

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003738/23
to the Commission
Clara Aguilera (S&D), Nikos Papandreou (S&D)
(20 December 2023)**

Subject: Unfair competition from Turkish fisheries and aquaculture

The EU and Turkey have shared a customs union for almost 30 years. In this time, bilateral trade has grown more than fourfold and reached almost EUR 200 billion last year. The EU remains Turkey's largest export and import market. In addition, the customs union has opened up enormous opportunities for Turkey-based companies and has enabled their integration into European supply chains.

This customs union also requires a legislative alignment on the part of Turkey with the EU *acquis* in areas such as sanitary and phytosanitary regulations.

Furthermore, Turkey strongly supports fisheries and aquaculture with subsidies ranging from tax exemptions on fuel for vessels to an aquaculture subsidy programme.

1. Can the Commission provide information on the state of the alignment of Turkish law with EU fisheries and aquaculture legislation?
2. Does Turkey have legislation similar to that of the Union on traceability of fisheries and aquaculture products?
3. Is the Commission aware of the impact of Turkey's subsidies on EU fisheries and aquaculture?

Submitted: 20.12.2023

**Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius on behalf of the European Commission
(5 March 2024)**

The Commission recalls that, in the framework of accession negotiations, fisheries and aquaculture fall under Chapter 13, which has not been opened for negotiations with Türkiye, whereas fisheries and aquaculture products are not covered by the EU-Turkey Customs Union.

The Commission engages with Türkiye in a dialogue under the common fisheries policy, on managing fleet capacity, rules on markets, and aquaculture.

According to the 2023 Commission report on Türkiye, the country is moderately prepared in fisheries and made some progress last year on fisheries governance, inspections and control, namely by improving its legislation ⁽¹⁾.

Türkiye, as member of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, has to apply the traceability rules and implement the catch documentation schemes adopted therein.

Moreover, imports in the EU require a catch certificate validated by the flag State of the catching vessel as provided by Regulation (EC) 1005/2008 ⁽²⁾.

The Member States, empowered to check the content of catch certificates, in case of doubts concerning the veracity of the information, have the possibility to submit verification requests to the third country. Should the reply not provide pertinent information, the products can be refused.

Since 2014, the EU has countervailing duties in place on imports of rainbow trout coming from Türkiye. These measures counteract the unfair advantage of Turkish producers who have received various state subsidies.

The Commission is committed to tackle such unfair trade practices and will initiate trade defence investigations, if justified, when it receives sufficient evidence of dumped or unfairly subsidised imports causing harm to EU industry.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2023) 690 final , SWD(2023) 696 final/08.11.2023 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2023 Communication on EU Enlargement policy, pages 119-120 https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_696%20T%C3%BCrkiye%20report.pdf

⁽²⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, amending Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1936/2001 and (EC) No 601/2004 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 1093/94 and (EC) No 1447/1999, OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1-32.