



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE/B4/AB

Dear Mr Farias, dear Ms Bermúdez

I would like to thank you for your letter of 22 May concerning your joint CCRUP-MAC Recommendation No. 62 on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in the Outermost Regions of the European Union.

We take the matter of IUU fishing in the Outermost Regions of the European Union very seriously and greatly appreciate the work CCRUP has delivered on this issue by providing an overview of the situation of IUU fishing in the Outermost Regions (ORs), namely Saint-Martin, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane française, Azores, Madeira, Canary Islands, Mayotte and La Réunion.

The eight recommendations to the Commission contained in your document cover various topics ranging from the implementation of the IUU Regulation, the alignment of Regulations, import controls to recreational fishing.

With regards to the **implementation of the IUU Regulation**, I would like to recall that the Commission remains committed to its “zero-tolerance” approach to IUU fishing as reiterated in the Mission Letter of 7 September 2024 from the President of the European Commission to the Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans as well as in the European Ocean Pact adopted on 5 June 2025. The Commission is also using all the means at its disposal to make the implementation of the IUU Regulation as effective as possible in the specific context of the ORs.

For instance, in the past year, the Commission has intensified its informal **dialogues with third countries involved in IUU fishing activities in the waters of French Guiana**,

Mr. Ruben do Couto Farias
Chair - CCRUP
rfarias@ccrup.eu
Rua de São Paulo, 3
9760-540 Praia da Vitória
Açores – PORTUGAL

Ms Yobana Bermudez
Chair - Market Advisory Council
yobana.bermudez@conxemar.com
Regus EU Commission
6 Rond-Point Robert Schuman
1040 Brussels
BELGIUM

namely Suriname, Guyana, Brazil and Venezuela, based on the sightings of IUU fishing activities sent by France. An IUU mission was conducted to Suriname at the end of April to assess their entire system to combat IUU fishing. A follow-up Observation Note which contained a set of recommendations has been sent to the Surinamese' authorities at the beginning of July and a progress report is due in six months. Regular exchanges are also ongoing with Venezuela, Guyana and Brazil to assess what measures these countries have in place to tackle this issue. If cooperation with these third countries on fighting IUU fishing in the waters of French Guyana is not progressing well, we will not hesitate to take further measures under the IUU Regulation such as their pre-identification and possible identification as non-cooperating countries in the fight against IUU fishing.

With regards to the control and monitoring of fishing activities in the waters of ORs, including IUU fishing activities by third countries, this is a competence of the Member States. The Commission nevertheless stands ready to address documented IUU fishing activities conducted by third countries in the waters of any ORs, in the framework of our IUU bilateral dialogues with them.

Regarding **import controls and CATCH**, the Commission is cooperating on a regular basis with the national authorities of all Member States, including Spain, France and Portugal, to better address the risks of IUU fishery products entering the Union market, including from neighbouring countries of the ORs. The entry into force of CATCH on 10 January 2026 will certainly provide Member States' competent authorities with important assistance in their checks and verification tasks of catch certificates and related documents. The Commission is also actively encouraging third countries, including the neighbouring countries of the ORs, to use CATCH directly or establish adequate interoperability with third countries' IT environments developed for the purpose of generating catch certificates.

With regards to communication with importers and other relevant operators on the potential risks of IUU fishery products entering the Union market from neighbouring countries in the Outermost Regions, the Commission encourages its Member States to perform adequate import controls and to raise awareness on this issue with their importers. To keep stakeholders informed of the changes to the IUU Regulation and the use of CATCH, the Commission has organised presentations to the several advisory councils, including CCRUP and MAC, in 2024 as well as a specific information seminar for the EU organisations representing the importers in January 2025.

Concerning the **alignment of Regulation (EU) 2017/2403** on the Sustainable Management of External Fishing Fleets (SMEFF) with the IUU Regulation and the Common Fisheries Policy, my services are working closely to ensure that non-EU vessels authorised to fish in Union waters comply with the same rules as Union vessels in the fishing area in which they operate. I take this opportunity to indicate that, in the next months, the Commission intends to launch an evaluation of the SMEFF Regulation. We look forward to receiving your feedback on the implementation of this important piece of legislation.

On the adoption of measures to **regulate and control recreational fishing** in the ORs, new reporting measures are in place under the revised Article 55 of Control Regulation (EU) 2023/2842 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023, which are further detailed under Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/274 of 12 February 2025. All Member States are required to apply these new measures as from 10 January 2026. We are confident that the new regulation will contribute to the standardisation of reporting amongst Member States to ensure consistency and fairness across the EU.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

c.c.: Daniela Costa dcosta@ccrup.eu; Fabiana Nogueira fnogueira@ccrup.eu;
Pedro Reis Santos secretary@marketac.eu

