

EU, Finfish Study reinforces adequate ATQ system

The EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE-CEP) has presented the highlights of its last finfish study, which provides a unique record and commentary of the EU fish processing industry.

At its General Assembly held on 25 September in Bergen, AIPCE-CEP announced the upcoming publication of this study and urged EU policy-makers to understand that the competitiveness of this sector relies very much on access to raw material.

During the public session followed by a fruitful debate with the Norwegian industry and authorities –including Trade Minister Vidar Helgesen –AIPCE- CEP presented the highlights of the *Finfish Study 2015*.

Some of the key findings from this year study are the following:

- Total market supply is up 1.7 per cent to 14.4 million tonnes;
- Whitefish dependency unmoved at 89 per cent for wild capture species;
- EU catches for whitefish species have increased marginally (+1 per cent) and quota utilisation has marginally improved as well;
- Exports expand by 8 per cent.

After analyzing the Commission proposal on autonomous tariff quotas (ATQ) 2016-2018, members unanimously concluded that this substantially fails to meet market demands. As stated in the official ATQ report requested by the Commission before making their proposal, the ATQ instrument does not have any detectable negative impacts on the EU production sector.

Furthermore, the ATQ regime can be evaluated to be broadly efficient in the creation of value-added at the level of every EUR 1 custom duty foregone generating between EUR 2.5 and EUR 3 value-added by the industry.

“Despite the clear indication from the *Finfish Study* that dependence on imports remains at the same levels, the initial proposal from the Commission for the next autonomous tariff quotas round is surprisingly not conducive to growth or innovation,” stressed G. Pastoor, AIPCE President.

“A European Commission which puts jobs and growth at the forefront of their policies contradicts itself by restricting the growth in an industry which generates 120.000 direct jobs across 3500 enterprises,” Pastoor added.

For his part, P. Bamberger, CEP President, insisted: “We hope that the European Commission will understand that the autonomous tariff quotas regime is a vital tool for our industry and will be able to adjust their proposal to take on board the necessary changes which will enable this system continue generating added value in the EU.”

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