

# EU and the Republic of Korea join forces in fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing

Today, the EU and the Republic of Korea have pledged to work closely together to fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing with a joint statement signed by European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu **Vella**, and Mr Kim Young-Choon, Minister for Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea. The signing took place on the eve of a bilateral [EU-Republic of Korea Summit](#).

Commissioner **Vella** said: *"Putting an end to illegal fishing is one of the main objectives of the EU's international ocean governance agenda. By joining forces with the Republic of Korea, a world player in fisheries, we send a clear message to those breaking international law that there is no place for such products on our markets and we will continue to fight illegal fishing until we have fully eradicated it."*

With the new partnership, in line with the objectives of the [EU's Ocean Governance strategy](#), the EU and the Republic of Korea will:

- exchange information about suspected IUU-activities
- enhance global traceability of fishery products threatened by Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing, through a risk-based, electronic catch documentation and certification system
- join forces in supporting developing states in the fight against IUU fishing and the promotion of sustainable fishing through education and training
- strengthen cooperation in international fora, including regional fisheries management organisations.

The Republic of Korea and the European Union have been working closely together on IUU fishing for several years already. The Republic of Korea is the fourth country with whom the EU signs a joint statement on IUU fishing, following the USA, Japan and Canada. Together, these five economies imported almost 90 billion euros worth of fish and fisheries products in 2017.

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing constitutes one of the most serious threats to sustainable fishing and to marine biodiversity in the world's oceans, with devastating environmental and socio-economic consequences. These consequences are particularly challenging for coastal communities in developing countries, who rely on fisheries for food and employment. Globally, IUU fishing is estimated to deprive coastal communities and honest fishermen of up to 20 billion euros of seafood and seafood products per year.

## **Background**

The EU is internationally recognised for its leadership in the fight against IUU fishing. Under EU legislation, only fish that is legally caught can be sold on the EU market – the biggest market for fish and fisheries products in the world. Countries for which there is concern about IUU fishing receive a ‘yellow card’. This starts a process of dialogue and support to find solutions and ensure that international law is fully applied. This can either lead to the repeal of the yellow card or it can turn into a ‘red card’, which would mean the banning of the products from the EU market.

In April 2015, the Commission lifted the yellow card adopted in 2013 to the Republic of Korea, recognising the country’s efforts to bring its legal and administrative systems in line with the international standards. Since then, the Commission and the authorities of the Republic of Korea have continued their fruitful cooperation in a bilateral working group to address IUU fishing.