

# 'Fury over fishing as EU trawls UK waters'

What follows is more than just a report. This is a campaign investigation and we are hugely indebted to Brexit Facts4EU for bringing this particular story – indeed scandal – to the attention of our readers.

In short, EU fishermen are continuing to take vast quantities of fish from UK shores which are then loaded from the trawlers onto EU lorries WITHOUT EVEN BEING PROPERLY LANDED, DECLARED AND INSPECTED.

Despite statements to the contrary by the authorities, thanks to on-the-ground eye-witness testimonies we can bring you a summary of the outrageous practices taking place in Scotland, all of which – shockingly – appear to be sanctioned by the Scottish Marine Directorate.

## Join our campaign to save UK Fishing



We mentioned in the introduction that this is a 'campaign' investigation. In that spirit Brexit Facts4EU in association with CIBUK is delighted to announce the launch of its UK Fisheries Campaign (UKFC): a grassroots membership body for fishermen and the general public, supported by some of the key groups, and formed to promote the interests of those who brave the UK's seas in all weathers to bring us some of the healthiest and most nutritious food we can eat.

## Join us now!

We invite all readers to join the Campaign via a chosen membership fee by clicking on the link **here**.

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# In the 5th year of Brexit, EU fishermen continue taking vast quantities of British fish

The UK's fishermen are asking for your support



Part I in our new and gripping story  
of our fishermen's claims against the  
EU

2 french boats offload 50 tonnes of fish from UK waters onto  
EU-bound lorries in 3 hours

*"No inspectors in sight as usual,"* say Scottish fishermen who  
saw it all

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## The 'Fish Course'

**Intro:** "Remember how our fishermen were thrown overboard when  
we left the EU?"

**Part I:** "In the 5th year of Brexit, EU fishermen continue  
taking vast quantities of British fish."

**Part II:** UKFC CAMPAIGN LAUNCH – "Announcing the launch of the  
UK Fisheries Campaign!"

**Part III:** “‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ – and here’s how we win. The tide is turning against ‘the Blob’.”

COMING UP... Another gripping story in this compelling series from the UK Fisheries Campaign!

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The UKFC is independent.

We rely for funding on the British public and their fishermen

Become a Member

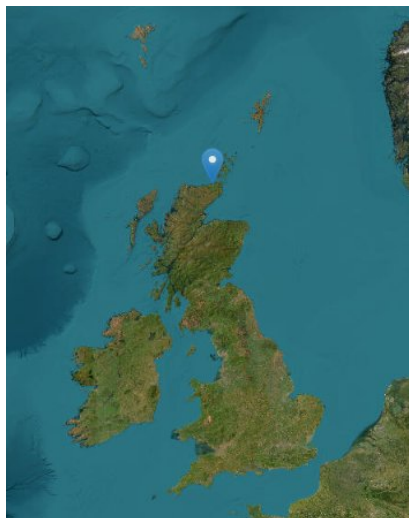


Become a Member

From equiv of £1.50/mth and be a Supporter for FREE.

The UKFC – For a sea-change in the fortunes of our fishermen and our coastal communities

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‘It’s 8am on Sunday morning (23 Mar 2025) in the remote Scottish port of Scabster in the far north of the United Kingdom.

‘Local fishermen watch as a 32 meter long French fishing boat is offloading a large catch estimated at being around 25 tonnes of fish, directly onto lorries bound for the EU. The catch is too big for one of these large container lorries, but our watchers know a second EU27 lorry is waiting, lined up on the quayside. No inspectors from the UK’s marine authorities are present to check the catch.

‘Many miles to the south, a team from Brexit Facts4EU is waiting for the fishermen’s report to be transmitted, together with photographs of what they are witnessing.’

‘Once the first French boat has finished offloading, a second vessel moves forward and the process continues until three EU-bound lorries have been filled with the loads from the two vessels. **Within a few hours, the lorries are on their way to the EU.**

‘At 11.38am the Facts4EU team remotely tracks the first French vessel, the Antonio Maria, as she leaves her berth and puts to sea, heading north-east back to the fishing grounds to start the process all over again.’



© Brexit Facts4EU.Org 2025 – click to enlarge  
[Source : A UK fisherman]

Above: If readers click the photograph, they will see the French vessel's crane in action, lifting crates of fish directly onto the loading platform of the EU container lorry.

**This catch does not even touch down on Scottish ground.**

## **Glacial progress since Brexit in taking back control of the fish in our waters from the EU Armada**

Following our 'scene-setter' last week, today we are launching the first report in this gripping series about UK fishermen, by the research team at the Facts4EU think-tank in association with GB News and CIBUK.

The series will alert the public to a number of areas of concern about **a rich and abundant natural resource surrounding the British Isles**. It will reveal the details of allegations

by British fishermen against the EU fishing industry in UK waters and against the UK's fisheries authorities in combatting this. We will provide the facts we have uncovered while investigating all of this over many weeks, and the responses of those in positions of power.

In the 5th year of Brexit, EU fishermen continue taking vast quantities of British fish and the UK's fishermen are asking for your support

A special investigation of our fishermen's claims

Led by Brexit Facts4EU and in association with GB News and CIBUK.

The list of charges

- The promise to British fishermen that ***"we will take back 100% control of the spectacular marine wealth of this country"*** (B. Johnson, HoC, 22 Oct 2019) was broken
- The promise that *"we will not link access to our waters to access to EU markets"* (M. Gove, HoC, 27 Feb 2020) was broken
- British fishermen are still competing with far more EU vessels in British waters than there are British vessels in EU waters
- Some EU fishermen are transferring their catches directly onto quayside lorries at UK ports, which head for the EU without the catches being properly 'landed', declared, and inspected
- The UK authorities are failing to monitor catches landed in UK ports by EU fishermen
- UK fishermen have no information about EU catches from UK waters being landed in EU ports
- UK fishing protection vessels are failing adequately to inspect EU vessels at sea and disproportionately inspect UK vessels
- Some EU owned vessels have been UK-registered to get more quotas and have no economic basis for being listed

as British

- EU law continues to be used in UK waters and has not been repealed after Brexit
- EU fishermen routinely discard rubbish overboard instead of at port, and are polluting the seas
- UK marine wildlife including seals and birds are being killed in horrific ways by old EU fishing tackle discarded overboard
- Enormous 'EU factory trawlers' not allowed anywhere else in the world are indiscriminantly hoovering up vast floors of UK seas and destroying the marine habitat

Part I of this series today focuses on the fourth and fifth items above.

## **Eyewitness testimony**

It was apparently business as usual for EU-owned boats on Sunday morning. The story starts at 8.05am when the above photo was taken by our eyewitnesses. This is the Antonio Maria, a French-registered fishing vessel nearly 32m long with a licence from the Scottish Marine Directorate to fish in UK waters. Our witnesses told us that the crew were transshipping their catch directly onto a refrigerated lorry for onward transport to the EU market. No monitoring by Scottish fishery officers.

*"I tried to speak with a lorry driver. Said hello, all was good, and he spoke away in English. I asked was he here to collect crabs and lobsters. He then said "I not speak English sorry." So they have been told not to speak about their loads, obviously."*

– Scottish fisherman's statement to Facts4EU, Sun 23 March  
2025

[Note: In some cases, where requested, we are protecting the



identity of our informants.]

Now we'll never know what fish they were and no way of checking what was offloaded. We must state categorically that there is no evidence of wrongdoing as there was no inspection or observation at all. Our assumption must therefore be that all went entirely according to the rules. The problem is that no officials were present or supervising and this has been the case for many vessels observed by the UK's fishermen.

Imagine a large jet arriving at a UK airport, with 400 passengers disembarking and walking through an empty Customs Hall and unmanned immigration gates, straight out of the airport into waiting taxis. This is the equivalent of what you are looking at in this report. Over and over again.

**Below is the next example**



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[Source : A UK fisherman]



Pictured above is the 27m long Brisca. Unlike the Antonia Maria the Brisca is a UK-registered vessel but just as with the Antonio Maria **it is not UK-owned**. Scrabster – where this picture was taken – is neither its administrative port nor its home port. On Sunday morning the crew started transshipping their catch to refrigerated lorries for direct transportation to the EU marketplace. This photo was taken at 9.17am. Once again, there was still no sign of anyone from the authorities checking anything.

**Three EU container lorries, lined up to cart away tonnes of fish caught in UK waters**



© Brexit Facts4EU.Org 2025 – [click to enlarge](#)  
[Source : A UK fisherman]

The Scottish fishermen who witnessed the events on Sunday morning and who took these photos told us they only went down to the port that morning because we had asked them to give us some evidence of what they and other fishermen had been telling us.

*"This is nae unusual. Same's happening all over, not only here."*

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**Join us now!**



Please take a look at our launch page for the UK Fisheries Campaign.

Everyone can join the Campaign simply by paying your chosen membership fee.

Click the logo, or [click here](#) to become a Member now!

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## **This is 'transshipment' and here is why it is worrying**

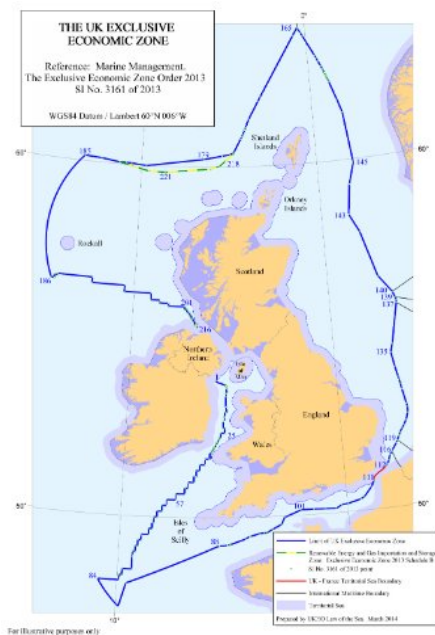
'Transshipment' is the term given to a variety of means of transferring a load from one means of transport to another. This can be from boat to boat or, as in this case, from boat to container lorry. Fishermen have told us they have alerted the Scottish Marine Directorate to this common practice, only to be told that it is not transshipment as it does not involve

transferring between two boats and that they will not answer any further questions about it.

Facts4EU decided to investigate and discovered that the largest international body in the world, the United Nations, refers to it as transshipment. Not only that, but a technical paper written for the UN's FAO – the part of the UN dealing with food and agriculture – describes it as being a very worrying trend.

*“... an increasing trend for fishing vessels to load catches directly to containers has been identified. ...Loading catches directly into containers is a concern because it appears that the competent authorities of some port States are not considering this a landing as such, but a kind of quasi-transshipment. **This means catches pass through the port in transit without undergoing any fisheries-related port State measures, including fisheries inspection.**”*

– UN report on Transshipment, 2020.



The document even singles out certain parts of the world: **“notably the northeast Atlantic”**. This is the area around the

**UK.**

There is considerable alarm around the world – including within the EU’s own marine authorities – about what is known as Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

**This is the largest threat to the conservation of many endangered species.** If catches are not inspected regularly it invites abuses and it can therefore be seen why the kind of transshipment taking place in UK ports by EU-owned vessels is a serious concern.

Map left: The UK’s Exclusive Economic Zone – in theory. © Crown

## **Apparently the Scottish Marine Directorate are not concerned**

Facts4EU has had sight of documents from the Scottish Marine Directorate including its response to the repeated concerns of Scottish fishermen about the practice we have evidenced above. Here is what they previously wrote to the fishermen about this.

*“[Regarding] Investigating and regulating export customs clearance system to prevent IUU fish from exiting the UK”*

*“As previously stated, **exports of fish landed into the UK are strictly controlled** and require various documentation and authorisations. We look to improve relations with other states to ensure no IUU fish is imported or exported from the UK.”*

– Marine Directorate Scotland, Feb 2025

Finally, the head of one fishermen’s group was told by ‘Compliance’ that if they mentioned transshipping again it would be ignored and discarded. Given our evidence above, we

contacted the Compliance Dept of the Marine Directorate in Scotland for their comments on this and on our report. It was not possible to get a response from them before publication but we hope to be able to speak to them very soon, in time for future reports in this exciting new series.

## **And finally, we have a lot more evidence...**

This report features the events of Sunday morning and is therefore newsworthy. It would be a mistake, however, to think this is a new or isolated incident. Indeed, it is precisely because this has been going on, unmonitored, for years that our fishermen are so frustrated and outraged by it.

Below are just three more vessels engaged in the same activity. These photos were taken in 2022, 2023, and 2024. **And we have a lot more photographs like this...**

We will leave the fishing authorities with one final question. If the UK's fishermen have nothing to worry about, why does so much of the testimony we have – including about the boats we have pictured – refer to the fact that the transshipment of catches to container lorries was not only unsupervised, **but also that the crates of fish were often NOT labelled?** This is obviously not permitted, since the whole premise of the quota system is to know exactly what is being caught.





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This is a CIBUK-Brexit Facts4EU summary. The full report can be found [here](#).

Main image: Montage © Facts4EU.Org 2025