

Portugal, sardine import grows for canning industry

The Portuguese canning industry decided to increase the purchase of imported sardines due to the lack of raw materials at the national level, following the suspension of fishing activities imposed by the Government to preserve this pelagic resource.

Canners have been forced to purchase sardines from Moroccan, Spanish and French markets.

The decision implies importing between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of the sardine that the industry needs to keep plants producing.

According to Castro e Melo, secretary general of the National Association of Fish Canned Industries (ANICP), when there is a product in the markets, the percentage being imported ranges between 20 per cent and 30 per cent.

"The value is highly variable and depends on the amount available," he said.

ANICP leader said that the factories operating in Portugal (around twenty) have not "had any problems" in finding raw materials abroad, unlike what happened in 2012, *Público* reported.

While the shortage of sardines has resulted in rising prices, ANICP ensures that the canning industry managed to absorb this increase to avoid harming the final consumer.

"The truth is that consumption increased in the domestic market because canned products are fashionable," added Castro e Melo.

According to a recent study, 75.4 per cent of the Portuguese consumes canned tuna between one and four times a month, while 35 per cent chooses sardine.

For its part, the Federation of Fishing Sector Unions adopted a resolution last Saturday defending the increase in sardine quota and building support.

"We are near 2016 and we can lack the industry," warned the coordinator of the federation, Frederico Pereira, who estimates that the quota of 9,000 tonnes of sardines can be finished "in September or earlier," the agency *Lusa* reported.

Exports of canned fish from Portugal fell by 6.5 per cent in 2014, to EUR 193 million.

The main consumer country of Portuguese canned products is France : it bought 10,350 tonnes for more than EUR 52 million in 2014. Spain was second, with purchases worth EUR 25.4 million, and behind Angola, the US and Brazil were located.

Source : [http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=77435\(24/06/15\)](http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=77435(24/06/15))