

**13th North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference
St Julian's, Malta – 22 to 24 May 2008**

Communiqué

Joint action taken by countries in the North Atlantic over the last two years has significantly reduced illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the North Atlantic. However, even more needs to be done.

This was the main conclusion of the 13th North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference held in Malta from 22 to 24 May 2008.

Mr Joe Borg, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, hosted the Conference, which was attended by fisheries ministers or their representatives from Canada, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation.

Ministers recognised that illegal fishing operations are not confined to the North Atlantic. Although recent actions in the North Atlantic have been effective in reducing IUU fishing significantly, illegal fishing operations persist, and may also have been displaced from the North Atlantic to other regions, in particular in Africa and Asia. Maintaining vigilance against IUU fishing in the North Atlantic is imperative.

To further combat IUU fishing, they agreed to take the following action:

- Strengthen existing measures both at the national and regional level in the North Atlantic
- Continue work on developing criteria for the assessment of the performance of flag States, including possible action against vessels flying the flags of States not meeting such criteria
- Engage in a dialogue with developing countries and assist them to enhance their capacity to combat IUU activities
- Organise a high level conference in the near future to address IUU issues with the participation of relevant port States and flag States
- Conclude negotiations within the FAO on a legally binding global instrument on port State control
- Eliminate market access for IUU fish by developing workable and effective traceability and certification systems without creating unnecessary burdens or trade obstacles
- Support practical tools to ensure the improved functioning and standardization of existing control procedures

Ministers were also informed of the results of recent conferences related to climate change and fisheries. There was also discussion on the sustainable use of all living marine resources. North Atlantic Ministers and their representatives expressed concerns at the impact of increasing seal populations on fish stocks as well as their desire to pursue this issue during future ministerial discussions.

The 14th North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference will be held in the Russian Federation during 2009.