



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

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EUROPEANS CALL ON GOVERNMENTS TO DO MORE TO SUPPORT THE FISHING INDUSTRY

New Research Highlights Belief Industry is Vital to Feeding Growing World Population

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Europeans believe the fishing industry has a vital role to play in feeding a growing world population but have accused Governments of failing to do enough to support the sector, according to a survey of consumers spanning the continent.

The findings come in the first ever pan-European survey of attitudes among consumers towards the fishing industry and to eating fish as part of their regular diet. Four thousand consumers in eight major European nations took part in the survey earlier this month. Among the key findings were that 71% of those responding thought the industry had a vital role to play in feeding a growing world population but with 84% saying that Governments should do more to support the sector and fishermen.

Despite the fishing industry contributing €71.3 billion to the EU economy*, only 1.7% of the EU's 2014 budget for sustainable growth in natural resources was allocated to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, against 97.5% of funding allocated to European agriculture. This equates to €1 billion of funding for the fisheries sector against €57 billion bolstering the agricultural sector in 2014 alone. **

The survey also disclosed that 70% of Europeans eat fish at least once a week, partly for health and taste reasons. Spanish consumers were revealed as the most avid fans, with the majority (almost 75%) eating fish at least 2-3 times each week. Most consumers (84%) preferred to eat fish at home rather than in restaurants.

In each of the countries surveyed – the UK, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Denmark and the Netherlands - the majority (73%) of consumers said they bought fish at the supermarket rather than at a fishmongers but said the stores didn't offer a wide enough choice.

Over two thirds of consumers across Europe (68%) noted that they would like to know more about where and how their fish had been caught, and who had caught it, though new regulations introduced in December 2014 meaning that all labels must now carry the exact location and method of the catch could alleviate this. Furthermore, the majority (54%) of consumers said the knowledge a species was sustainably caught would influence their buying decision. These concerns are addressed, as all EU fishermen meet strict EU standards on fisheries practices to ensure that fish are sustainably caught.

Across the EU, 84% of consumers thought more needed to be done by Government to support the country's fishing industry with 71% saying fisheries played a key role in offering a healthy food source to the population.

The survey was commissioned independently by Europêche, the body which represents 80,000 fishermen and 45,000 vessels within the EU fleet, to mark the launch of its new consumer facing information portal – iFish.

iFish is designed to address the growing consumer appetite for information on the industry, and will cover key themes such its economic and environmental impact, as well as its role in providing a healthy, sustainable food source to a growing population.

The findings come in the week which will see 25,000 fishing industry professionals attend the Global Seafood Expo in Brussels – the industry's showcase event which will see more than 1,700 companies from over 75 countries meet to identify future opportunities within the industry.

Europêche managing director Kathryn Stack said:

“The survey clearly shows that Europeans recognise the importance of the fishing industry both to their daily diets but also as part of feeding a growing world population. Fishing is a heavily regulated industry and the fishermen we represent have made huge strides in recent years, not only to comply

with new European regulations but secure the sustainability of fishing practices and in turn, their livelihoods.

“There is a huge disparity between the level of support provided to the agricultural and fishing sectors and what’s important now is that Governments recognise this and provide a more level playing field to assist those who frequently work in difficult and dangerous conditions to put food on our plates.”

The consumer findings come on the back of the publication of the latest scientific findings by the European Commission*** which show continued success in the industry’s drive for sustainability. The data shows 36 stocks are now fished at Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) levels - a key indicator of the sustainability of a particular fishery - compared to 27 fisheries at MSY in 2014, and just two in 2003.

According to the latest scientific advice from ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea), there has been a 50% reduction in fishing pressure across all commercial stocks in the North Atlantic since 2000.

Javier Garat, President of Européche, said: “iFish is a response to the lack of consumer focused information available which is something European consumers were concerned about, as this survey has shown.

“Over half of all respondents believed fish stocks are in serious decline – a misconception that the latest scientific figures show clearly isn’t the case - so further education for consumers is timely and we hope will go some way to addressing the misconceptions that still plague the industry”.

To view iFish, visit www.ifish.info

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The survey was undertaken independently by Research Now between 03/04/2015 – 08/04/2015 and encompassed a total of 4,000 respondents – 500 each from Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the UK.

* p. 17 & p.34, Facts and figures on the Common Fisheries Policy,
http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/publications/pcp_en.pdf

**p.19, Multi Annual Financial Framework 2014-2020, European Commission,
<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/multiannual-financial-framework-2014-2020-and-eu-budget-2014-pbKV0413055/?CatalogCategoryID=mpgKABstFogAAAEjblUY4e5K>

*** http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/publications/documents/eu-fisheries-n-e-atlantic-msy-jan-2015_en.pdf

Europêche represents the fisheries sector in Europe. Currently, the Association comprises 12 national organisations of fishing enterprises from the following 9 EU Member States: DE, DK, ES, FR, IT, MT, NL, PL, UK.