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Answer given by Mr Kadis
on behalf of the European Commission
(20.4.2026)

The Commission shares the concerns raised. However, Russian vessels are allowed to fish in the exclusive economic zone of West African countries based on bilateral fisheries agreements, as illustrated by the article mentioned by the Honourable Member. If such activities are authorised by the respective coastal States, they cannot be considered illegal.

The EU, through its policy of zero-tolerance towards illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, its sustainable fisheries partnership agreements and its strong presence in regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), works with several of these coastal States to help them increase their capabilities in fighting IUU fishing and boost their monitoring and surveillance activities in their own waters. As an example, thanks to the EU's insistence, the 2023 and 2024 compliance reports highlighting several infringements involving Russian fishing vessels were endorsed in November 2025 by the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC).

Regarding Russia's unsustainable fishing, the EU proposed control measures in certain RFMOs such as NEAFC and the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation that were adopted to help prevent unsustainable practices on depleted stocks, such as pelagic redfish. The Commission will continue to work with Member States on similar measures for other stocks like mackerel.

Constraining revenues funding Russia's illegal war of aggression is a key goal of the EU's sanctions imposed since February 2022. The selection of products subject to trade sanctions, such as import bans, depends on a case-by-case assessment, addressing notably their actual economic contribution to Russia's budget and the impact on the EU supply. The adoption of EU sanctions ultimately lies with the Council of the EU.