

## Salmon companies under EC scrutiny for monopolistic practices suspicions

The European Commission confirmed that last 19 February its officials carried out unannounced inspections in several Member States at the premises of several companies in the sector of farmed Atlantic salmon.

The Commission worries that the inspected companies may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices (Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the relevant national competition authorities.

Unannounced inspections are carried out as a preliminary investigatory step into suspected anti-competitive practices. The fact that the Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudice the outcome of the investigation itself. The Commission respects the rights of defence, in particular the right of companies to be heard in antitrust proceedings.

According to the BBC, several salmon farming centers in Scotland were inspected in the framework of this investigation across the EU against suspected illegal cartels.

Officials conducted raids on Shetland, Stirling and Fife offices.

The sites visited have connections with Norway, including those of the Mowi in Rosyth, Scottish Sea Farms in Stirling and Grieg Seafood in Lerwick.

The European Executive highlighted that there is no legal deadline to complete inquiries into anti-competitive conduct. Their duration depends on the complexity of each case, the extent to which the companies concerned co-operate with the Commission and the exercise of the rights of defence.

Liens articles : <https://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?!=e&id=101640&ndb=1>

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STATEMENT-19-1310\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-19-1310_en.htm)

