

Brussels, 20 March 2023

Mr Leonard Mizzi  
Head of Unit – Sustainable Agri-Food Systems and Fisheries  
Directorate-General for International Partnerships

**Subject: Red card Cameroon – FISH4ACP project**

Dear Mr Mizzi,

Greetings from CFFA!

By this letter, we would like to draw your attention on the fact that on January 17, 2023, the European Union identified Cameroon as a non-cooperating State in the fight against IUU fishing, therefore preventing Cameroon to export any of its fisheries products to the EU market.

Meanwhile, DG INTPA supports a project in Cameroon, FISH4ACP, dedicated to improving the sanitary quality of fish products, in order to promote their access to lucrative markets such as the EU. Indeed, fisheries exports from Cameroon to the EU have been suspended since 2006 for not complying with sanitary requirements. FISH4ACP in Cameroon supports specifically the increase of the productivity and competitiveness of Cameroon's shrimp sector. The industrial shrimp fishing vessels in Cameroon are owned by foreign interests (mostly Nigeria and China), that have constituted opaque joint ventures with Cameroon nationals.

It needs to be noted that, when Cameroon shrimp value chain was selected to be part of FISH4ACP, the Commission had already initiated a process of administrative cooperation with the authorities of Cameroon in the context of the fight against IUU fishing, based on failures to implement international law obligations, linked in particular to the adoption of an adequate and updated legal framework, a lack of clear and transparent registration and licensing procedures and a lack of efficient and adequate monitoring of fishing vessels (conditions for registration of fishing vessels and their control).

Reading the decisions of the Commission, it seems that the authorities of Cameroon have never really been cooperative and that the EU has received extremely limited information and guarantees on the status of fishing vessels flying the flag of Cameroon and on their activities, as well as incomplete information on the procedure of registration of fishing vessels under the Cameroon flag. The standards for allocating the Cameroonian flag are particularly opaque and weak and, as a result, Cameroon exercises almost no control over the fleet flying its flag, both in its waters and outside.

On the one hand, the EU is sanctioning Cameroon for mismanagement of its fisheries and fleets, stopping its products from accessing the EU market, whilst on the other hand, it is supporting Cameroon shrimp fishing sector to meet the exportation standards to the EU market, turning a blind eye to the impact such support, provided in a context where IUU is rife, will have on the future of local coastal communities. Where is the coherence?

We welcome EU's support towards the improvement of the sanitary conditions in the ACP fisheries value chains, but the support of the industrial shrimp sector in Cameroon seems contradictory with decisions taken under the IUU regulation. Since the IUU dialogue was initiated with Cameroon before FISH4ACP took effect, we would have expected better guarantees on governance and transparency before investing EU taxpayers' money in a sector plagued by IUU fishing.

Therefore, would be grateful to hear how your services are working with the implementing partner on the ground to monitor the progress and adapt it based on the latest developments.

Kind regards,



**Beatrice Gorez**  
Coordinator

CC. Roberto Cesari, Head of Unit, Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fisheries Policy