

EU slaps seafood trade ban on Belize, Cambodia, Guinea

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A Cambodian man throws a fishing net in the Mekong river in Phnom Penh on August 21, 2011

In its toughest move yet to eradicate illegal fishing, the European Union on Monday blacklisted Belize, Cambodia and Guinea, effectively banning their products from the world's most valuable seafood market.

The move to target the three "as countries acting insufficiently against

[illegal fishing](#)" means EU states will now be required to ban their fish imports and EU vessels required to stay out of their waters.

"These decisions are historic," said the EU's Fisheries Commissioner Maria Damanaki. "I want EU citizens to know that the fish they consume is sustainable, wherever it comes from."

Illegal fishing is estimated to account for 15 percent of world catches or some 10 billion euros a year and the decision by the EU, which imports 65 percent of its seafood, won swift praise from environmental groups.

"Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing depletes fish stocks, damages marine ecosystems, puts legitimate fishers at an unfair disadvantage and jeopardises the livelihoods of some of the world's most vulnerable communities," said WWF, Oceana, the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Environmental Justice Foundation.

The three countries were among eight nations warned in late 2012 to take action against illegal fishing or face such action.

The European Commission considered that the five other nations warned—Panama, Fiji, Togo, Sri Lanka and Vanuatu—had made significant progress, but the Commission is continuing to monitor the situation.

Another three countries—South Korea, Ghana and Curacao—received warning "yellow cards" in November and are currently being evaluated.

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