



EC hands Thailand 'yellow card' for failure to act on IUU

Country has six months to deliver action plan to address issues; Korea and Philippines cleared.

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The European Commission on Tuesday gave the government of Thailand a formal notice, also known as a "yellow card," for its failure to take sufficient measures to fight illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing.

"As a result of a thorough analysis and a series of discussions with Thai authorities since 2011, the Commission has denounced the country's shortcomings in its fisheries monitoring, control and sanctioning systems and concludes that Thailand is not doing enough," the Commission wrote in announcing the warning.

The EC's decision begins a formal process requiring Thai authorities to create a corrective "tailor-made" action plan to address key issues as outlined in discussions between the two groups.

The Thai government has six months to deliver the plan. If the EC is not satisfied with the plan, it could result in a total ban of seafood imports from Thailand. The EC has in the past banned seafood imports from other countries, including Belize, Guinea, Cambodia and Sri Lanka.

Also on Tuesday, the EC cleared South Korea and the Philippines, acknowledging that the countries had taken appropriate reforms to upgrade their fisheries governance to come in line with international law, and as a result, could continue to ship seafood into the bloc.

South Korea and the Philippines were issued yellow cards in 2013 and 2014, respectively.

European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu Vella said the outcome of the yellow card decisions against the two countries demonstrated the effectiveness of the EC program.

"By using our market weight the EU is getting important players on board," he said. "Both Korea and the Philippines have taken responsible action, amended their legal systems and switched to a proactive approach

against illegal fishing."

In October 2014 Fiji, Panama, Togo and Vanuatu got a green card, as they had solved the issues identified by the Commission.

Formal dialogue is still ongoing with Ghana and Curaçao, which received formal warnings in November 2013; Papua New Guinea, warned in June 2014; and Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, warned in December 2014.

"Most of these countries are now cooperating constructively with the Commission, making significant progress in their fisheries management systems in order to curb illegal fishing," the commission wrote.

Seafood products harvested in Sri Lanka, Guinea and Cambodia remained banned from import into the EU.

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