

IUU REGULATION – WEIGHT IN THE CATCH CERTIFICATE – PRODUCT CODE

It has been reported to the European Commission that in many catch certificates, the weight of the product is not entered in a correct manner.

Weight in the catch certificate ("Estimated live weight", "Estimated weight to be landed", "Verified weight landed") should only cover the consignment to be exported to the EU and not the total catch landed. Instead of applying this rule, which is important to ensure traceability, certain third countries are validating catch certificates for the products landed and not for the products exported to the EU. It is a misinterpretation of the IUU Regulation which is raising uncertainty in respect of the legal status of the products. This uncertainty can only be beneficial to operators not abiding with conservation and management measures.

From 15 August 2010, products accompanied by a catch certificate with an incorrect weight will not be authorised to enter the EU market. Clear instructions have been given to EU Member States on this point as this situation can no longer be accepted. In practical terms, it means that all the catch certificates **validated after this date** should mention the weight of the consignment to be exported and not the total catch. Otherwise importation into the EU of these consignments will not be authorised.

Some catch certificates are also filled in incorrectly with respect to the product code. They indicate only a 4 digit code, while all third countries having notified the implementation of the IUU Regulation are implementing 6 or more digit codes, all based on the 6 digit codes of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS). The use of a 4 digit code does not ensure a sufficient traceability and can facilitate manipulations in order to trade illegal products with certificates validated for legally obtained products. The Commission has requested EU Member States to return all certificates only containing 4 digit codes to flag States in order to determine the exact nature of the products for which they have been validated prior to authorising importation.

This information has been communicated directly to the competent authorities of third countries and EU Member States.