EU CATCH certification scheme

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Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/1522 amending Regulation (EC) No 1010/2009 laying down rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

What is changing and why?

The European Union (EU) is adapting certain rules of its catch certification system, designed to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The digital CATCH database for the management of catch certificates will be compulsory for all EU importers and competent authorities in all EU Member States from 10 January 2026. CATCH is designed to reduce the risk of fraudulent imports and ease the administrative burden for competent authorities. For this system to work well, all EU Member States must carry out the same procedure for port inspections of landing and transhipment operations by non-EU fishing vessels.

The rules for certain approved economic operators are updated to comply with the mandatory use of CATCH. Changes include:

- the form for prior notification of arrival of products in port will be simplified
- a simplified catch certificate for importing fishery products into the EU can be used by certain small fishing vessels (length: <12 m without towed gear; <8 m with towed gear)
- the list of regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) with catch documentation schemes that are compliant with the requirements of the IUU Regulation and compatible with CATCH will be updated
- individual administrative arrangements that are no longer compatible with CATCH, such as between the European Commission and South Africa, will be terminated from 10 January 2026.

Timeline

The Regulation applies from **10 January 2026**.

The simplified catch certificate and the corresponding form for prior notification apply from **10 January 2027** for non-EU fishing vessels.

Until 10 January 2028 importers may use simplified catch certificates that have been validated before 10 January 2027.

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