

EN

E-000538/2026

Answer given by Mr Kadis
on behalf of the European Commission
(25.3.2026)

1. CATCH is a major step forward in the European Union's fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. It is operational as of 10 January 2026 and aligned to the legal requirements in the revised IUU Regulation¹. On 23 February 2026 more than 12 500 importer declarations had been validated in CATCH, and no major disruption of trade has occurred.

CATCH is a game changer as it harmonises import controls across Member States and levels the playing field between EU and non-EU fishers on the legality of products placed on our market. Developed in cooperation with Member States, CATCH is continuously adapted and updated based on experiences reported by all users.

The Commission supports the mandatory use of CATCH decided by the co-legislators and does not plan to defer its full implementation. It is critical to maintain EU leadership in fighting IUU fishing. The Commission will continue to engage constructively with the Member States within the existing legal framework to find workable and effective technical solutions.

2. To ensure uniform implementation of CATCH and advise on timely solutions to confirmed general issues, the Commission has issued regular guidance to Member States, including ways to reduce workload. CATCH has multiple functionalities to reuse data that expands as the system is progressively used. 30% of the importer declarations are already based on digital interconnections of CATCH and non-EU systems. The Commission continues to encourage more countries to interconnect or use CATCH directly for free.

Certifying catches from EU vessels in CATCH is compulsory only in limited cases under the IUU Regulation (Art. 14, 15), and Member States continue to use their existing systems in all other cases.

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Union system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, amending Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1936/2001 and (EC) No 601/2004 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 1093/94 and (EC) No 1447/1999, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02008R1005-20260110>.