



Uncovered: China – Seafood Superpower

To stop imports from Chinese-owned seafood companies engaging in slavery and illegal, unreported & unregulated fishing, transparency and strict import control are critical.

From Morocco to Senegal, Argentina to the Galápagos, North Korea to the Indian Ocean, the ever widening net of China's distant-water fishing fleet has reached across the globe to meet an increasing demand for seafood. The fleet has been tied to a range of crimes ranging from illegal fishing, forced labour, and intentional wildlife killing and more. Chinese companies, owning fishing vessels in countries in the Global South have been engaging in tax evasion and fraud. Seafood linked to vessels engaging in forced labour has been entering EU supply chains. Seafood processed in China by North Korean forced labour even ended up in the cafeterias of the European Parliament.

As the biggest seafood market in the world - importing **70% of its consumption** - the EU must block entry of all abuse-tainted products and profits, whilst leading by example.

Yet currently too little is done. Member States rarely verify imports from China, let alone reject them. Chinese companies can hide behind complex corporate structures to hide illegally and unethically earned profits. Meanwhile their activities undercut fishing communities and deplete fish populations globally. This status quo harms food security in Global South countries, EU consumers wanting sustainable seafood, and EU fishers needing a level playing field.

MEPs must urge Commissioners to support more transparency and stricter controls on seafood imports by:

- 1. Closing the gaps in the EU seafood import control system.** The import control system should be reinforced by 2026 as the EU Court of Auditors recommended. This means harmonising import controls across the EU, increasing the number of verifications of seafood imports originating from China, and coherently identifying regions with high risk of producing products illegally and/or with forced labour.
- 2. Enabling all parties to see who is fishing what, where, when and how to level the playing field.** At home, and in non-EU countries where Chinese companies are active, the EU should promote cost-effective transparency measures, such as collecting and disclosing beneficial ownership data as an essential first step to identify interests behind vessels engaging in illegal and unethical seafood production.
- 3. Allocating sufficient resources** to ensure the European Commission and Member States can take the above measures and enforce a zero-tolerance policy on seafood products from illegal fishing and forced labour.

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