

GUIDANCE

Exporting fishery products to the European Union

AN INTRODUCTION TO
CURRENT AND UPCOMING
EU REGULATIONS

July 2026



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the European Union



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Box 1. Key requirements for exporting fishery products to the European Union

- Exporting countries must be authorised to export fishery products to the European Union (EU). They must be able to demonstrate that they have in place their own official controls which ensure that fishery products comply with EU health and food safety requirements and that traceability is maintained throughout all production stages.
- Exporting establishments, including processing plants, freezer or factory vessels and cold stores, must be listed for export by the exporting country, and must be included in the list of establishments authorised for exports to the EU, published in the EU's Trade Control and Expert System TRACES.
- Fishery products must meet specific labelling requirements, including the scientific name and commercial designation of the species, catch method, and area where the product was caught.
- Revised model official health certificates must be used.
- New maximum limits for inorganic arsenic in certain fish, crustaceans, bivalves, and cephalopods apply since **7 October 2025**.
- Since **3 November 2025**, clearer guidelines, including a definition of 'failure to cooperate', clarify how the EU identifies and sanctions countries that allow non-sustainable fishing on fish stocks of common interest.
- **NEW:** From **10 January 2026**, fishery products processed in approved establishments after landing, and then imported into the EU, regardless of where the processing has taken place, i.e. in the flag State or in another non-EU country, must be exported to the EU with a processing statement.
- **NEW:** Use of digital CATCH database for handling catch certificates is compulsory for all EU importers and competent authorities in all EU Member States from **10 January 2026**.
- **NEW:** Hygiene requirements for tuna frozen in brine sold as fresh apply from **27 January 2026**. Only those freezing vessels that can freeze whole tuna in brine at -18°C are approved.
- **NEW:** From **1 July 2026**, the food safety criterion '*Listeria monocytogenes* not detected in 25 g' applies throughout the **entire shelf-life** of ready-to-eat products, including processed fish products with a long shelf-life.
- **UPCOMING:** A revised simplified catch certificate will be introduced on **10 January 2027**.
- **UPCOMING:** The use of revised catch certificates and processing statements will become mandatory for all countries from **10 January 2028**.
- **UPCOMING:** Stricter rules on the use of bisphenol A (BPA) and related chemicals in single-use food contact articles intended to preserve fishery products will apply from **January 2028**.
- **UPCOMING:** Certain smoke flavourings in foods that are traditionally smoked, such as processed fish and fish roe, may be used **until 1 July 2029**.



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1 Introduction

This guide is provided by the AGRINFO [programme](#), an online service that informs the EU's trade partners about the 'what, why, and when' of evolving EU policies, regulations, and standards with potential impacts on agri-food value chains, including fisheries. It gives an overview of the main EU requirements that must be met to export fishery products to the EU and aims to help exporters in AGRINFO partner countries to navigate the regulatory framework. AGRINFO partner countries are those listed as low-income, lower-middle income and upper-middle-income economies in the [Development Assistance Committee List of ODA Recipients](#) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. This guide covers fish and other seafood products from wild catch, except bivalve molluscs, which will be treated in a separate guide. Finfish and crustaceans from aquaculture are treated in a [dedicated guide](#). Live fish exported to the EU are not covered by these guides.

1.1 EU fish and seafood imports today

The European Union is currently one of the world's biggest importers of fish and seafood products. In 2023, the EU imported 5.9 million tonnes of fisheries and aquaculture products (FAP) worth €30.1 billion. This figure includes fish caught and landed by EU vessels outside Europe.

The European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products ([EUMOFA](#)) estimates the consumption of FAP in the EU at nearly 13 million tonnes in live weight equivalent (LWE), or about 23.5 kg LWE per capita.¹ Seventy per cent of that consumption comprises imported wild-catch fishery products.² In 2023, the annual expenditure for purchasing fish and seafood by EU households amounted to more than €138 per capita. The most consumed species are tuna (mostly canned), salmon, cod, Alaska pollock, shrimps, mussels, hake, and herring.³

1.2 EU fish and seafood trade tomorrow

This guide is published at a time when the European Union is reshaping its overarching strategic direction for all EU action in fisheries and aquaculture. The EU [2040 Vision](#) for fisheries and aquaculture sets out a 15-year strategic framework to guide policy and address systemic challenges affecting the fisheries, aquaculture, and processing value chains. The 2040 Vision will also provide the overarching framework for the [European Union \(EU\) strategy on fisheries external action](#). We encourage readers to [subscribe](#) to our AGRINFO updates, to be kept up to date and prepared for recent and upcoming policy and regulatory changes that will inevitably accompany this process. In the event of any remaining questions, please contact the AGRINFO [helpdesk](#).

¹ European Union (2023) [Implementation of Regulation \(EU\) No 1379/2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products](#).

² European Commission (2025) [The EU Blue Economy Report 2025](#). Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

³ European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products (EUMOFA): [EU profile](#).



2 What is wild-caught seafood?

2.1 Fish from wild catch

Wild fish are harvested from their natural environments, such as oceans, rivers, and lakes, in contrast to farmed fish raised in controlled aquaculture. Wild catch, commonly referred to as capture fisheries, involves small-scale coastal, large-scale, and industrial fishing fleets, including long-distance fleets fishing in international waters (high-seas fisheries).

2.2 Wild catch vs. aquaculture

EU legislation often applies uniformly to both wild-caught and farmed products.⁴ All fishery products for human consumption in the European Union must meet the same EU general food safety and hygiene rules. The EU's common fisheries policy covers both wild-catch fisheries and aquaculture, but requirements for products from wild catch differ from those for aquaculture in various ways:

1. Exporters of wild catch fish must fulfil requirements related to the jurisdiction and preservation of oceans, as well as rules against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (Regulation [1005/2008](#)). These do not apply to aquaculture.
2. Unlike for fish products from aquaculture, countries exporting wild catch fish do not require an authorised residue control plan for pharmacologically active substances, pesticides, and contaminants.
3. Aquaculture products exported to the EU from 3 September 2026 onwards must be accompanied by an antimicrobial attestation (and in certain cases by an animal health attestation). This requirement does **not** apply to wild catch fishery products.

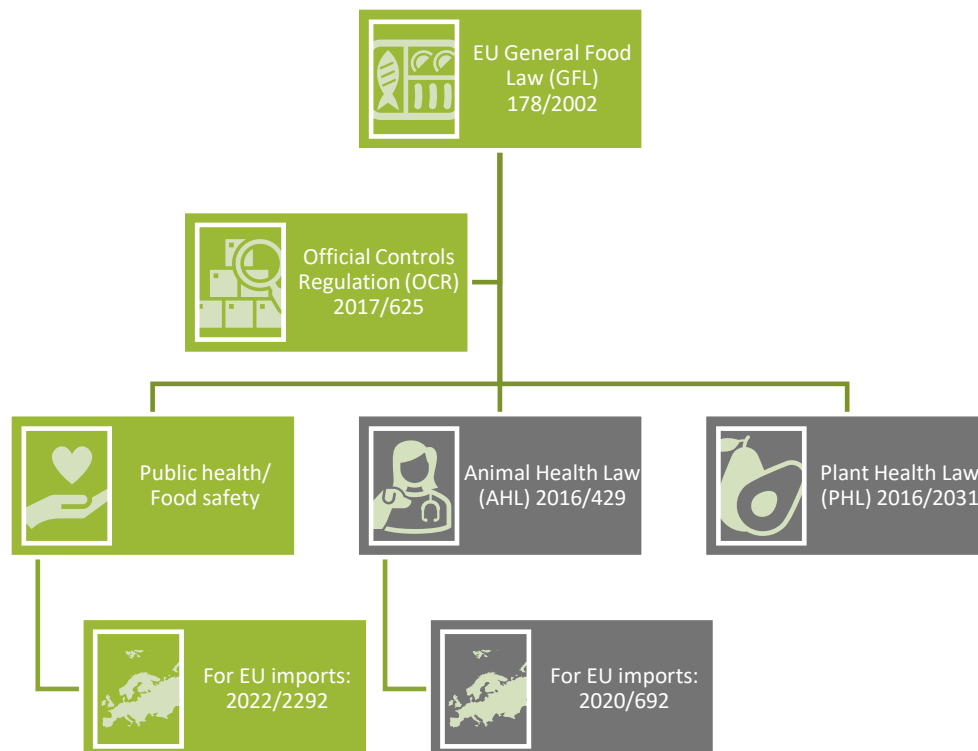
⁴ European Commission (2024) [Implementing the Strategic Guidelines for EU aquaculture: Regulatory and administrative framework for aquaculture](#).



3 Exporting to the EU: Legal framework

Two main sets of requirements apply to the export of fishery products to the EU: I. sanitary provisions; and II. provisions related to legal fishing/sustainability of the fishery sector. Both apply at the same time. All requirements are subject to official controls. Competent authorities and operators must work hand in hand to ensure that the requirements are met.

3.1 Sanitary requirements



The sanitary requirements are underpinned by EU General Food Law (Regulation [178/2002](#)). This sets out general principles that apply to all foods and cover the entire value chain. These principles include:

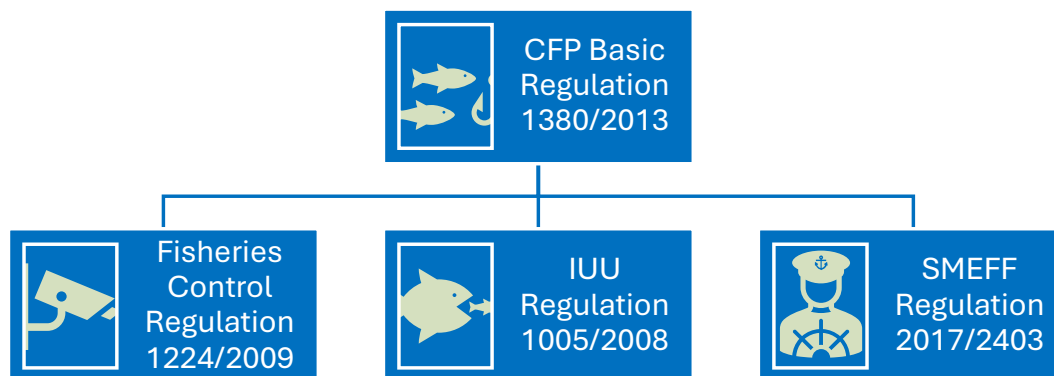
- food put on the market must be safe
- integrated food chain approach ‘from farm to fork’
- decisions based on risk analysis and latest available scientific information/data
- the precautionary principle⁵
- principle of the operator’s responsibility (and obligation to recall unsafe food from the market)
- activities subject to official controls by competent authorities
- traceability at all stages of production, processing, and distribution.

There are specific requirements for food of animal origin.

⁵ The [precautionary principle](#) is an approach to risk management; if it is possible that a given policy or action might cause harm to the public or the environment, and if there is still no scientific agreement on the issue, the policy or action in question should not be carried out.



3.2 Sustainability of the fishery sector



The EU fishery policy has the EU common fisheries policy (CFP) at its core. It is part of a broad package of blue economy policies and initiatives that concerns more sectors than food.

Regulation [1380/2013](#), commonly referred to as the CFP Basic Regulation, is underpinned by a set of three main Regulations:

- (i) The [Control Regulation](#) - applies to:
 - a. all fishing activities in EU waters and fishing activities of EU fishing vessels in non-EU waters; and
 - b. supply chain operators dealing with fishery and aquaculture products (within or imported into the EU).
- (ii) Regulation on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing ([IUU Regulation](#)).
- (iii) Regulation on the sustainable management of external fishing fleets ([SMEFF Regulation](#)).

Box 2. export wild-caught fishery products

Based on these two sets of requirements, in order to export wild-caught fishery products:

- **Exporting countries** must be authorised and listed by the EU (see section [4.1](#) of this guide).
- **Exporting establishments** must be approved by the competent authority of the exporting country and listed on the EU dedicated webpage (section [4.2](#)).
- Products must be **traceable** throughout all production stages (sections [4.2.2](#) and [5.2](#)).
- Products must be accompanied by **official health certificates** (section [4.3](#)).
- Products must be accompanied by a **catch certificate** (section [5.2.1](#)) and, when relevant, a transit declaration ('non-manipulation document') and a processing statement.
- Exporting countries must **not** be **listed as non-cooperating** countries in fighting IUU fishing (section [5.5.3](#)).
- The vessel of origin of the catches must not appear on the EU's IUU vessel list or in other named IUU vessel lists (e.g. those issued by regional fisheries management organisations).
- Products must be compliant with the marketing standards set out in the **CMO Regulation** (section [6.3](#)).

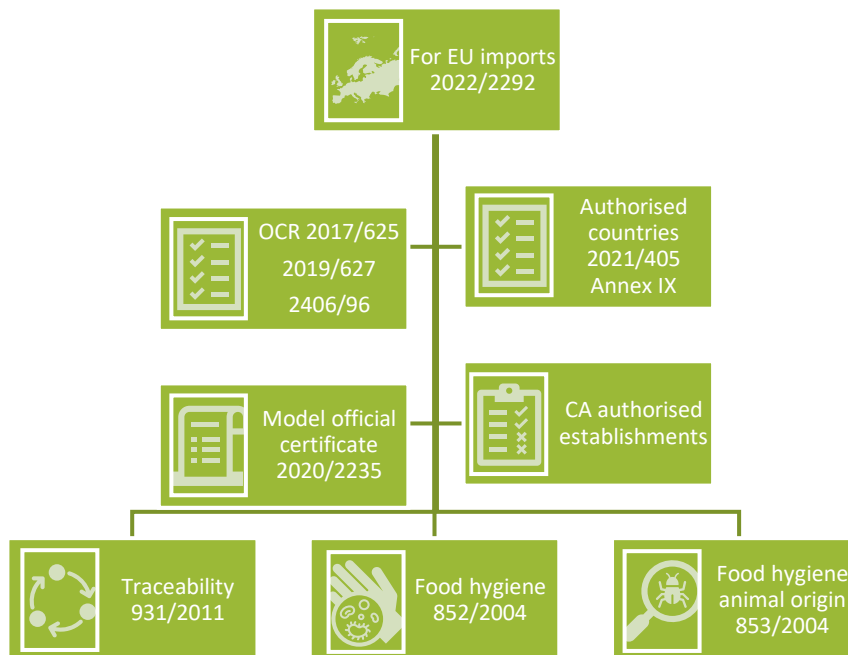


4 Key requirements for sanitary issues

To be able to export, each country must:

- be in the relevant list of **authorised countries** (see Box 3);
- have submitted a list of **authorised establishments**;
- make use of the relevant **health certificate**.

These requirements are detailed below.



4.1 Exporting countries must be authorised

Authorisation requires exporting countries to demonstrate that they meet EU food safety requirements (see section [4.1.1](#) of this guide).

The procedure for listing countries is explained in section [4.1.2](#).

4.1.1 Country listing for food safety

Exporting countries will only be authorised and listed to export fishery products if their food safety systems, including legislation and official controls, meet EU hygiene and public health requirements.

The export process starts with the identification and designation of competent authorities in the exporting country. Competent authorities must be able to demonstrate that they have a robust and reliable inspection system in place that can guarantee compliance with the EU food safety and hygiene rules (Regulation [2022/2292](#), Art. 4).



These controls must cover:⁶

- regular inspections of establishments, including fish auctions and wholesale markets, with respect to obligations of operators (see section [4.2.2](#)), including:
 - conditions for approval
 - correct handling of fishery products
 - compliance with hygiene and temperature requirements
 - staff hygiene and cleanliness of establishments, including facilities and equipment
- storage and transport conditions
- freshness indicators, minimum sizes and weights⁷
- where relevant,⁸ compliance with permitted levels of histamine, laid down in Regulation [2073/2005](#) on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs
- contaminants (absence of prohibited and non-authorised substances, maximum levels for certain contaminants (Regulations [2022/931](#) (substances); [2022/932](#) (sampling frequency); [2023/915](#) (maximum limits)
- risk-based testing for parasites.

The list of countries authorised to export fisheries products to the EU can be found in Regulation [2021/405](#), Annex IX (for an updated list, click on 'Consolidated version' or 'Access current version'). The AGRINFO partner countries currently approved are listed in Box 3.

4.1.2 Country listing: The process

Countries seeking to be listed in Annex IX must proceed as follows (see [EU import conditions for seafood and other fishery products](#), p. 4).

1. The exporting country's competent authority must submit a written request to the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE, SANTE-CONSULT-A5@ec.europa.eu), including confirmation that the authority can meet all EU requirements.
2. After evaluating the request, DG SANTE sends a general and/or product-specific questionnaire to the competent authority, which must be completed and returned. The exporting country must complete questionnaire(s), e.g. information on relevant national legislation on food hygiene, structure of the competent authorities.
3. Following evaluation of the information provided, the European Commission's Health and Food Audits and Analysis Directorate conducts an on-the-spot audit.
4. If the outcome of the audit is satisfactory, the competent authority will be requested to submit, and maintain, a **list of establishments** approved by that authority as compliant with EU criteria.
5. If the Member States are favourable to the proposal, the European Commission will list the exporting country and any specific import conditions that apply.

For details, see [Third country lists for public health – explained](#).

⁶ Regulation [2017/625](#) sets the official control principles for all food. Regulation [2019/627](#) sets specific requirements for products of animal origin, including fish and seafood products (Arts. 67–71 and Annex VI).

⁷ Council Regulation (EC) No [2406/96](#) of 26 November 1996, laying down common marketing standards for certain fishery products, sets the baselines of freshness criteria for whitefish, bluefish, Selachii, cephalopods, and crustaceans and establishes a grading system (minimum sizes and weights).

⁸ Fishery products from fish species associated with a high amount of histidine.



Box 3. AGRINFO partner countries authorised for export of wild catch fish products to the EU (Regulation 2021/405, Annex IX)

Albania	Georgia	Nicaragua
Algeria	Ghana	Nigeria
Angola	Grenada	North Macedonia
Antigua and Barbuda ¹	Guatemala	Pakistan
Argentina	Guinea ⁴	Panama
Armenia ²	Guyana	Papua New Guinea
Azerbaijan*	Honduras	Peru
Bangladesh	India	Philippines
Belize	Indonesia	Saint Helena / Tristan da Cunha ⁵
Benin	Iran	Senegal
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Jamaica	Serbia
Brazil	Kazakhstan	Solomon Islands
Cabo Verde	Kenya	South Africa
China	Kiribati	Sri Lanka
Colombia	Madagascar	Suriname
Congo ³	Malaysia	Tanzania
Costa Rica	Mauritania	Thailand
Côte d'Ivoire	Mauritius	Tunisia
Cuba	Mexico	Türkiye
Ecuador	Moldova	Uganda
Egypt	Montenegro	Ukraine
El Salvador	Morocco	Vietnam
Eritrea	Mozambique	Venezuela
Fiji	Myanmar	Yemen
Gabon	Namibia	Zimbabwe
Gambia		

¹ Only lobsters (live)

² Only crayfish (live, heat processed, frozen)

³ Only directly frozen and packed at sea

⁴ Only fresh, chilled, frozen, unprocessed

⁵ Only lobsters (fresh/frozen)

*caviar and roes



4.2 Establishments exporting fishery products must be listed

Only establishments that are included on the European Commission's [Establishment Lists](#) in the Trade Control and Expert System [TRACES](#) can export fishery products to the EU. These include processing plants, freezer or factory vessels, and cold stores. Establishments are listed by the competent authority of the exporting country, once the establishment has demonstrated that it meets EU requirements.

4.2.1 Listing of establishments by competent authorities

Once an exporting country is authorised and listed to export fishery products (section [4.1](#) of this guide), competent authorities in those countries must approve the individual vessels and establishments that prepare and dispatch fishery products to the EU (Regulation [2022/2292](#), Art. 13). Approved establishments (including processing plants, freezer or factory vessels, and cold stores) must be listed on the EU's online platform for certification (Trade Control and Expert System, [TRACES](#)). These establishments are given a unique identification code, also known as the 'EU number'.⁹ Primary producers (fishers) and businesses solely involved in transport operations **do not** have to be listed (Regulation [2022/2292](#), Art. 14).

National competent authorities in each country should designate one or more National Contact Point/s to enter and maintain the details of approved exporting establishments in TRACES. National competent authorities are responsible for auditing the establishments regularly and updating the list in TRACES (see section [4.3](#) of this guide).

An [Establishment Listing](#) user guide in TRACES gives step-by-step instructions for non-EU countries wishing to register new establishments. Webinars are also available [online](#) in EN, ES, FR, PT. These lists are publicly available in the European Commission's [Establishment Lists](#) directory.

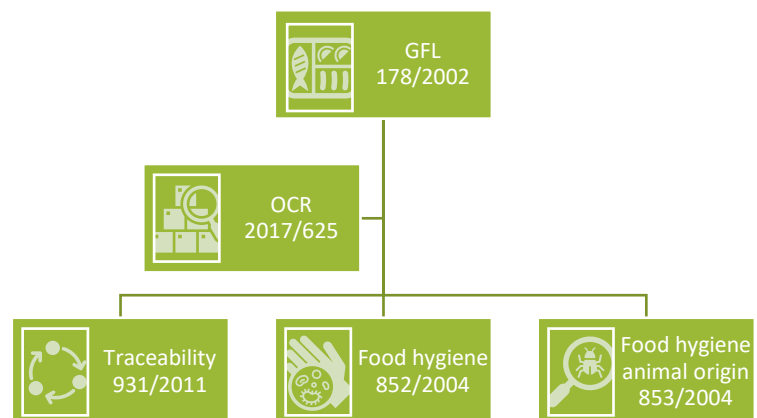
4.2.2 Listing establishments: Overview of operator obligations

An operator wishing to export fishery products to the EU must demonstrate to its competent authorities that it complies with the following.

- **Principles of EU General Food Law**

(Regulation [178/2002](#)), including:

- Food must be safe.
- Operators have the primary responsibility and must submit their company to official controls and collaborate with competent authorities.
- Food and feed must be traceable at all stages: records must be kept of the immediate supplier/s (one step before) and the immediate customer/s (one step after) (Regulation [931/2011](#)).
- Consumers must be protected against fraud, adulteration, and other misleading practices.



⁹ FFA (2025) [EU market access guide for fish and fishery products](#). Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency.



- **Hygiene rules applicable to all food** (Regulation [852/2004](#)), in particular:
 - The establishment must be nationally authorised, and must implement a self-control system based on hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) principles (Art. 5).¹⁰
 - Products must be handled, prepared, packed, and stored in a hygienic manner (Annex II).
 - Products must meet the general hygiene requirements regarding primary production (Annex I) and other stages of production, processing, and distribution (Annex II).
- **Hygiene rules applying to food of animal origin** (Regulation [853/2004](#)),¹¹ in particular:
 - Identification mark (ID):¹² a clear, legible, and indelible identification mark must be applied before the product leaves the establishment. The ID must include the country where the establishment is located and its approval number. The Regulation specifies details of the information required and how it must be applied to the consignment. Different rules apply for products supplied in containers/large packages for further handling, in bulk, or sold directly to the consumer.
 - Specific hygiene rules and requirements apply to handling fishery products, whether whole or prepared (see definitions in Annex I, point 3). These requirements, covered in Annex III, section VIII, include water use to clean products, chilling and freezing processes, transport and storage conditions, mechanically separated products, treatments in case of parasites, health standards, wrapping, and packaging.¹³

NEW: A July 2025 amendment to Regulation 853/2004 concerns the requirements for operators to put in place a validation plan that sets strict conditions for cooling and freezing whole tuna in brine at –18°C on-board freezer vessels. Whole tuna frozen in brine at a temperature of –9°C must be destined for canning. Such tuna cannot be sold as fresh tuna, even if subsequently frozen at a temperature of –18°C. Competent authorities must take action against operators who illegally place tuna not frozen at –18°C on the EU market. This practice is considered fraudulent because it exposes consumers to health risks from excessive exposure to histamine (Regulation [2025/1449](#), applied from **27 January 2026**).

See also [Amended hygiene rules for food of animal origin](#).

- **Maximum levels of contaminants** (Regulation [2023/915](#))
 - Contaminants are substances that have not been intentionally added to food (Regulation [315/93](#)). These substances may contaminate the food at various stages of its production, packaging, transport, or holding. They may also result from environmental contamination. Since contamination may have a negative impact on the quality of food and may imply a risk to human health, contaminant levels must be kept as low as can reasonably be achieved ('ALARA' principle). Food containing a contaminant in an amount that poses a potential threat to public health must not be placed on the market.
 - The 'ALARA' principle is an obligation for food business operators. They must:
 - implement preventive controls
 - reduce contamination at source
 - apply good practices.

¹⁰ See [Commission Notice](#) on the implementation of food safety management systems covering good hygiene practices and procedures based on HACCP principles.

¹¹ See [Updated Commission guidance on Good Hygiene Practices and HACCP](#) for food of animal origin.

¹² Regulation [853/2004](#), Annex II, Section I, see, in particular, points 1, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13.

¹³ For more details, see the section on fishery products in [Updated guidance on hygiene requirements for food of animal origin](#).



Regulation [2023/915](#) sets strict limits for specific contaminants that may be present in fishery products, including heavy metals (mercury, cadmium, lead, arsenic), dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). These limits apply to both EU-produced and imported fishery products. Maximum levels for certain contaminants in fish (whole fish and muscle meat) and crustaceans (muscle meat) can be found in Annex I to Regulation [2023/915](#).

NEW: Maximum limits have been set for inorganic arsenic in certain fish, crustaceans, bivalves, and cephalopods.

See also: [Maximum levels of inorganic arsenic in fish and seafood](#).



- Microbiological criteria
 - Regulation [2073/2005](#) sets out the food safety criteria for fishery products in relation to *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, and histamine (Annex I, Chapter 1). Process hygiene criteria (specifically relating to *Escherichia coli* and staphylococci in shelled and shucked products of cooked crustaceans) are set out in Annex I, Chapter 2.4.
 - **NEW:** Specific attention should be paid to **Listeria** in ready-to-eat food. *Listeria* may specifically affect certain processed fish products with a long shelf-life, such as smoked fish. The EU has extended the food safety criterion '*Listeria monocytogenes* not detected in 25 g' that it currently applies to food at the production stage.

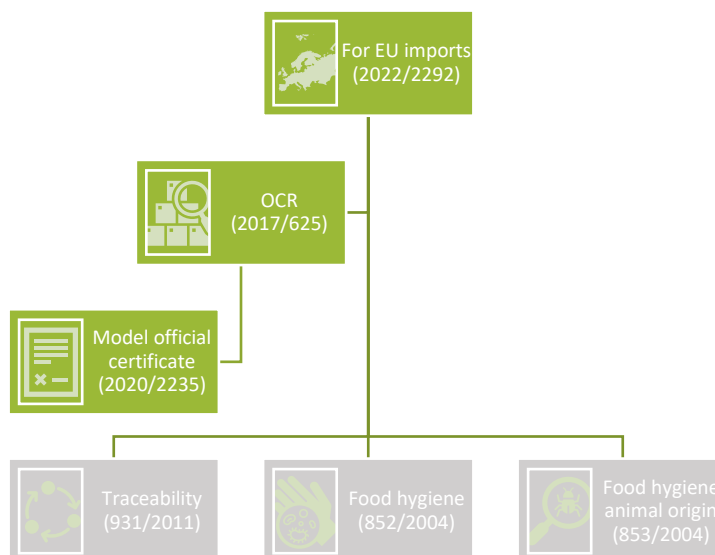
From 1 July 2026 the *Listeria* criterion will apply throughout the **entire shelf-life** of the product. Food business operators must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the competent authority that the product will not exceed the limits throughout its shelf-life, taking into account the storage and processing conditions, and possible contamination under reasonably foreseeable conditions of distribution, storage, and use (see Regulation [2073/2005](#), Annex II). For details, see [Listeria monocytogenes in ready-to-eat food](#).



4.3 Official health certificates

All consignments of fishery products entering the EU must be accompanied by the correct model official certificate. The most recently updated template of the certificate must **always** be used. To reduce the risk of mistakes, it is recommended to use the TRACES online platform to complete the certificate. Non-EU countries can access [TRACES](#) after [creating an EU login account](#), and request a role as 'Operator' or 'Authority'.

Each consignment of fishery products exported to the EU requires a health certificate signed by the competent authority in the exporting country of origin. The purpose is to give information on the consignment (Part I – exporter, importer, country of origin, weight) and to guarantee that the commodities comply with each relevant EU requirement mentioned in the certificate (Part II). The official veterinarian signing the certificate must strike out what is not relevant for the consignment. On entering the EU, the certificate will be inspected at a [Border Control Post \(BCP\)](#). It must be accurate; any discrepancy can lead to a rejection at the border.



For all fishery products covered in this guidance, the relevant model official certificates can be found in Regulation [2020/2235](#) Annex III, Chapters 28 FISH-CRUST-HC, 29 EU-FISH, 30 I, FISH/MOL-CAP.

Model certificates are updated regularly.¹⁴ Exporting countries must ensure that they use the latest version, to be found in the 'consolidated version' (the act as applicable at a specific point in time) of the Regulation. The current consolidated text is directly accessible from the page of the initial act (see example below on how to access the latest consolidated text for Regulation 2020/2235).

Document 32020R2235

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2235 of 16 December 2020 laying down rules for the application of Regulations (EU) 2016/429 and (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards model animal health certificates, model official certificates and model animal health/official certificates, for the entry into the Union and movements within the Union of consignments of certain categories of animals and goods, official certification regarding such certificates and repealing Regulation (EC) No 599/2004, Implementing Regulations (EU) No 636/2014 and (EU) 2019/628, Directive 98/68/EC and Decisions 2000/572/EC, 2003/779/EC and 2007/240/EC (Text with EEA relevance)

OJ L 442, 30.12.2020, pp. 1–409 (BG, ES, CS, DA, DE, ET, EL, EN, FR, HR, IT, LV, LT, HU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK, SL, FI, SV)

● In force: This act has been changed. Current consolidated version: [20/05/2025](#)

ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2020/2235/oj



¹⁴ AGRINFO (2025) [Updated model animal health/official certificates for food of animal origin](#).



It is recommended to complete the certificates in TRACES when possible, as the TRACES system is continuously updated and the necessary actions relating to the attestation will be taken automatically. See [AGRINFO Webinar and FAQ: Using TRACES](#).

4.3.1 Certificate model FISH-CRUST-HC

The most commonly used certificate for fish and crustaceans, both from aquaculture and wild catch, is the FISH-CRUST-HC model¹⁵ in Regulation [2020/2235](#) (Annex III, Chapter 28).

The certificate consists of a:

- **public health attestation** (Part II.1) covering compliance with the key requirements (see sections [4.1](#) and [4.2](#) of this guide); and an
- **animal health attestation** (Part II.2).

The animal health attestation (Part II.2) does not apply to wild-caught fishery products that are landed from fishing vessels for direct human consumption (in other words, intended to enter the food chain) without undergoing further processing in the EU.

For fish destined for further processing in the EU, slaughtered and eviscerated prior to dispatch to the EU, Parts II.2.3.1 (country of origin is listed in Regulation [2021/404](#)), II.2.3.2 (clinical inspection carried out prior to loading) and II.2.4 (specific health requirements) do not apply and can be deleted.

Notes at the end of the certificate, explaining how to fill in the various boxes, should be read carefully before completion.

Since competent authorities are certifying operators' compliance with EU requirements, they must **regularly audit the operators**.

4.3.2 Certificate model EU-FISH

Model EU-FISH¹⁶ is only used in the case of fishery products intended for human consumption, caught by **vessels of an EU Member State**, that are transferred in non-EU countries with or without storage.

4.3.3 Certificate model FISH/MOL-CAP

For fishery products entering the EU directly from a reefer, freezer, or factory vessel flagged to a non-EU country, the FISH/MOL-CAP model applies.¹⁷ Such vessels must be authorised to enter the EU and be listed as an EU-approved establishment. The model certificate can be found in Regulation [2020/2235](#) (Annex III, Chapter 30 – see Latest consolidated version). This certificate may be signed by the captain of the vessel (Regulation [2022/2292](#), Art. 21).

¹⁵ Regulation [2020/2235](#), Chapter 28: Model animal health/official certificate for the entry into the Union of live fish, live crustaceans and products of animal origin from those animals intended for human consumption (FISH-CRUST-HC).

¹⁶ Regulation [2020/2235](#), Chapter 29: Model official certificate for the entry into the Union of fishery products intended for human consumption caught by vessels flying the flag of a Member State and transferred in non-EU countries with or without storage ([EU-FISH](#)).

¹⁷ Regulation [2020/2235](#), Chapter 30: Model official certificate for the entry into the Union of fishery products or fishery products derived from bivalve molluscs intended for human consumption entering the Union directly from a reefer, freezer or factory vessel flying the flag of a non-EU country as provided for in Article 21(2) of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2292 ([FISH/MOL-CAP](#)).



5 Sustainability of the fishery sector

The EU has introduced measures to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable exploitation of fish stocks within and beyond EU waters, while preserving the oceans and seas, and their biodiversity. Its core regulatory framework, the common fisheries policy (CFP) (Regulation 1380/2013), has applied since 2014 and is complemented by a variety of legal acts. The CFP is currently under evaluation to assess whether it remains fit for purpose in today's context.

5.1 The EU's common fisheries policy

The CFP is the basic regulatory framework for sustainably managing European fishing fleets and conserving fish stocks. It sets out general principles and also applies to non-EU vessels fishing in EU waters, and EU fishing vessels operating in areas beyond EU waters.

The [EU's common fisheries policy](#) establishes rules to manage fishing in EU waters, including the outermost regions. It also applies to non-EU vessels fishing in EU waters, as well as to EU fishing vessels operating in areas beyond EU waters, such as those covered by regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), to which the EU is a party. Based on [scientific advice](#), it sets total allowable catches (or 'fishing opportunities') for most commercial fish stocks ([Multiannual plans](#)). It also introduces a '[landing obligation](#)',¹⁸ which bans putting unwanted catches back into the sea. The aim is to encourage more selective fishing and avoid unwanted catches. The unwanted catches are counted in the fishers' quotas. It foresees tools to support the objectives, such as the regulation of fishing gear and fishing methods.¹⁹

5.2 The IUU Regulation

The EU prohibits imports from [illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing](#) (IUU). The IUU Regulation ([1005/2008](#)) established the CATCH certification scheme, which uses **traceability** to prevent fishery products stemming from IUU fishing from entering the EU market.

The IUU Regulation established a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU. One of its key principles is **traceability at all production stages**, from catch to marketing, including processing and transport. This applies to all traded wild catch fishery products, processed or not, exported to the EU by any means of transportation. Transshipments and processing operations are also within the scope of the scheme.²⁰

Under the IUU Regulation, non-EU countries identified as having inadequate measures in place to prevent and deter this activity may be issued with a formal warning (yellow card) to improve. If they fail to do so, they face having their fish banned from the EU market (red card), among other measures. For the current status of countries, see the [Map of EU carding decisions](#).

Regulation [1010/2009](#) lays down detailed rules for implementation of the IUU Regulation. These rules include conditions for access to port by non-EU fishing vessels, port inspections, the [CATCH certification scheme](#), criteria for verification, status of 'approved economic operator', cooperation and information exchange with non-EU countries, and notification of IUU activities or infringements (Regulation [1010/2009](#)). See [Regulation on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing – explained](#).

¹⁸ Exemptions are foreseen in some cases in [Western waters](#), in the [North Sea](#), for small pelagic fisheries in the [Mediterranean Sea](#), [for cod and plaice in Baltic Sea fisheries](#), [for Venus shells \(venus spp.\) in certain Italian territorial waters](#).

¹⁹ Regulation (EU) [2019/1241](#) on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures

²⁰ FFA (2025) [EU market access guide for fish and fishery products](#). Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency.



5.2.1 CATCH certification scheme

The European Union's CATCH certification scheme ensures that only legally caught fishery products can enter the EU market. The digital CATCH information system helps to identify and prevent the importation of fishery products obtained through IUU fishing. The use of revised catch certificates and processing statements will become **mandatory for all countries from 10 January 2028**.

The CATCH certification scheme establishes full traceability of all fishery products imported into the EU market. This means knowing where, when and in what quantities and by whom fish have been caught.²¹

All wild catch fishery products imported into the EU directly from a non-EU country must be accompanied by a valid catch certificate. Certificates can be downloaded from the European Commission's [Templates – CATCH](#) webpage. The exporter must provide all the information required by the certificate, validated by the competent authorities (normally the Fisheries Authority of the flag country of the fishing vessel) in the country of origin of the product, and notify the arrival of consignments prior to their importation into the EU. The EU importer must ensure that the consignment to be imported is accompanied by the corresponding valid certificate(s). Generally, a period of three working days before the estimated time of arrival of fishery products is required for prior notification of landings or transshipments in port and for the submission of catch certificates. Fresh fishery products and consignments arriving by air, road or rail require a shorter period.

Catches from non-EU fishing vessels measuring less than 12 metres without towed gear or less than 8 metres with towed gear, constituting a single consignment that is only landed in the flag State of those vessels, may be accompanied by a simplified catch certificate. The exporter of the consignment must request validation of the simplified catch certificate by the competent authority of that country. A revised simplified catch certificate will be introduced on **10 January 2027**.

NEW: Starting from **10 January 2026**, EU importers must use the fully digitised **CATCH** information system to submit catch certificates for fishery products imported into the EU market.²² CATCH simplifies and speeds up the consignment clearance process by offering a digital and paperless workflow. It allows the easy exchange of data, information, and documents between trading parties and control authorities. See also [Revised EU rules and digitalisation of fisheries control](#).

In the event that CATCH is unavailable, users may complete printed or electronic templates to record and exchange information. These are publicly available for download [here](#), with instructions on how and when to use them.

Operators and authorities in non-EU countries may use CATCH directly in the IT system, instead of on paper, to create and validate catch certificates and related documents required for exporting their fishery products to the EU. It can be used by operators and authorities in non-EU countries after creating an [EU login account](#) and requesting a role, as 'Operator' or 'Authority' respectively, to have access to [TRACES](#). Only authorities can endorse and sign documents required under the amended catch certification scheme, such as those in relation to processing, transit, transshipment, and landing operations.

More information on the EU CATCH certification scheme can be found in the European Commission's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the topic.

Use of the revised versions of catch certificates, simplified catch certificates, and processing statements will become mandatory for all countries from **10 January 2028**. A timeline for the entry into force of the revised templates and termination of previous versions can be found [here](#).

²¹ FFA (2025) [EU market access guide for fish and fishery products](#). Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency.

²² Instructions for creating a certificate are available [online](#), together with other resources such as [webinars](#).



5.2.2 Indirect imports

NEW: Regulation [2025/453](#) of 18 December 2024 established a uniform template for the document that must accompany fishery products transiting through a third country without manipulation. The non-manipulation document can be downloaded from the European Commission's [Templates – CATCH](#) webpage. If unprocessed, the consignment must be accompanied by the catch certificate(s) and by a declaration that the fishery product “did not undergo operations other than unloading, reloading or any operation designed to preserve them in good and genuine condition, and remained under the surveillance of the declaring authority”.

- If the consignment is not split in the non-EU country of transit, a single transport document is required, issued to cover the passage through that non-EU country from the flag State, or the country in which processing takes place. Instead of the single transport document, a non-manipulation document can also be used in cases when the consignment is not split.
- If the consignment is split into different sub-consignments in the non-EU country of transit, a non-manipulation document is required for each sub-consignment, validated by the competent authorities of that country.

The new template, introduced on **10 January 2026**, must be used by countries other than the flag State through which fishery products transit without any processing or other physical alteration. See also [Template for fishery products dispatched from countries other than flag States](#).

5.2.3 Processing statement

Processing statements are required for **all** processed fishery products from wild catches imported into the EU, regardless of whether the processing occurs in the flag State of the fishing vessels that caught the fish, or another non-EU country. Processing operations requiring a processing statement, include cutting, filleting, canning, smoking, salting, cooking, pickling, drying or preparing fish for market in any other manner. Fishery products subject **only to freezing and/or packing** do not require a processing statement.

For fishery products processed in a non-EU country, the authorities of the processing State must endorse a processing statement (IUU Regulation, Annex IV), where the code for processed products (EU Combined Nomenclature (CN) 8-digit code) must be indicated. The processor must complete the processing statement prior to import into the EU. This new requirement also applies to fishery products processed on board **factory vessels** after transshipment from catching vessels.

The processing statement must bear a unique number provided by the authorities endorsing the statement (where CATCH is used, the system will generate a unique number directly) and:

- (a) give an exact description of the unprocessed and processed products and their respective quantities;
- (b) indicate that the processed products have been processed from catches accompanied by catch certificate(s) validated by the flag State (IUU Regulation Art. 14.2);
- (c) be accompanied by:
 - (i) the original catch certificate(s) where the totality of the catches concerned has been used for the processing of the fishery products exported in a single consignment; or
 - (ii) a copy of the original catch certificate(s), where part of the catches concerned has been used for the processing of the fishery products exported in a single consignment.



The revised processing statement, introduced on 10 January 2026, is provided in Annex IV of the IUU regulation and can be downloaded [here](#).²³

5.3 The Fisheries Control Regulation

The Fisheries Control Regulation ([1224/2009](#)) ensures that all fishery and aquaculture products are digitally traceable throughout the supply chain ‘from net to plate’ (from fishing or harvesting, landing, processing, transport through to marketing stages). Regulation [2023/2842](#) updated these rules to reflect technological advances and facilitate more effective, risk-based controls.²⁴ See also [Revised EU rules and digitalisation of fisheries control](#).

5.4 Sustainable management of external fleets

The EU’s Regulation on the sustainable management of external fishing fleets (SMEFF) ([2017/2403](#)) provides the legal basis for controlling and enforcing its common fisheries policy. It applies to EU vessels fishing in non-EU country waters or on the high seas, and to non-EU country vessels fishing in EU waters. It does not apply to non-EU vessels fishing in non-EU waters, even if those vessels are exporting to the EU.

When fishing in EU waters, vessels from non-EU countries must comply with the same rules applicable to EU vessels. They may fish in EU waters if authorised to do so by the European Commission and access EU ports if able to provide accurate information on the legality of their catches, validated by their flag State.

They are authorised to fish in EU waters only if:

- there is a surplus of allowable catch;
- they comply with the conditions set out in the relevant fisheries agreement between the EU and the non-EU country; and, where relevant, the vessel is on the list of permitted vessels under that agreement;
- the fishing vessel is not included in the EU IUU vessel list or that of a regional fisheries management organisation;
- the partner country is not on the list of ‘non-cooperating’ countries according to the IUU Regulation ([Implementing Decision 2014/170/EU](#)) or those allowing non-sustainable fishing (as defined in Regulation [1026/2012](#) Art. 3). See also [EU external fisheries policy explained](#).

5.5 International fisheries relations

The European Union plays a key role in international fisheries cooperation. The external dimension of the common fisheries policy provides a framework for the activities of EU vessels fishing outside EU waters. This framework underpins the EU’s engagement in multilateral agreements for fishing on the high seas under RFMOs, and in bilateral fisheries agreements with non-EU countries for fishing in their waters, known as [sustainable fisheries partnership agreements](#).²⁵

²³ Instructions for creating a processing statement are available [online](#), together with other resources such as [webinars](#).

²⁴ See also [Control regulation](#), European Commission, DG MARE.

²⁵ See also [International fisheries relations](#), European Parliament fact sheets.



5.5.1 Regional fisheries management organisations

Regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) establish measures for the conservation and sustainable management of certain fish stocks, particularly those that migrate across regions or straddle multiple jurisdictions. Such stocks, often considered ‘stocks of common interest’, require bilateral or multilateral cooperation between countries. RFMOs have the authority to adopt rules for managing fisheries. These rules are binding upon members and include management tools such as catch limits (quotas), technical measures, spatial and temporal restrictions, and monitoring, control, and surveillance activities to ensure compliance. The EU plays an active role in 18 RFMOs.²⁶ When decisions are agreed within the relevant RFMOs, the EU implements these in EU law.

See also [EU fishing opportunities for 2024–2026](#).

5.5.2 Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements

The external dimension of the EU’s [common fisheries policy](#) is strengthened by bilateral agreements between the EU and non-EU countries. In these partnerships, the EU provides financial and technical support to develop the fisheries sector and improve fisheries governance, together with partner countries in exchange for fishing rights in their waters.

Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements serve multiple objectives, including supporting responsible fisheries, optimal use of EU fleet capacity, creation of employment and value addition both in the EU and in partner countries, provision of products to the EU processing industry, and contribution to EU market supplies.²⁷

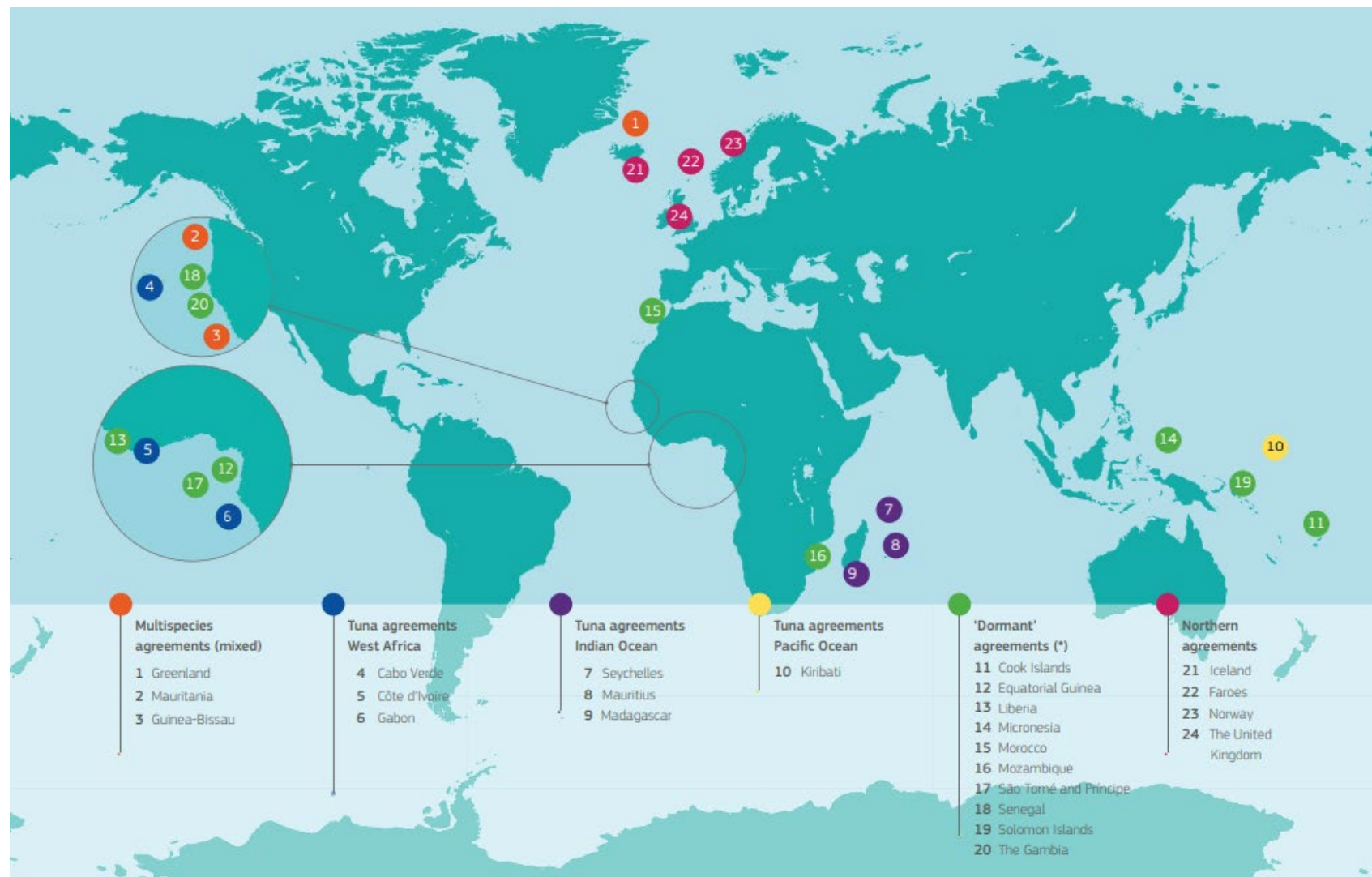
See also [Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements explained](#).

²⁶ European Commission, DG MARE [Regional fisheries management organisations](#).

²⁷ European Commission: DG MARE, FS, Megapesca Lda, POSEIDON, Caillart et al. (2018) [Ex ante evaluation study of a sustainable fisheries partnership agreement between the European Union and the Republic of The Gambia](#). Publications Office.



Figure 1. Map of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements and northern agreements (August 2025)



(*) Agreements for which no protocol is in force.

Source: European Commission: [Map of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements](#)

5.5.3 Unsustainable fishing by non-EU countries

Under Regulation [1026/2012](#), the EU can take measures against exporting countries that do not take adequate action to conserve fish stocks of common interest.

When a non-EU country does not take action to preserve stocks of common interest, or otherwise allows non-sustainable fishing, the EU can impose quantitative restrictions or bans on fish imports. It can also prohibit any other trade activities associated with the fishery, including any private trade arrangements between EU economic operators and that country, such as prohibiting fishing vessels of an EU Member State from using fishing opportunities of that country.

NEW: Regulation [2025/2077](#) clarifies these measures to ensure that non-EU countries are aware of the specific conditions under which their fishing practices may lead to EU restrictive measures and sanctions, which can include import bans. In particular, the EU notifies a country 90 days in advance if it intends to identify it as allowing non-sustainable fishing. During this period the country can respond to the notification and remedy the situation. It also introduces a definition of ‘failure to cooperate’ and provides examples. See [EU measures against unsustainable fishing by non-EU countries](#). The Regulation applies from **3 November 2025**.



6 Fish trade with the EU

The EU has become increasingly dependent on imports of fish and fish products to meet demand. Seafood self-sufficiency within the EU has declined steadily, falling to 37.5% in 2022.²⁸ This figure masks even greater dependence in terms of EU fish and seafood consumption, of which more than 80% is supplied by imports. The EU has concluded several agreements with non-EU countries or territories to permit the suspension or partial waiver of normal duties on these imports. Country-specific tariff quotas can be agreed either within or outside the framework of a free trade agreement. Separate from these, autonomous tariff quotas (ATQs) encourage the import of raw materials to ensure an adequate supply for the EU's domestic processing industries.

6.1 EU autonomous tariff quota for imported fisheries products

The EU fish processing industry can import certain fishery products from non-EU countries at reduced rates or duty-free to avoid a shortfall in raw material supplies. Such imports are known as autonomous tariff quotas. Tariff-free access is provided on a 'first-come, first-served' basis for specific quantities of unprocessed and semi-processed fisheries products.

Some 8% of EU imports of fishery products benefit from the ATQ regime.²⁹ For the period 2024–2026, ATQs have been set for products that have undergone certain processing (e.g. dicing, filleting, production of flaps, cutting of frozen blocks). For full details of the individual quotas, such as detailed descriptions and TARIC (integrated tariff of the European Union) customs codes, see the Annex of Regulation [2023/2720](#).

To find out how much of each quota has already been used for a specific product, visit the European Commission's [Tariff quota consultation](#) webpage.

See also [Tariff quotas for certain fishery products](#).

6.1.1 Customs codes

The Harmonized System (HS) is a standardized numerical method of classifying traded products, including fish and fish products. Administered by the [World Customs Organization](#), it is used by countries around the world to uniformly identify and describe products for purposes such as customs clearance, import duties, and tax calculation. Tariffs tend to increase with the level of processing that a product undergoes. HS code 03 covers fresh, chilled, frozen, salted, dried, smoked fish, fillets and other fish meat (fresh, chilled, or frozen) and seafood. Prepared or preserved fish and seafood products that have undergone significant processing (e.g. canned fish) fall under HS16.³⁰

6.2 Generalised Scheme of Preferences and Rules of Origin

Within the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), countries that are listed as 'Standard GSP', 'GSP+' or 'EBA' (Everything But Arms) can benefit from reduced or zero import tariffs. Exporters can only benefit from a reduced tariff if they can prove the origin of the product. Exporters are required to declare the origin of their goods by producing a 'statement on origin' or 'origin declaration'. To do this, the exporter must fill in an application and submit it to the national competent authority to be included in a database as a 'registered exporter'.

²⁸ Policy Department for Regional Development, Agriculture and Fisheries Directorate-General for Cohesion, Agriculture and Social Policies (2026) [Assessing the impact of seafood imports on EU self-sufficiency](#).

²⁹ European Parliament, [2024](#); European Commission, [Trade of fisheries and aquaculture products](#).

³⁰ CBI (2022) [What requirements must fish and seafood comply with to be allowed on the European market?](#) Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries.



GSP beneficiary countries can sign up for the pre-application process here: [Register in REX for non-EU exporters](#).

To better understand what to do as an exporter, [read this article on the REX system](#) or [Check whether your country is benefitting from GSP, GSP+ or EBA status](#).

Box 4. Special case: Global sourcing derogation supporting regional tuna processing in the Pacific

The [EU-Pacific interim Economic Partnership Agreement](#) allows certain Pacific countries to bypass strict 'rule of origin' requirements and process tuna caught by non-originating (foreign) vessels in their local factories. These value-added products (canned, pre-cooked) qualify as a product originating from the Pacific and are exported duty-free to the EU. Even if the derogation allows sourcing of fish from outside the Pacific, the fish must come from a country authorised to export to the EU and from listed establishments in their jurisdiction. Only 4 countries in the Pacific (out of 15) are currently included in the EU lists (Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands).

6.3 Mandatory information and labelling

Fishery products must comply with general principles and labelling rules on food information to consumers. The mandatory identification marking for fishery products includes the scientific name and commercial designation of the species, production method, and area where the product was caught. This mandatory information must accompany the product along the supply chain to allow it to be used at the point of sale.

See [A pocket guide to the EU's new fish and aquaculture consumer labels](#).

6.3.1 Common market organisation in fishery and aquaculture products

The EU [common market organisation](#) (CMO Regulation) in fishery and aquaculture products sets marketing standards and uniform characteristics related to quality, size, weight, packing, presentation, and labelling for all fish and fish products sold in the EU as intended for human consumption, regardless of origin. It sets out requirements for notification and labelling, and for giving verifiable and accurate information on the origin of a product and its mode of production for consumers. Those standards also apply to fish imported from non-EU countries. Marking or labelling with mandatory information is necessary at the point at which the product is offered for sale to the final consumer or to a mass caterer (Regulation [1379/2013](#) Article 35(1)). The food business operator under whose name or business name the food is marketed is responsible for that information, unless the operator is not established in the EU. In such case, the responsibility rests with the importer into the EU market.

The CMO Regulation sets specific labelling rules for fishery and aquaculture products. The following information **must** appear on the labels (scope and detailed provisions covered in Arts. 35 and 38):

- scientific name and commercial designation of the species: these can be found on the European Commission webpage [Commercial designations of fishery and aquaculture products](#)
- production method, indicating whether farmed or wild-caught, in marine or fresh waters
- area where the product was caught
 - fish caught at sea: The [FAO major fishing area](#)
 - fish caught in freshwater: Both the name of the body of water (river, lake etc.) and the country where the product was caught.



- gear categories used to catch the fish: seines, trawls, gillnets and similar nets, surrounding nets and lift nets, hooks and lines, dredges, or pots and traps.
- date of minimum durability, where appropriate
- whether the product has been defrosted.³¹

See [Common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products explained](#) and the [European Parliament fact sheet](#) on common market organisation in fishery and aquaculture products.

6.3.2 Marketing standards for canned fish and seafood

Canned fish is usually packaged in brine, oil or other sauces. Labelling requirements for canned fish and seafood include the net quantity (net weight) in grams or kilograms and drained net weight of the food, which must be shown on the package. The can or jar label must indicate the name of the food (for example, ‘mackerel in olive oil’), net quantity, food operator, identification mark, list of ingredients (quantity of main ingredients and allergens), ‘best before’ date and storage conditions. A bar code or traceability code can also be included on the label. As with all fish and seafood, canned fish imported into the EU must be traceable at all stages of production, processing and distribution – from the harvest to the retail stage.³²

Detailed rules are set for preserved tuna and bonito³³ and for preserved sardines.³⁴ Only certain species can be used and species cannot be mixed. Trade descriptions, such as ‘solid’, ‘chunks’, ‘fillets’, if used, must strictly comply with the definitions.

6.3.3 General labelling rules

In addition to the specific rules, fishery products must comply with the general principles and labelling rules set out in Regulation [1169/2011](#) on food information to consumers.

For more information on consumer information and labelling, see [A pocket guide to the EU’s new fish and aquaculture consumer labels](#).

6.4 Food contact materials

All material in contact (or intended/expected to be in contact) with food must be produced in compliance with the dedicated EU’s legal framework (see [Food contact materials explained](#)). These rules are currently under review (see: [EU reviews rules on food contact materials](#)). Certain substances may be used in plastic food packaging only if they are authorised (see: [Food contact materials: Review](#)).

NEW: The EU has adopted stricter rules on the use of bisphenol A (BPA) and related chemicals in food contact materials. This is due to health concerns about the presence in food of BPA that can migrate from food packaging. Regulation [2024/3190](#) bans the use of BPA in all food produced, packaged, or stored in materials that may contain BPA or other hazardous bisphenols or their derivatives (e.g. metal food packaging such as cans, tins, and jar lids; plastic packaging including polycarbonate and polysulfone). In the case of single-use food contact articles intended to preserve fishery products, these rules apply from **January 2028**.³⁵

³¹ There is an exception (derogation) for foods where freezing is a technologically necessary step in the production process; fishery and aquaculture products previously frozen for health safety purposes, in accordance with Annex III, section VIII, of Regulation [853/2004](#); fishery and aquaculture products that have been defrosted before the process of smoking, salting, cooking, pickling, drying, or a combination of any of those processes (Regulation [1379/2013](#), Art. 35.1).

³² CBI (2021) [Entering the European market for canned fish](#). Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries.

³³ Council Regulation (EEC) No [1536/92](#) of 9 June 1992 laying down common marketing standards for preserved tuna and bonito.

³⁴ Council Regulation (EEC) No [2136/89](#) of 21 June 1989 laying down common marketing standards for preserved sardines.

³⁵ See resources from two AGRINFO webinars on [Bisphenol A and PFAS](#) (2025) and [Packaging and packaging waste](#) (2026).



6.5 Food additives and food flavourings

Any food additives or food flavourings added to fishery products should meet the latest EU standards. Regulations [1333/2008](#) (food additives) and [1334/2008](#) (food flavourings) provide lists of the categories of food products, including fish and seafood, in which food additives/flavourings may be used. Only those additives/flavourings specifically listed for fish may be used, following the specified conditions described, including the maximum amounts that may be used. Examples include E 220–228 (sulphur dioxide, sulphites) on fresh, frozen, and deep-frozen crustaceans; E 300-302 (ascorbic acid, sodium ascorbate and calcium ascorbate) in unprocessed thawed tuna sold as fresh tuna or marinated (processed) tuna (see 1333/2008 Annex II, Part E) and E 315 and E 316 (erythorbic acid and sodium erythorbate), only on frozen and deep-frozen fish with red skin.

Operators can check if food additives/flavourings are permitted by using the following European Commission online tools:

- [Food Additives Database](#)
- [Food Flavourings Database](#).

Smoke flavourings

NEW: Before 2024, ten smoke flavourings were authorised for use in foods. These authorisations expired on 1 January 2024. However, eight of these ten smoke flavourings may still be used **until 1 July 2029** in foods that are traditionally smoked, such as processed fish and fish roe.

For details see [Smoke flavourings: no reauthorisation of 10 primary products](#).



7 Additional points

7.1 EU border controls and the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

AGRINFO provides monthly updates on interceptions of non-compliant consignments of agri-food products at EU Border Control Posts (BCPs). Border rejections of fishery and aquaculture products exported to the EU occurred more than 80 times in 2025.

Exceedances of maximum levels of certain contaminants, such as [perfluoroalkyl substances](#) and [food additives](#), commonly result in rejections of fishery and aquaculture products at EU borders.

Non-compliances that represent a serious food safety risk are notified via the EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed ([RASFF](#)). This alert system is used by all EU Member States to share information on when such a food or feed is identified at BCPs or on the EU market, and when rapid action is required. Food and feed consignments that have been tested and rejected at the external borders of the EU when a health risk has been found are also notified through this system.

To keep up to date on interceptions at EU Border Control Posts, see [EU reports on non-compliance](#).

7.2 Be ready for audits/remote assessments

The European Commission conducts regular controls (audits and remote assessments) of both EU Member States and non-EU countries to ensure the highest standards of food safety and regulatory compliance of goods placed on the EU market (see EU [Health and food audits and analysis programme 2026](#)).

Remote assessments, also called 'desk-based audits', are based on comprehensive questionnaires. Exporting countries are required to provide detailed responses. This involves documenting all procedures, controls, and corrective actions that are taken to align with EU requirements.

A negative outcome of an audit or remote assessment performed by the European Commission in a non-EU country may result in the imposition of trade-restrictive measures. Examples of such measures include increased checks at EU borders and, as a last resort, suspension of imports.

In December 2025 the European Commission unveiled a [package of measures](#) to tighten controls on food, animal, and plant products entering the EU. Enhanced controls within the EU ports will be introduced at entry points. The EU will increase import export controls and implement more compliance checks in third countries. By the end of 2027 the Commission will have increased audits in non-EU countries by 50% and raised audits of EU Border Control Posts by 33% to ensure that inspections meet EU requirements.

7.3 Stay up to date

6.1.1. European Ocean Pact: A strategy and roadmap

The [European Ocean Pact](#), published in June 2025, sets out a comprehensive strategy and roadmap to better protect the ocean, promote a thriving blue economy, and support the well-being of people living in coastal areas. It offers a single framework for implementing existing legislation and announces the preparation of an Ocean Act (due in 2027) that builds on the revision of the common fisheries policy, including the CMO Regulation and other legislation. New initiatives include a Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture, expected before the end of 2026. It will include measures to ensure the sustainability of fisheries management and cooperation in the management of shared stocks with non-EU countries.

For more details see [The European Ocean Pact](#).



6.1.2. Evolution of EU requirements

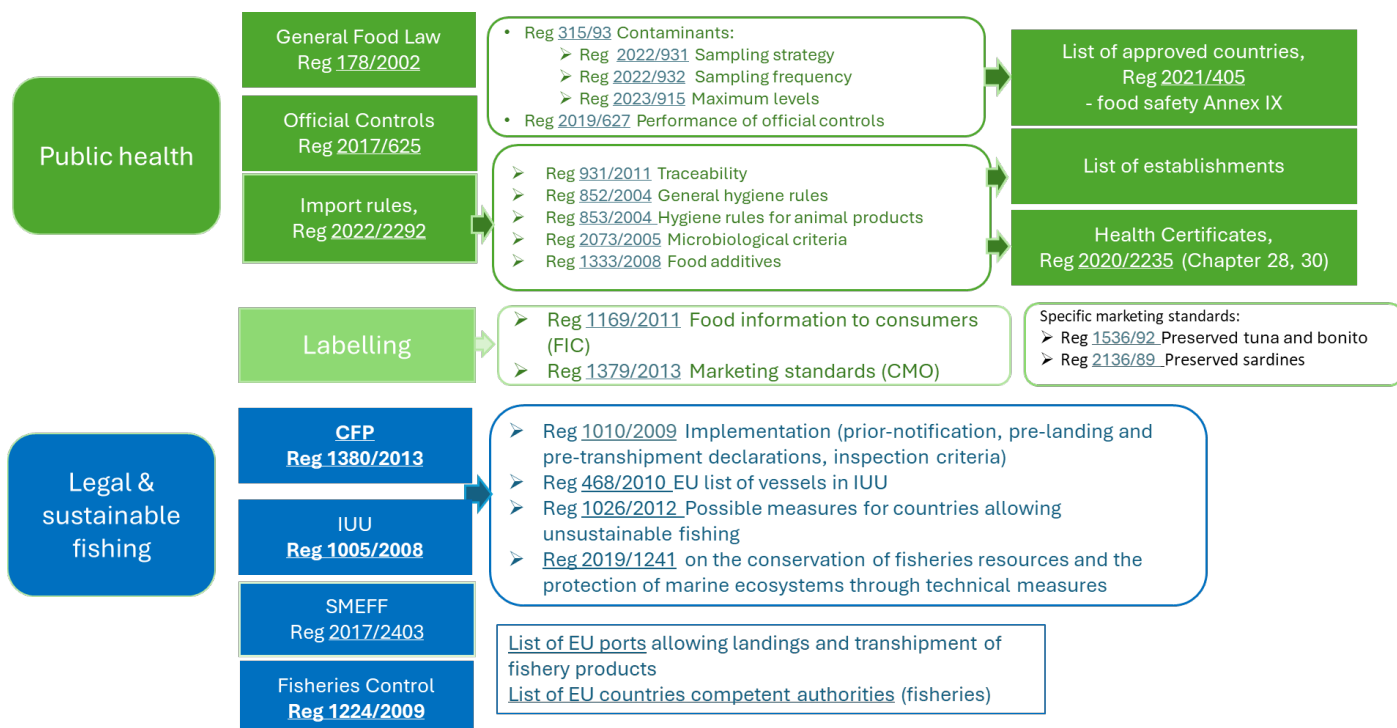
European Union agri-food requirements are constantly evolving. AGRINFO provides a single, intuitive portal bringing together and building on existing resources. It highlights [drafts in consultation](#) (both on the EU's 'Have your say' website and World Trade Organization notifications) and provides [quarterly reports](#) on upcoming EU regulatory changes and opportunities for feedback. Expected upcoming changes include:

- maximum levels for pesticides and contaminants
- Animal Health Law (under evaluation)
- animal welfare (aquaculture: farming and transport of live fish)
- due diligence.

To keep up to date on upcoming changes, [subscribe](#) to AGRINFO updates. For any questions, see [ASK AGRINFO](#).



Annex: Overview of significant EU legislation for export of fishery products to the EU





GROWING PEOPLE