



The role of the European Union in ending IUU fishing

As the world's largest importer⁷ of fishery products, the European Union (EU) is a valuable destination market for IUU operators.

The EU imports many high-value products via trading partners on all continents. EU member states also lend their flags to a significant number of vessels active in distant waters that catch a large share of the fish consumed within the EU market.

Consequently, the EU's actions have a very significant impact on the global fishing trade.



The EU is the world's largest importer of seafood products, accounting for **24%** of total world trades in valueⁱ

ⁱ <http://www.eumofa.eu/documents/20178/22933/2014+Edition+%28English+version%29/687c32f7-7088-467c-8e13-3aff8376268c>

The EU imports more than 60% of its fish products, and 90% of its white fishⁱⁱ

60%
fish products

90%
white fish

Tuna, white fish and fishmeal are the most imported products deriving from wild capture

ⁱⁱ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/513968/IPOL-PECH_ET\(2013\)513968_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/513968/IPOL-PECH_ET(2013)513968_EN.pdf)

In 2014, the EU imported over

35% & 90%

more fishery products by value than the USA and Japan, respectivelyⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱⁱ Eurostat

EU imports grew by 6.5% in value during 2013–2014, reaching a total of

€20.5 billionⁱⁱⁱ

Consumption in the EU market is dominated by wild-caught fish, making up

76% of total consumptionⁱ



TOP 6

Spain, the UK, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and France were the top 6 EU importers of wild-capture fish from external^{iv} markets in 2014^v.

^{iv} From outside the European Economic Area (EEA).
^v Eurostat. Imports subject to IUU Reg. calculated based on methodology in MRAG (2014).

In 2013, imports arrived into the EU via the following routes:

76%*



Most imports arrive via container into major ports such as:
• Rotterdam,
• Bremerhaven, and
• Algeciras^{vi}.

2%



20%



*includes both fishing and container vessels

^{vi} Eurostat and member state reports submitted under the Regulation (2010/11 and 2012/13).

The EU has one of the world's largest distant water fishing fleets, with over

15,000 vessels

registered to fish outside EU waters since 2010^{vii}.

^{vii} www.iuuwatch.eu

Estimates suggest this distant water fleet is responsible for

28% of the fish caught for human consumption by EU vessels^{viii}

^{viii} http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/international/index_en.htm

The EU's distant water fleet

EU member states lend their flags to a large fleet of vessels that operate in distant waters, meeting the growing demand for seafood. All EU fishing vessels operating in non-EU waters need an authorisation under the Fishing Authorisation Regulation (FAR).

Until recently, the only publicly available figure on the number of EU vessels operating outside the EU was 718 vessels for the year 2007. Results of an access to information request showed that 15,264 vessels operated under the FAR to fish in non-EU waters between 2010 and 2014. They operate under various access agreements between the EU and third countries, but also via private and charter agreements directly between private EU companies or citizens and authorities or companies in coastal countries.

To date, there are no established procedures to ensure that these private arrangements comply with EU laws, nor is there any publicly available information on them. Under the current FAR, vessels or operators that fish outside official EU agreements do not have to adhere to the labour or fisheries management standards that these official agreements contain.

The rules governing the authorisations of the distant water fishing fleet are being reformed. Given this fleet's fishing capacity, it is vital that the FAR is revised to ensure transparent, accountable and sustainable fishing operations, in line with the reformed Common Fisheries Policy and the EU's IUU Regulation. See www.whofishesfar.org for NGO recommendations.