

## Spaniards rank first as EU's fish consumers

Spain is at the head of Europe in fish consumption, according to the results of a survey presented on Tuesday in Brussels, where the Global Seafood Expo, the largest event in the fishing industry, is being held.

The first survey on Fish Consumption and the Fishing Sector's Role in Europe, conducted by Europêche -- an organization representing 80,000 fishermen and 45,000 fishing boats from nine countries in the EU -- reveals that:

- 75 per cent of Spaniards consume seafood 2-3 times per week, compared to 70 per cent of Europeans, who only do so once a week.
- The fishing industry contributes with EUR 71.3 billion to the EU economy, but only 1.7 per cent of the EU budget for 2014 has been assigned to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to promote the sustainable catch of natural resources.

The survey also reveals that 84 per cent of Europeans prefer to eat fish at home, rather than at a restaurant, and 73 per cent buys it in the supermarket, even though these facilities do not offer enough variety.

Moreover, 68 per cent of European consumers want to know more details of the origin of fish and its method of capture, which, according to Europêche, will contribute the obligation introduced in December 2014, to include this information on the label. In addition, 54 per cent states that the sustainable capture is a decisive factor in the purchase.

As regards the review of the fisheries sector, it should be noted that 81.3 per cent of Spaniards think it has a vital role in feeding the world's population and 91.9 per cent calls for the Government's support on this industry, compared with 71 per cent and 84 per cent of Europeans, respectively.

From what the fishing industry contributes to the EU economy, 1.7 per cent of the 2014 EU budget has been allocated to the EMF to promote the sustainable exploitation of natural resources compared to 97.5 per cent for European agriculture. This amounts to EUR 1 billion as finance for the fisheries sector compared to EUR 57 billion to strengthen the agricultural sector, only in 2014.

According to Kathryn Stack, Europêche general director, "European governments have begun to recognize this disparity and to demand greater equality to help those who often work under difficult and dangerous conditions to put fish on our tables."

Europêche has conducted this survey in the UK, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Denmark and the Netherlands, during iFish launch, its new information website on the fishing industry. iFish will provide information on their economic and environmental impact as well as their role in the sustainable provision of healthy foods.

The survey results have been released during the Global Seafood Expo, the largest event of the fishing industry, which will held in Brussels from 21 to 23 April and will be

attended by over 1,700 companies from 75 countries and will be visited by over 25,000 professionals.

Furthermore, it takes place at the same time when the latest scientific report by the European Commission, which demonstrates the excellent progress of the European fishing industry in terms of sustainability, is being released. It states that currently there are 36 stocks at maximum sustainable yield, compared with 27 in 2014 and 2 in 2013. Similarly, according to the latest scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, the effects of fishing have declined by 50 per cent in all the commercial stocks in the North Atlantic since 2000.

One of the members of Europêche is the Spanish Fisheries Confederation (CEPESCA), which represents the interests of 38 associations of shipowners both in inshore fisheries and in the high seas, with 800 fishing companies, 882 ships, nearly 10,000 crew members and a tonnage of 225,227 GT.

According to Javier Garat, president of Europêche and CEPESCA secretary general, "more than half of the respondents believe that fish stocks are undergoing a serious decline, a misconception, according to the latest scientific data. In this sense, iFish is an excellent tool to provide consumers with the information they are seeking and feel worried about, and thus to address the misconceptions that still surround the fishing industry."

Source : [http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=75993\(22/04/15\)](http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=75993(22/04/15))