

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000673/26  
to the Commission  
Nicolás González Casares (S&D)  
(17 February 2026)**

*Subject:* Entry of products from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing into the European Union

Recent information indicates that the licences of two Ghanaian-flagged vessels that are listed as authorised in the information management system for official controls (IMSOC) have, reportedly, been suspended by the Ghanaian Government; in other words, nothing would stop them from supplying the European market with fish despite their licences having been suspended for illegal fishing. Not only that, but the history of one of the vessels includes complaints from seafarers about ill-treatment. That information calls into question the robustness of the EU's systems to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and results in unfair competition against the EU fleet.

In light of the above:

1. Does the Commission consider the EU to have systems that are robust enough to stop IUU products from entering the EU when vessels that have been suspended by their countries continue to be authorised in the Commission's systems?
2. Does the Commission not intend to make changes so that establishments listed as authorised in IMSOC automatically leave the system when the authorities in their countries of origin suspend or withdraw the licences under which they operate?

Submitted: 17.2.2026

**Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission  
(27 April 2026)**

Fishery products imported into the EU are subject to official controls to verify compliance with EU food safety and animal health legislation, and controls to prevent the import of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing products. The outcome of both controls must be satisfactory to allow entry into the EU.

The EU catch certification scheme established by the IUU Regulation <sup>(1)</sup> aims to prevent the importation of IUU fishery products. Member States check catch certificates submitted for importation <sup>(2)</sup> and, where necessary, carry out verifications to ensure the legality of the products <sup>(3)</sup>.

Third countries need to send to the Commission their flag State notification <sup>(4)</sup>, certifying they have in place national rules for the implementation, control and enforcement of conservation and management measures that their fishing vessels must comply with.

From a sanitary perspective, third countries can export to the EU only from vessels that are listed as compliant with EU food safety legislation.

Accordingly, the list of establishments in TRACES (IMSOC <sup>(5)</sup>) is not a fisheries control tool, but a list of the establishments that can export to the EU on sanitary grounds.

The Ghanaian fishing vessels were listed in TRACES before the suspension of their fishing licence by the responsible fisheries authorities.

However, the listing in TRACES does not mean that the vessels have a valid fishing licence, that is included in the catch certificate. In case of concerns as to the legality of the catch, Member States can request a verification to confirm that the fishery products were legally caught.

If Member States are not satisfied with the replies provided by the concerned third country, they must reject the fishery products, preventing them from entering the EU market.

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<sup>(1)</sup> <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2008/1005/2026-01-10>.

<sup>(2)</sup> Under Article 12 of the IUU Regulation.

<sup>(3)</sup> Under Article 17 of the IUU Regulation.

<sup>(4)</sup> Under Article 20 of the IUU Regulation.

<sup>(5)</sup> IMSOC: Information management system for official controls to ensure compliance with agri-food chain rules.