

Fish stock conservation: removal of fins of sharks on board vessels

2011/0364(COD) - 12/06/2013 - Final act

PURPOSE: to put an end to the exemptions in place as regards the removal of shark fins.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Regulation (EU) No 605/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1185/2003 on the removal of fins of sharks on board vessels.

CONTENT: Council Regulation (EC) No 1185/2003 establishes a general prohibition of the practice of shark finning, whereby a sharks fins are removed and the remainder of the shark is discarded at sea. However, it currently allows Member States to issue special fishing permits allowing sharks to be processed on board by removing their fins from their bodies.

This Regulation deletes this exemption. It states that in order to facilitate on-board storage, shark fins may be partially sliced through and folded against the carcass, but shall not be removed from the carcass before landing.

Where vessels flying the flag of a Member State catch, retain on-board, tranship or land sharks, the flag Member State shall send to the Commission, annually, by 1 May, a comprehensive report on its implementation of this Regulation during the previous year. In particular, the flag Member State shall provide all of the following information:

- the number of landings of sharks,
- the number, date and place of the inspections that have been carried out,
- the number and nature of cases of non-compliance detected, including a full identification of the vessel(s) involved and the penalty applied for each case of non-compliance, and
- the total landings by species (weight/number) and by port.

The Commission shall, by 1 January 2016, report on the operation of this Regulation and the international developments in this field.

The Regulation recalls that the Scientific, Technical, and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) acknowledges the problem of shark finning, calls for its eradication, without derogations, and advises that all elasmobranch species should be landed with their fins/wings naturally attached to their bodies.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 06/07/2013.