

Guinea threatened with EU sanctions for illegal fishing

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Children play on fishing boats in the harbour at Conakry, Guinea, on August 10, 1999

The European Commission on Tuesday urged EU governments to hit Belize, Cambodia and Guinea with trade sanctions over illegal fishing, while warning South Korea, Ghana and Curacao they may be next.

The European Union executive called for action against the first three with no 'credible progress' made since hitting them with so-called 'yellow cards' last year along with five others.

Once placed on an official list of "non-cooperating countries" in the fight against [illegal fishing](#), related products from those territories will find themselves all-but shut out of the EU market of half a billion consumers.

The Commission also flagged up a new round of 'yellow cards' which puts key free-trade partner South Korea, Ghana and Caribbean island Curacao under mounting pressure to meet international obligations.

"West Africa was identified as a major source of illegal fishing and my intention is now take the same thorough approach in the Pacific," said EU Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Maria Damanaki.

Damanaki told a press conference that for South Korea, Ghana and Curacao, "this is not about EU legislation—we are implementing international rules."

"We are very much willing to give them more time."

She said the "right to fish as they want" had to be set against the EU's "right to protect consumers."

The EU says at least 15 percent of all landings around the world are done illegally, between 11 and 16 million tonnes each year, with international rules agreed in 2001 routinely flouted.

Five countries made sufficient progress this year to avoid being expelled from EU markets at least until March next year: Fiji, Panama, Sri Lanka, Togo and Vanuatu.

The EU imports 65 percent of its fishing consumption.

Campaigners Greenpeace said the decisions announced would "motivate all six countries to improve fisheries management and help create a better future for their seas and fishermen."

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