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Reference is made to Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and the subsequent Agreed Record of 3 September 2009 between Norway and the European Community on the implementation of the aforementioned Regulation.

Norway also refers to Article 20 (1) of the IUU regulation, noting that the Norwegian notifications to the Commission of 30 June and 3 December 2009 certifying that it has in place national laws and regulations on the conservation and management of fisheries by which fishing vessels must comply with, and that public authorities are empowered to attest the veracity of the information in the catch certificates.

Norway reiterates its support of the Council Regulation as an important step forward in the fight of illegal, unreported and unregistered fishing internationally, and sees this as a crucial move to prevent illegal products to enter the market. The fight against IUU is of high political importance to Norway, and being a major seafood supplier to the EU market, Norway has worked actively to put in place a system to comply with the requirements in the EC Regulation in time for its entry into force on 1 January 2010.

Article 20 (4) of the Regulation provides for the conclusion of administrative arrangements between the Community and third countries pertaining to the implementation of the catch certificate provision of the Regulation. Article 20 (4) also provides for the use of electronic means to establish, validate or submit the catch certificates in third countries.

Norway and the European Community signed such an administrative arrangement in the form of an Agreed Record on 3 September 2009. The arrangements sets out provisions relating to the establishment of a Norwegian catch certificate, mutual assistance and prior notification.

In accordance with Article 12 (4) of the IUU Regulation, Norway will establish a Norwegian catch certificate based on the Norwegian system of sales notes, thus replacing the catch certificate provided for in Article 12 and Annex II of the IUU Regulation. The Norwegian system of sales notes is an integral part of the Norwegian fisheries control system and is an electronic traceability system under control of the Norwegian authorities (cf. the Raw Fish Act of 14 December 1951 and the act relating to the management of wild living marine resources (the Marine Resources Act) of 6 June 2008). The sales (or landing) note must be completed and signed for each landing of fish in Norway. This system crucially ensures the same level of control by Norwegian authorities as required under the Community catch certification scheme.

The administrative arrangement signed on 3 September 2009 also stipulates that current prior notice arrangements, in the context of existing bilateral fisheries control agreements and the Agreement on the European Economic Area with regard to landings and export of fish and fish products from Norway to the Community, continue to apply.

It should also be noted that the arrangement contains a reciprocity element with regard to the requirement of catch certificates for landings and imports to Norway of catches made by fishing vessels flying the flag of a Member State of the European Union. Norway is currently considering how to address this in the context of landings and imports into Norway, but such

a requirement will not be in place as of 1 January.¹ Norway will address this issue separately, carefully considering and consulting parties involved.

Norway will implement the administrative arrangement and the system for catch certificates through a national regulation, pursuant to the Norwegian Act relating to the management of wild living marine resources (the Marine Resources Act) of 6 June 2008.

The Norwegian catch certificate system is based on the already-in-place fisheries control and enforcement system where sales notes are generated for each landing of fish, irrespective of vessels size or type of fishery. In effect, the Norwegian catch certificate, the consignment certificate and related documents, which is to be submitted to the EC importers, is based upon the Norwegian sales note. This is, in accordance with the IUU Regulation, an electronic traceability system ensuring the same level of control as an EC catch certificate. The Norwegian catch certificates, consignment certificate and related documents, are given unique numbers, enabling traceability back from a given landing or export consignment in the EU to the landing in Norway where the fish originated.

The Norwegian sales organisations will be responsible for the issuing and validation of the Norwegian catch certificate, under the auspices of the Directorate of Fisheries. The sales organisations are by law an integral part of the Norwegian management and control system, and the issuing of catch certificates under IUU regulation is considered to be part of their control function.

In order to facilitate the well-functioning of issuing and validation of the Norwegian catch certificates, consignment certificates and other documents related to the IUU-regulation, operators will utilise the website www.catchcertificate.no. Upon export or landing in the EU, an exporter must require a catch certificate from www.catchcertificate.no, i.e. the sales organisation. Following signature by the exporter (which takes place electronically), the catch certificate is validated by the sales organisation. A copy of all catch certificates are submitted in real-time to the Directorate of Fisheries, and can be traced for purposes of verification. After validation by the sales organisation, an exporter can download a catch certificate to be enclosed/submitted to the EC importer.² This system will also provide for the electronic requisition and transmission of documents as required under Article 14 (1) and Article 14 (2) of the IUU Regulation, and the 'Consignment Certificate'.³

Norway will implement the requirements set out by the administrative arrangement between the EC and Norway of 3 September 2009 through a national regulation (published on 18 December). Here it is stipulated that a catch certificate and related documents only can be issued when requirements with regard to the landing of fish, and the completion of the sales note, are met. The regulation also requires exporters to keep documentation of which landings fish and fish products originate from. Furthermore, exporters are also required to enter the catch certificate or consignment certificate number in the ordinary customs document (i.e. the Single Administrative Document, box 44).

The Norwegian system of catch certificates is thus directly interlinked with the Norwegian fisheries control and management system. Norway's objective is to continue supplying the EU market with fish and fish products obtained from fisheries that are legal, sustainably managed and strictly controlled.

¹ Note that all EC landings and imports in Norway, re-exported to the Community must be accompanied by an EC catch certificate validated by the flag state, i.e. the Member State concerned.

² This can be submitted electronically as a pdf* document, but also in XML-format. If necessary, these documents can also be printed, if required by importing Member State.

³ Statement on indirect importation cf. 14 (1) and producer declaration cf. 14 (2).