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Commission's response to **STOP FINNING – STOP THE TRADE** European citizens' initiative

#EUTakeTheInitiative
#EUGreenDeal #OceanEU



The number of European citizens' initiatives that have successfully reached the required number of support statements for the European Commission to provide a reply, continues to grow. This is the 8th successful citizens' initiative. Some have resulted in new legislation, while others have had other meaningful results. All of them have built networks around issues and raised awareness among both citizens and policymakers.

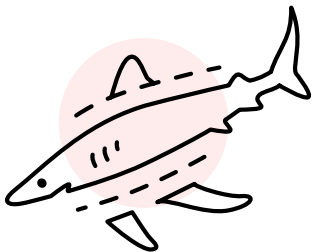
ORGANISERS' GOAL

End the trade of shark fins in the EU, extending Regulation (EU) No 605/2013 banning shark finning, to also **ban the import, export and transit of loose shark fins.**

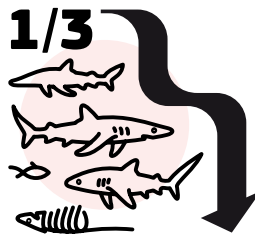
ENGAGEMENT

1,119,996 signatories from 27 EU Member States

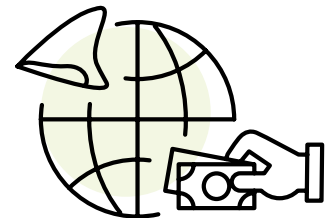
KEY FACTS



Finning means that the shark's fins are cut off on board fishing vessels and the animal is thrown back to sea while it may still be alive.



The most recent global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ assessment estimated that **over 1/3 of shark species are threatened with extinction** (i.e. considered critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable).



In 2021, the average price of shark fins exports was **EUR 16 per kg**, while it was **EUR 1.43 per kg** for shark meat.

CURRENT LEGISLATION

The EU was the first to consider shark finning as an unacceptable practice, in 2003. With the “Shark Finning Regulation” ([Regulation \(EU\) No 605/2013](#)), **shark finning is forbidden on board of all vessels fishing in EU waters and everywhere else for vessels under the flag of an EU Member State**. It is also prohibited to retain on board, tranship or land shark fins. This means fins may only be detached upon landing.

REPLY TO THE CITIZENS’ INITIATIVE

The Commission commits to:

- Start without delay preparatory work with a view to launch, by the end of 2023, **an impact assessment on the environmental, social and economic consequences of applying the “fins naturally attached” policy** to the placing on the EU market of sharks, whether within the EU or for international trade (imports and exports).
- By end 2024, provide more **detailed EU’s import and export information to improve statistics on trade in shark products**.
- **Better enforce the EU’s already strong traceability measures** by strengthening the enforcement of EU law that applies to the entire value chain - control of fishing at sea, full traceability of shark products from landing to consumer, consumer information, and prevention and redress of illegal trade - and ensuring the collection and reporting of complete and reliable information by fishermen and Member States’ authorities on all these aspects.
- **Step up the EU’s international action**: advocate for a worldwide ban of shark finning and strengthen the effective implementation of conservation and management measures for sharks’ species; **encourage the reduction of demand for shark fins**; and **fight against shark fins trafficking**.

TIMELINE

- **January 2020** Initiative is registered and starts collection of support (extended to 2 years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic)
- **January 2023** Initiative is submitted to the Commission
- **February 2023** Initiative organisers meet with Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Virginijus Sinkevičius
- **March 2023** Public hearing is held in European Parliament
- **July 2023** The Commission provides an official answer

European Citizens’ Initiative - your tool to shape European policy
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