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E-002721/2025

Answer given by Mr Kadis
on behalf of the European Commission
(25.8.2025)

1. As recalled in the advice from the Long Distance Fisheries Advisory Council and Market Advisory Council on the urgent need for effective implementation of import control rules across Member States, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) recommended in 2022 that the Commission needs to a) monitor that import checks by Member States are sufficient to address risks and b) take the necessary actions to remedy any shortcomings - both by 2026. This Commission accepted the recommendation.

Over the past years, the Commission intensified its work with Member States to improve the tools available to them when performing checks and verifications on the EU border, to reinforce and harmonise import controls. Moreover, the Commission is currently finalising the process of CATCH implementation, the EU IT system for submission of catch certificates and related documents, for its obligatory use by EU operators and EU authorities by 10 January 2026. CATCH will be a key tool to ensure that no fishery products stemming from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) enter the EU market.

The Commission will analyse the situation, after the use of CATCH becomes compulsory, and assess if other actions are needed.

2. The Commission does not hesitate to launch an infringement procedure, as recently done in the case of Portugal¹, when a Member State fails to properly implement and enforce EU fisheries laws. However, infringement procedures are only one of the Commission's tools to ensure Member States comply with EU rules.

The Commission closely monitors the implementation of the obligation on minimum legal inspection standards by Member States and is in dialogue with them to identify the reasons for the low number of inspections reported.

¹ (INFR(2025)2072), https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_25_1241.