türkiye, to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing within the framework of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, its 2030 Strategy <sup>(1)</sup> and its Regional Plan of Action to Combat IUU <sup>(2)</sup>. These initiatives foster alignment with international and EU standards, including the IUU Regulation <sup>(3)</sup>. As part of the EU accession process, the Commission assists candidate countries in complying with EU regulations and policies. This includes adherence to the Common Fisheries Policy and IUU-related rules.
2. Member States, however, remain primarily responsible for safeguarding their waters under the IUU Regulation. Within their jurisdictions, they can intensify risk-based checks, impose sanctions and enforce measures to combat illegal activities. Simultaneously, the Commission promotes cooperation among national authorities to strengthen control and ensure a level playing field for European fishers.
3. The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) is in charge of coordination and cooperation between national control and inspection activities so that the rules of the CFP are respected and applied effectively <sup>(4)</sup>. EFCA further supports capacity building in sea control and inspection, notably through the deployment of its patrol vessel, ‘Ocean Sentinel’, whose Mediterranean mission now covers parts of the Eastern Mediterranean, Ionian Sea, Adriatic Sea, Strait of Sicily and Western Mediterranean.

With respect to the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), the prevention of IUU fishing falls outside the Agency’s mandate as established by the regulation (EU) 2019/1896 <sup>(5)</sup> on the European Border and Coast Guard.

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<sup>(1)</sup> <https://www.fao.org/gfcm/publications/brochures/gfcm2030strategy/en/#:~:text=The%20GFCM%202030%20Strategy%20for%20sustainable%20fisheries%20and,to%20deliver%20on%20national%2C%20regional%20and%20global%20commitments>

<sup>(2)</sup> <https://www.fao.org/gfcm/activities/compliance/decisions/rpoa-iuu/en/#:~:text=The%20RPOA-IUU%20provides%20guidance%20to%20Contracting%20and%20Cooperating,while%20harmonising%20measures%20in%20place%20across%20the%20region>

<sup>(3)</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2008/1005/oj/eng>

<sup>(4)</sup> This includes organising joint control and inspection activities, developing risk management strategies, providing training and technical assistance.

<sup>(5)</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1896/oj/eng>