

Seafish Regulation Alert Monitor 26/02/16 – 04/03/2016

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Sustainability

“Sustainable” fish from major consumer brands linked to Arctic destruction – Source Greenpeace

Fishing fleets that supply major consumer brands are using giant trawlers in an area known as the ‘Arctic Galapagos’, according to a new Greenpeace investigation .

The research implicates the suppliers of well-known brands Birdseye, Findus and Iglo, as well as fish restaurants across Europe. Many of these brands proudly display their commitment to sustainability on their packaging.

ICES and EU sign Memorandum of Understanding – [source - ICES](#)

ICES President and Director-General of DG MARE sign annual agreement in Copenhagen.

João Aguiar Machado, Director-General of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) visited ICES Secretariat in Copenhagen to sign the annual Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organizations.

ICES provides the European Union with scientific advice on fishing opportunities for more than 220 fish stocks on an annual basis, as well as answering special requests that relate to the impacts of fisheries, evaluation of fisheries management strategies, and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

Ethics

Human rights in culturally diverse societies – new guidelines – [Source – Council of Europe](#)

A new text from the Council of Europe’s decision-making body, the Committee of Ministers provides timely guidance to member states, underlining that in democratic societies diversity is regarded as a source of enrichment.

The recommendation spells out a number of principles to be taken into account by states when drafting or amending legislation. For example, it encourages states to recognise the need to address “multiple discrimination” which often affects women and the most vulnerable individuals and groups of society, and “reasonable accommodation” ensuring full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination by all members of society.

Adoption of the new guidelines is a further step in the Council of Europe's broader policy to fight against radicalisation in European societies.

Thai tuna factory pays \$1.3m compensation, ahead of EU ban decision - [Source Euractiv](#)

A Thai tuna processing factory has agreed to pay staff \$1.3 million compensation for a litany of labour abuses, officials said Tuesday (1 March), a rare victory for migrant workers in the kingdom's scandal-mired seafood industry.

Hundreds of Myanmar labourers at a processing plant in Samut Sakhon that sells fish to markets around the globe have spent months seeking compensation for exploitative working conditions.

Thailand is the globe's third-largest seafood exporter, but the industry is plagued with rights abuses and fuelled by trafficked labour from neighbouring Myanmar and Cambodia.

CFP and Discards

Ban on fisheries discards - [Source – European Commission](#)

Science for Environment Policy: Immediate ban on fisheries discards may destabilise marine ecosystems

Discarding – returning unwanted catches to the sea – is seen as wasteful, but banning the practice would remove an important food source for many marine organisms. This study modelled the effects of gradually reducing and abruptly banning discards using data from a protected bay in Australia. The researchers recommend gradual reduction of discards in order to maintain ecosystem stability.

Question for written answer to the Commission on Food fraud involving fish; reducing imports of fish into the EU

The international association Oceana and the University of Louvain have recently performed scientific analyses of 280 samples at 150 restaurants in Brussels, demonstrating that one fish in three which is served does not correspond to its description on the menu. Moreover, according to other research, in Italy and Spain respectively, 32% and 30% of orders culminated in fraud against the consumer.

The availability of fish within the EU is declining, while consumption is rising. As a result, 65% of fish consumed in Europe is imported, with less monitoring of quality and greater health risks.

Thus the level of fraud has become alarming, particularly as regards fish which are already gutted before import and processed foods, because the processing makes it impossible to identify the original species.

1. Will the Commission create a fish tracking system in the EU using DNA barcoding, which will make it possible with certainty to trace a product back to the original species and raw materials from which it is derived?
2. Will the Commission take action by means of sustainable development plans which will alter the percentage of fish imports into the EU?
3. Will the Commission improve monitoring to guarantee the traceability of fish and extend more detailed labelling of fish offered for sale?

Answer given by Mr Andriukaitis on behalf of the Commission can be found [here](#)

FAO meeting discusses catch document schemes, trade in fisheries services and traceability –
[Source - FAO Subcommittee on Fish Trade](#)

The 15th session of the biannual meeting of the FAO Subcommittee on Fish Trade took place in Agadir (Morocco) from 22-25 February 2016. FAO members discussed topics of special significance to the foreign trade of fisheries, including catch document schemes, trade in fisheries services and traceability.

Catch Documentation Schemes (CDS) are an important instrument to better track catches and prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The Subcommittee expressed its aim to finalise voluntary CDS guidelines for discussion at a technical group in April 2016. The EU had contributed significantly to a first draft, but an alternative, less ambitious draft version by countries without a CDS system in place gained broad support from many FAO members. The FAO Secretariat proposed moving forward with this draft document as a basis. The EU provided additional comments for consideration.

With regards to trade in fisheries services FAO emphasised the economic interest as well as the technical difficulties in ensuring adequate data gathering and statistical support. There was general support to further develop this subject.

Seafood traceability ensures that seafood can be tracked throughout the supply chain. It is a concept of significant importance for policies implementing sanitary, environmental, marketing and fishing control measures. At the meeting, FAO provided a paper illustrating that this concept is still often misunderstood. The Subcommittee concluded by noting the usefulness of traceability in developing catch documentation and food safety schemes.

Consumer

Unfair trading practices in the food supply chain – [Source - EP AGRI](#)

The AGRI Committee's Opinion on unfair trading practices in the food supply chain has been published

Deliberations on mercury MLs

The European Commission aided by the Standing Committee and an industry working group is considering making changes to the maximum permitted levels of mercury in seafood.

Currently Regulation 1881/2006 gives two maximum levels (MLs) for seafood: the "normal ML" of 0.5 mg/kg applicable to most fishery products and a higher ML of 1.0 mg/kg that applies to certain species of fish that are naturally higher in mercury. The current proposal is to add an even lower ML class for seafood naturally very low in mercury, such as mackerel, and a higher ML class for products such as shark and swordfish, which are naturally higher in mercury. The ML classes have been arrived at on the basis of data supplied by industry and by national authorities.

National consumption advice may be necessary to ensure that fish consumption remains at a level that is high enough to promote consumer health while mindful of mercury exposure.

UK

Cabinet Office launch a Cutting Red Tape review of Local Authority regulatory services:

The Cutting Red Tape review of Local Authorities is a government review led by the Cabinet Office, DCLG and BIS. They are working together with other government departments and regulators to identify and remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to growth placed on businesses by local authorities, while ensuring necessary protections are maintained.

To input your views see here <https://cutting-red-tape.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/local-authorities/>

Potential Changes to Regulations Governing Heat Treatment of Bivalve Molluscs

Some bivalve molluscs are harvested from category 'B' and 'C' classified waters and heat treated prior to delivery to market. Cockles are an important example of this category of processed seafood. The heat treatments currently permitted for live bivalve molluscs harvested from Class B and C production areas are set out in EC Regulation 853/2004 Annex III, Section VII, Chapter II point 5.

The European Food Standards Agency (EFSA) has recently published an expert opinion that casts doubt on the efficacy of current profiles of heat treatment. The EFSA Scientific Opinion published 14.12.2015 is available [here](#).

Also some member states have indicated in an EU working group on bivalve molluscs that they would favour a change to the existing controls. **The FSA have asked for comments from stakeholders by 10 March 2016.**

Seafish would be happy to consolidate comments from interested parties and present them to the FSA team. Contact mandy.pyke@seafish.co.uk