

FOLLOW **The Fish** — **Statement**

In the EU, one of the largest consumers of fish in the world, it remains difficult for buyers to know which seafood products are harvested sustainably. **Most of the seafood products on the EU market come from wild-fisheries (75%) and the rest, from aquaculture.¹ Almost 70% of the EU fish supply comes from imports** and much of it is processed, like canned tuna or sardines.² What is especially concerning is that **EU labelling regulations are less stringent for imported and processed products than they are for fresh, frozen, or EU products.**

Crucial information, such as the species, origin, fishing gear and production method (caught or farmed), is currently lacking for processed and preserved products.³ When it comes to restaurants, hotels and mass-caterers, there is no requirement to provide this basic information for any seafood products they serve to their clients. This is however mandatory for retailers, fishmongers, and market stalls to provide this information for fresh, chilled and frozen seafood products.⁴ In addition, the flag state - the country of registration of the fishing vessel - is not part of compulsory consumer information requirements, yet it can offer insights into the environmental and human rights standards.

To address the lack of transparency for the seafood products mentioned above, the Follow the Fish movement **asks the European Commission for a targeted revision of the regulation on Common Market Organisation (CMO) for fishery and aquaculture products**, with a focus on Article 35 and thus Chapter IV on consumer information. Namely, **we ask that the CMO is revised in a targeted manner** as follows:



Basic information such as species, origin, fishing gear and production method should be required for all seafood products. Exemptions for prepared or preserved fish, crustaceans, mollusks, and caviar should be removed.



The food service sector (such as mass-caterers, hotels and restaurants) should also have to provide this basic information (species, origin, fishing gear and production method) **to their customers.**



Consumer information should specify the flag state - the country of registration of the fishing vessel - **for wild-caught seafood products.**

We believe that **requiring crucial information on seafood products could help those who eat, buy, or sell seafood make sustainable choices**, and avoid products associated with illegal practices, unsustainable environmental practices and unethical working conditions. Furthermore, it would not only inform consumers, seafood businesses, and restaurants but also incentivise the major players in the seafood industry and transform the food environment.⁵



We ask you to defend consumers' right to know and choose what they eat!

Signatories:

- **Algas La Patrona.** Cristina García, Owner & Managing Director.
- **Aquatic Life Institute.** Christine Xu, Head of Fisheries Welfare.
- **Chef.** Jordi Artal.
- **Chef Liaison & Responsible Seafood Advocate.** Danielle Leoni.
- **Chefs' Manifesto.** Keren Allen, Chef of Strategy & Special Projects.
- **ClientEarth.** Anaïs Berthier, Head of ClientEarth Brussels.
- **Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements.** Béatrice Gorez, Coordinator.
- **DECO Associação Portuguesa para a Defesa do Consumidor.** Ana Tapadinhas, Director General.
- **Diversity Seafoods.** Paul O Boyle, Director & CEO.
- **Earthworm Foundation.** Grégoire Jacob, Senior manager business partnership.
- **EKPIZO.** Eleni Alevritou, Vice President MD.
- **FEDEPESCA.** María Luisa Álvarez Blanco, General Manager.
- **Federación Regional de Cofradías de Pescadores de Canarias.** David Pavón González, Manager.
- **Federation of European Aquaculture Producers.** Javier Ojeda, Secretary General.
- **Feedback EU.** Frank Mechielsen, Executive Director.
- **Fish Tales.** Irene Kranendonk, Impact Manager.
- **Freelandcook.** David Ariza, CEO.
- **GastroBio.** Arnau Subías, Marine Scientist.
- **Good Fish Benelux.** Margreet van Vilsteren, Director.
- **La Pizza è Bella.** Stefano Napoli and Nadiya Isikova, Company Owners.
- **Low Impact Fishers of Europe.** Marta Cavallé, Executive Secretary.
- **Member of the European Parliament.** Mélissa Camara.
- **Member of the European Parliament.** Thomas Bajada.
- **Mr. GoodFish.** Justine Delettre, Programme Officer.
- **Mulleres Salgadas.** Dolores Gómez Ordoñez, Chairwoman.
- **Oceana in Europe.** Pascale Moehrlé, Executive Director.
- **Organización de Productores de Pesca de Bajura de Bizkaia.** Aurelio Bilbao Barandica, Director.
- **OURZ.** Immanuel Viridi, Head of Project Management.
- **OCU (Spanish Organisation of Consumers and Users).** Ileana Izverniceanu, Director of Communications and Public Affairs.
- **Planet Tracker.** François Mosnier, Head of Oceans Programme.
- **PSQR.** Emanuel Greisen, Managing Director.
- **Sciaena.** Gonçalo Carvalho, Executive Coordinator.
- **SDG2 Advocacy Hub.** Paul Newnham, CEO.
- **Seas At Risk.** Dr Monica Verbeek, Executive Director.
- **Testachats.** Julie Frère, Domain Head Public Affairs & Media Relations.
- **Woodcock Smokery.** Sally Barnes, Founder and Educator.
- **WWF.** Ester Asin, European Policy Office Director.

Supporting organisations:

- **Abotokio Slow Food Beekeeping Community.** Asade Elijah, Director.
- **Abotokio Slow Food Beekeeping Community Women's Group.** Afuape Fadilat Abosede.
- **Gbokoto Ketu Slow Food Beekeeping Community.** Olayode Williams.
- **Ejalonibu Imosan Slow Fish.** Oreyemi Babatunde Adenola.
- **Seaweed Commons.** Amanda Swinimer, seaweed harvester and author.
- **Slow Food Chile.** Marcela Ramos, President.
- **Slow Food Tanganyika.** Jean Pierre Kapalay Karemba.
- **Slow Food Yogyakarta.** Amaliah.
- **Sole of Discretion.** Caroline Bennett, Founder.

- 1 EUMOFA (2023) The EU Fish Market: https://eumofa.eu/documents/20124/35668/EFM2023_EN.pdf/95612366-79d2-a4d1-218b-8089c8e7508c?t=1699541180521
- 2 EUMOFA (2023) "The European Union in the world": <https://eumofa.eu/documents/20124/35683/European+Union.pdf/f6357f0b-45c1-4f55-b08c-78ab773b9eae?t=1700837229916>
- 3 When it comes to seafood, the type of information provided to consumers is dictated mostly by the Common Market Organisation (CMO) for fishery and aquaculture products and by the Food Information to Consumers legislation.
- 4 Fresh and frozen seafood products (including those already precooked) and certain processed products (e.g., smoked fish) fall under these requirements. Other prepared or processed products (codes 1604 and 1605) like tuna cans do not.
- 5 We call on the EU to ensure that the future legislative framework for sustainable food systems also integrates these demands.