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Answer given by Mr Kadis
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.12.2025)

The Commission consistently promotes the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing at regional level, as well as the improvement of compliance with the regional fisheries management rules to promote effectively the level playing field amongst all operators. In 2024, Recommendation 46/2023/17¹ of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), establishing an international joint inspection and surveillance (JIS) scheme for common dolphinfish fisheries, entered into force. The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) is coordinating the participation of the EU in the scheme as regards the deployment of means.

As presented during the annual session of the GFCM Compliance Committee (CoC) (3-4 November 2025)², the implementation of the JIS scheme in 2025 delivered 39 inspection reports. Among these, eight inspections involved Tunisian-flagged vessels, six of which revealed infringements such as missing catch records, fishing without a license, or misreporting. Five of these cases led to follow-up measures including sanctions against captains, seizure of non-compliant equipment and fishery products, and vessel detention. The Commission sent a follow-up letter to Tunisia, as flag State, regarding the enforcement actions.

At the GFCM annual session (4-9 November 2025), upon a proposal made by the EU, the GFCM listed the vessel ‘Sonia’ of unknown flag, previously flying the flag of Tunisia, on its IUU vessel list. This listing is the result of the consistent efforts for the reinforcement of the CoC and the establishment of the instruments to effectively fight IUU fishing in the Mediterranean, together with the increased presence of the EFCA’s patrol vessel.

¹ GFCM Recommendation 46/2023/17 <https://www.fao.org/gfcm/decisions/en/>.

² <https://www.fao.org/gfcm/statutory-meetings/detail/en/c/1755049/>.