

Brussels, 20 November 2020

Ms. Valerie Tankink
Head of the Legal Unit
DG MARE

Subject: Pilot case with Italy – access to audit of the external fleet

Dear Madam Tankink,

Greetings from CFFA!

We are contacting you today regarding the on-going Pilot case launched with Italy regarding the fishing activities of vessels flying Italian flag in Sierra Leone (Reference CHAP (2019) 00315).

Indeed, CFFA, as well as other environmental and professional fishing organisations, PRCM, Bloom, Danish Living Seas and CAOPA, filed a complaint in February 2019 asking the EU to launch an infringement procedure against Italy for failure to comply with its monitoring obligations. We made a recap of our actions on the following [link](#).

We were subsequently informed that a Pilot case had been launched with Italy, and that an audit of the external fleet, had been conducted.

Following on, we asked if the audit on the external fleet was accessible and could be made public. We were informed that the audit could not be disclosed, as it is part of the ongoing investigation by the Commission as part of the EU Pilot procedure.

Our latest information from your services (end of September) confirms that the Commission is still engaged in the procedure after requesting additional information and clarifications from Italy, following the response received from the Italian authorities.

Hence, one month and a half later, we would like to know where the procedure is at and if the investigation has been closed. We are not aware of the exact date when the procedure was launched but it seems however that the delays are almost (or already?) expired.

It is of great importance to know the deadline of the procedure, and as a matter of fact, the outcome, knowing that Italy has the highest number of Pilot cases in course at the moment (18) in various domains and it seems that it often exceeds the average response time (settled at 70 days).

We consider the audit on the external fleet essential for the understanding of EU fishing activities outside EU waters, and would be of great interest for our partners and the public in general. We would therefore like to have access to this document and, if necessary, we will resort to a formal access to information request.

We thank you very much for your understanding and remain at your disposal should you need further information,

Yours sincerely,



Béatrice Gorez
Coordinator

Cc: Veronika Veits, Director, International Oceans Governance and Sustainable Fisheries, DG MARE

Francesca Arena, Head of Unit, Fisheries Control and Inspections, DG MARE

Roberto Cesari, Head of Unit, Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fisheries Policy, DG MARE