



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO THAILAND

Press Release

Bangkok, 21 April 2015

Commission warns Thailand over insufficient action to fight illegal fishing

The European Commission in Brussels has adopted a Decision to warn Thailand of the possibility of being identified by the Commission as a non-cooperating third country in fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

This pre-identification is only a warning sign, a “yellow card”, and does not entail any trade sanctions. It is intended to pave the way for an intensified dialogue between the Commission and Thailand to address the issues which have led to this warning. The European Commission will support Thailand in its efforts to address the shortcomings and effectively tackle illegal fishing.

The European Union's IUU Fishing Regulation (EC) 1005/2008 entered into force on 1 January 2010 and is a conservation measure, aiming at ensuring sustainable fishing practices. It applies to all trade of marine fishery products to and from the EU. The Regulation is intended to make sure that no illegally caught fisheries products end up on the EU market.

During earlier missions to Thailand in 2011 and 2012, the European Commission identified weaknesses in the implementation of the IUU Regulation. These included an inadequate legal framework to cope with the complexities of the Thai fisheries and trade passing through Thailand as well as poor monitoring, control and surveillance of its fleet and trade of third country products entering and processed in Thailand with some IUU products consequently ending up on the EU market. A recent observation mission in October 2014 found that the concerns remained.

After the issuance of the yellow-card the Commission will propose a concrete action plan to remedy the situation within a reasonable time. It will then evaluate progress made by Thailand. If the situation improves, the country will be removed from the “yellow card” list as has been the case of other countries who took the necessary steps and concrete measures to address established shortcomings and shown commitment to complete structural reforms in order to address illegal fishing. Only if the situation persists, will the European Commission be forced to consider taking further steps by issuing a “red card” which would entail, among others, trade sanctions on fisheries imports.

For more information, please contact Ms Kullwadee Sumalnop, Delegation of the European Union to Thailand. E-mail: kullwadee.sumalnop@eeas.europa.eu Tel. 02 305 2644.



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Background

The fight against illegal fishing is part of the EU drive to ensure the sustainable use of the sea and its resources. As the world's biggest fish importer, the EU aims at closing its markets to illegally caught fish. With these actions vis-à-vis third countries, the EU ensures a systematic approach in favour of the sustainability of fishing activities at both EU and global level, in coherence with the EU's new Common Fisheries Policy.

The European Commission has undertaken missions to assess the implementation of the IUU scheme in over 50 countries. So far 18 countries received a warning, the “yellow card”. Four countries were given “red cards”. Because of a cooperative dialogue and necessary measures being taken by the countries to improve implementation of the fight against IUU fishing, six countries have been taken off the list of “yellow-flagged” countries and one country has been taken off the list of “red-flagged” countries.

The estimated global value of IUU fishing is approximately 10 billion euros per year. Between 11 and 26 million tonnes of fish are caught illegally a year, which corresponds to at least 15% of world catches.

Thailand is one of the world's leading exporters of fisheries products. In 2014, exports of all fisheries products to the EU were recorded at 575 million Euros, accounting to 3% of the Thai exports to the EU and 0.34% of the total Thai exports to the world.

For more information regarding IUU, please consult:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/illegal_fishing/index_en.htm

The Commission's press release:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4806_en.htm

Questions and Answers on the EU's fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-4807_en.htm