Fisheries: controls, surveillance, and inspection

Published by AGRINFO on 26 Nov 2025

EU simplifies and updates rules for control, surveillance, and inspection of fisheries

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/1766 of 27 August 2025 supplementing Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 by laying down rules on the control of fisheries and on the surveillance and inspection of fishing activities, enforcement and compliance

Update

This Regulation implements several new features introduced by the revision of the Fisheries Control Regulation (1224/2009), which entered into force in January 2024.

It sets new rules on how to transmit information on fishing activities when the vessel monitoring system (VMS) or the electronic recording/reporting system malfunctions. It also sets standards for how control observers must be treated on board when carrying out inspections.

These rules apply to European Union (EU) vessels operating in regulatory and convention areas of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and in waters under the sovereignty or jurisdiction of non-EU countries, as well as to non-EU vessels operating in EU waters.

Impacted products

Wild fish, seafood

What is changing?

The EU has updated its rules for monitoring the entry of EU fishing vessels into and out of specific areas, and operations and movements within those areas, including:

- regulatory and convention areas of the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations that are binding upon the EU
- waters under the sovereignty or jurisdiction of a non-EU country.

Similar rules also apply to non-EU fishing vessels operating in EU waters.

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*

Monitoring of vessel position and electronic recording/reporting of fishing activities

The Regulation sets rules to ensure timely transmission of complete and accurate data on vessel position and fishing activities where the VMS or the electronic recording/reporting system malfunctions.

- Any malfunctioning of the VMS must be notified, either directly or through the vessel's flag State, to the fisheries monitoring centre (FMC) of the coastal Member State where the fishing is taking place. The vessel must transmit its current position to the FMC at least once every 4 hours.
- If a non-EU vessel cannot transmit accurate position data at least once every 4 hours, it must leave EU waters until the necessary checks, repairs, or replacement of the VMS have been completed.
- If the electronic recording and reporting system fails, masters must submit data from fishing logbooks, prior notifications, transhipment declarations, and landing declarations to the FMC of the flag State where the fishing takes place at least once every 24 hours, even when no catches are made.

Duties of operators and masters relating to control and inspections

- Masters of EU fishing vessels, and non-EU fishing vessels in EU waters, must ensure the physical safety and welfare of any control observers on board, including privacy in the observer's personal areas, and unrestricted access to adequate food, accommodation, sanitation facilities, and equipment on board. Control observers must be treated as officials during their time on board. Any relevant information concerning the security of control observers on board, including physical injury, any other incapacitation, or disappearance must be reported by electronic means to the competent authorities of their flag State.
- All operators under inspection must provide officials with the necessary information and documents on request, including (where possible) access to relevant databases regarding their fishing activities.

Operators must prevent third parties from obstructing, intimidating, or interfering with officials carrying out inspections, and provide (where possible) a meeting facility in isolation for a briefing of fishery inspectors by a control observer.

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*

Why?

The new measures reflect technological advances and the need for more effective, risk-based control. This means that vessels must be able to transmit timely, complete, and accurate data on vessel position and fishing activities, even if the VMS or electronic recording/reporting system malfunctions.

Timeline

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

Recommended Actions

Fishing vessels of non-EU countries that are allowed to transit through or conduct fishing activities within an EU Member State's waters are recommended to conduct the necessary checks of the VMS before entering EU waters, and to ensure that alternative telecommunication means are available on board and are functioning.

Background

Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 established a system for the control, inspection, and enforcement by national authorities of the rules of the EU common fisheries policy (CFP). This Regulation was amended by Regulation 2023/2842 to provide for the adoption of specific rules and measures, taking advantage of modern and more cost-effective control technologies and the latest scientific findings, to ensure that fishing and aquaculture activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term.

Resources

DG-MARE (2025). Fisheries control: Commission simplifies and harmonises rules in the EU

Regulation 1224/2009 establishing a Union control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy

Regulation 2023/2842 as regards fisheries control

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*

Sources

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/1766 laying down rules on the control of fisheries and on the surveillance and inspection of fishing activities, enforcement and compliance

Visit the AGRINFO website to view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

Disclaimer: *Under no circumstances shall COLEAD be liable for any loss, damage, liability or expense incurred or suffered that is claimed to have resulted from the use of information available on this website or any link to external sites. The use of the website is at the user's sole risk and responsibility. This information platform was created and maintained with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents do not, however, reflect the views of the European Union.*

Copyright © **COLEAD 2026,** *AGRINFO is funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD.*