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Cypriots strongly support expanded consumer information on seafood products

New poll conducted by Oceana shows that 89% of citizens in Cyprus want to know more about the fish they eat

EU Commissioner-designate for Fisheries and Oceans, Costas Kadis, should ensure that consumers have basic information on processed seafood

A new Oceana poll reveals that 89% of citizens from Cyprus¹ demand expanded consumer information on processed seafood, such as canned tuna, fish fingers or surimi. Whereas information requirements are strong for fresh and frozen seafood, EU consumers are left in the dark when it comes to processed products or when they order seafood in restaurants. Cyprus is the sixth country in the European Union with the highest per capita fish consumption. The other countries analysed in the poll, Belgium, France, and Spain also occupy top positions of this ranking².

90% of interviewees in Cyprus highlighted knowing more about the species used in processed seafood as important, whereas 88% would like to know how and where these products were caught. More than 85% were concerned about the impact of the fishing gear used on marine ecosystems, as well as whether the species consumed were overfished. Having this basic information would allow people to make sustainable and informed choices when buying seafood, including at restaurants and mass caterers, establishments that are currently exempted from this obligation.

The director of Oceana's illegal fishing and transparency campaign in Europe, Vanya Vulperhorst said that *"consumers have spoken, and the numbers show that they want to know more about the fish they eat. Understanding the origin, species and catch method of the seafood we consume is crucial for making informed choices. This allows consumers to avoid overfished stocks, or products associated with illegal activities, unsustainable environmental practices and unethical working conditions. We call on the European Commission to listen to citizens and require more information on processed seafood products in the EU market."*

When purchasing seafood, consumers should be informed about the associated environmental impacts, such as the risk of seabed damage or bycatch of protected species like turtles or dolphins.

Oceana therefore urges the Commissioner-designate for Fisheries and Oceans, Costas Kadis, and the European Commission to prioritise revising the Common Market Organisation (CMO) Regulation, the law that sets fishery and aquaculture consumer information requirements, to:

- **Expand its scope to include processed seafood products.** Basic information such as species, origin, fishing gear, the country of registration of the fishing vessel, and production method should be required for all products.
- **Require science-based sustainability information to be displayed on all seafood products.** There is currently no EU-wide requirement to provide sustainability information

on these products, such as the status of the stock, which makes it difficult for consumers to identify sustainable products based on clear and objective criteria.

- **Expand its scope to include the food service sector.** Mass-caterers, hotels, and restaurants should be required to provide information on species, origin, fishing gear, and production method to customers. Under EU law, the food service sector only needs to provide information on allergens.

Last month, Oceana released [report](#) that analysed more than 180 seafood products in different European supermarkets. The analysis found that for almost 40% of analysed processed seafood products in Belgium, France and Spain, it is impossible to know the species, the origin and the fishing gear used. To address this, Oceana has created the [Follow the Fish movement](#) which calls for consumer information for all seafood products

Note to editors:

Access the data from our poll on Seafood Consumer Information [here](#).

References:

¹ The polls were conducted by YouGov for Oceana. The independent company interviewed 619 people in Cyprus. It also did so in three other European countries, chosen for their relevance in the European and international fisheries sector. See press release [here](#).

² EUMOFA EU Fish Market 2023 - per capita - Spain 2nd, France 3rd, Cyprus 6th, Belgium 10th.

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Oceana is the largest international advocacy organisation dedicated solely to ocean conservation. Oceana is rebuilding abundant and biodiverse oceans by winning science-based policies in countries that control one-quarter of the world's wild fish catch. With more than 300 victories that stop overfishing, habitat destruction, oil and plastic pollution, and the killing of threatened species like turtles, whales, and sharks, Oceana's campaigns are delivering results. A restored ocean means that 1 billion people can enjoy a healthy seafood meal every day, forever. Together, we can save the oceans and help feed the world. Visit europe.oceana.org to learn more.

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