

European Parliament Fisheries Committee, Brussels – Feb. 27, 2008.



Responsible Fishing Alliance

An alliance for a responsible fishing policy

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**Comments on the Commission
proposal for a *Community system
to combat Illegal, Unreported and
Unregulated fishing***

1. Need for efficient Control & Prosecutions

- ➔ Community system to combat IUU Fishing must apply to all vessels!
- ➔ Member States (MS) guilty of showing tolerance and/or leniency towards IUU Fishing, especially from their own fishing fleets
- ➔ 1st measures to be established: IUU Blacklists of both EU and non-EU vessels (Ch. V) & rapid alert system (Ch. IV on Community Alert System)
- ➔ Control & Prosecution will be efficient only if truly independent:
 - Under the responsibility of a supra-national entities (not MS level)
 - More power to be given to the Community Fisheries Control Agency
- ➔ Immediate prosecution measures shall be commonly agreed by MS
 - Commercial penalties are not enough:
 - Fish products generate significant incomes & MS hardly impose them
 - Minimum penalties are the most important (Ch. VI, Art 43)
 - Other enforcement measures are key, especially seizure (Art 42 & 45)
 - Expedited criminal trials to be endeavored in case of recidivism

2. IUU Fishing part of a ‘responsible policy’

- ➔ IUU Fishing issues cannot be undertaken in an isolated manner:
 - Current situation highlights the failure of the EU Common Fishing Policy (subsidies to over-fishing capacity, lack of control lack of sanctions...)
 - To focus only on IUU Fishing = to stigmatize an already weakened sector
- ➔ IUU Fishing issues must be part of a global ‘responsible fishing policy’
 - No time to reinvent the wheel. EU must integrate the existing international tools, including:
 - FAO ‘Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing’ (1995)
 - FAO ‘International Plan of Action’ against IUU Fishing (2001)
 - Community system to combat IUU fishing shall also apply to EU vessels that operates in RFMOs – *double penalty thesis?*
 - EC’s work on ‘Ecolabel of Responsible fishing’ must be restarted
 - *common interest shall come 1st, not internal rivalries!*

3. IUU Fishing: a chain of responsibility

- ➔ IUU Fishing exists because there is a market for this:
 - IUU fish products cheaper than legal products
 - IUU fish products enable to fix short-term product shortage problems
- ➔ IUU fish products are a reality in the day-to-day fish business from the smallest fish operators to the big food processors and retailers
- ➔ An efficient fight against IUU Fishing must also implicate actors downstream the fish chain -fishmongers, fish processors, fish distributors-:
 - Part of the Community Alert System (Ch. IV)
 - Part of an efficient Traceability System
 - Appropriate Control & Prosecution measures must also apply to them

4. Incentive measures for ‘responsible actors’

- - *The stick*- : fight against IUU fishing cannot be based on a ‘sanctioning’ policy only...
 - ...Or the existing gap between EU institutions and the EU fishing sector will increase even more, giving legitimacy to MS that tolerate IUU Fishing
 - - *The carrot*-: responsible actors (fishers, processors, distributors) shall be helped in distinguishing on the EU market through appropriate measures:
 - At individual level: *business-to-business* overseen by EU bodies to ensure fair application
 - At collective level: *business-to-consumer/labelling* overseen by EU bodies
- Importance of the 2 steps work on the ‘Ecolabel of Responsible Fishing’ at the European Commission’s.

5. Case of the Developing Countries (DC)

➔ DCs are resources deficient:

- Implementation of the Community system to combat IUU fishing cannot be achieved without an appropriate assistance by the EU (technical, financial, human)

➔ Sovereignty in DCs is a key point. There is a rising concern about the historical interference of EU countries in DCs' fishing strategies

- Responsibility of the implementation & follow-up of the Community system must be given to local network: authorities, fishers, organizations, public society, etc.

➔ Appropriate benefits shall be identified for committing DCs. If not:

- Entire parts of the DCs fishing economy may disappear *and/or*

- Prices of IUU Fish products from DCs paid by EU operators will ↓

- As a consequence, for profitability reasons, IUU Fishing will remain high

6. Related web links

- ➔ Responsible Fishing Alliance

www.sustainablefoodlabg.org/fisheries

- ➔ FAO 'Plan of Action' against IUU Fishing

www.fao.org/DOCREP/003/y1224e/y1224e00.HTM

- ➔ FAO 'Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries'

www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/v9878e/v9878e00.htm