

European Union bans fish exports from Cambodia

Greenpeace says Cambodia is facing new sanctions on seafood because it hasn't responded to European Union efforts to curb illegal fishing.

The EU announced last month it was banning fish imports from Cambodia and two other countries because of illegal fishing under their countries' flags.

Greenpeace's EU fisheries policy director Saskia Richartz says the EU took the drastic step because of Cambodia's failure to act.

"Cambodia has the responsibility as soon as it gives its flag to countries," she told [Asia Pacific](#).

"(The EU) has been trying to achieve progress with Cambodia and it has facilitated some administrative improvement but Cambodia hasn't replied or hasn't responded in the way the EU would have hoped."

The new bans also prohibit EU vessels from fishing in the waters of the offending countries.

The EU says Cambodia, Belize and Guinea were warned last year that their imports were in danger.

The EU's fisheries commissioner Maria Damanaki says the pressure will be maintained on the offending countries.

"The heart of the problem is the lack of effective control on their fleet," she said.

"How can they claim in these circumstances that the fish caught under their flag or in their coastal waters is sustainable?"

Cambodia has long been known as a country that allows so-called "flags of convenience" for fishing boats.

But the director general of Cambodia's fisheries department Nov Thuak says his country is limited in what it can do.

"We cannot act on anything because this maritime fishing is in the international zone and they are posting Cambodia's flag," he said.

"It's not under the competency of the fisheries department or the ministry of agriculture."

The EU is the world's top importer of fresh and frozen fish and seafood.

It's often been criticised for not doing enough to prevent fish caught illegally ending up in Europe.

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