Press release | 15.11.2012

Illegal fisheries

New black-list an important tool for clamping down on illegal fishing

The European Commission today published a list of countries it has identified as non-cooperating in the fight against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU) (1). The Greens have long campaigned for tougher measures to address illegal fishing and welcomed the list, with Green fisheries spokesperson **Räul Romeva** stating:

"This black-list provides a crucial tool for clamping down on illegal fishing. While long overdue, we warmly welcome today's publication.

"Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing remains a major threat to vulnerable fish stocks, accounting for up to one-third of global catches. While the EU has introduced tougher rules against IUU fishing, illegal fishing continues to be a major problem, also within the EU fishing industry. EU fisheries companies have vessels flagged in or operating out of some of the countries listed today (and other countries with a lax approach to illegal fishing), enabling them to evade EU regulations.

"This list, the first of its kind, must be seen as a significant step in EU efforts to tackle illegal fishing and the Commission must be congratulated for publishing the list and must now ensure sanctions follow for countries that are complicit in IUU fishing. However, it is by no means a finished project, with many other countries likely to be directly engaging in or complicit in IUU fishing. The Commission must therefore expand the list as soon as it has clear evidence from other countries, as well as a list of individual vessels engaged in IUU fishing.

"If countries on the list do not make swift improvements, the Commission must propose sanctions, including – but not limited to – trade sanctions."

(1) The list comprises 8 countries: Belize, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Fiji, the Republic of Guinea, the Republic of Panama, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Togolese Republic and the Republic of Vanuatu.

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