

Sustainable Seafood Supply is Essential in the EU, finds Study

A new Eurobarometer survey on EU consumer choices regarding fishery and aquaculture products reveals that people in the EU eat seafood quite regularly, although how far people live from the sea plays a role in how often they eat fish.

Investigation into EU consumers' attitudes shows sustainable supply is essential

The majority of Europeans say they eat fish because its healthy. Fish consumption is also increasing, with 42 per cent Europeans eating fish/aquaculture products at least once a week at home. This underlines the need to ensure sustainable supply of fish to the EU market.

"This survey helps us see how Europeans choose their seafood. This helps inform our policies. We must make sure that Consumers continue to have a wide range of high quality seafood to choose from. That is why we are determined to reach targets on sustainable fishing by 2020," stated European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella.

For seafood, there is a strong preference for regional, national and European origin (80 per cent). The majority of consumers indicated that they like to try new products and species, which shows the importance and potential of diversified sourcing. Reducing import dependency by developing sustainable fishing and aquaculture in the EU is again emphasised. 68 per cent of consumers indicated that they would eat more fish if the prices were lower.

People mainly buy their seafood at the supermarket, and they look first at its appearance, then at its price and origin. Europeans trust the content of labels, especially when the information provided is required by law. 66 per cent think the information on products is clear and easy to understand, showing that EU labelling rules are working.

The survey findings are largely confirmed in a new study by EUMOFA, the Commission's European market observatory for fisheries and aquaculture products.

The study, which looked into retailers' strategies and national campaigns promoting seafood consumption, notes the growing importance of farmed seafood products in the EU market, given the need for retailers to ensure a stable supply. The analysis also finds that various categories of consumers show common attitudes and behaviours across Member States, highlighting the potential for reinforcing the EU internal market for fishery and aquaculture products.

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