

## BRUSSELS UPDATE 15/04/2016

- **CODEX Committee on contaminants in food - Discussion paper on maximum levels for methylmercury in fish**

On April 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> the CODEX Committee on contaminants in food addressed the following actions:

- ✓ To consider expanding the Maximum Levels of methylmercury (MLs) to fish species that can accumulate high methylmercury concentrations, other than tuna, while narrowing down the ML ranges;
- ✓ To conduct an exposure assessment based on different MLs; and
- ✓ To include a project document (available [HERE](#))

The EU remains in favour of the development of maximum levels for methylmercury in fish. From EU's perspective such maximum levels should not only cover fish species which can accumulate high methylmercury concentrations, but all fish species that are important for international trade. Although top predator fish species often show very high levels of methylmercury, accumulation of methylmercury is not exclusively restricted to predatory fish. Maximum levels for fish should be reasonable and reflect reality. Therefore, the EU considers that the project document should not be limited to tuna but instead offer the possibility to cover all fish species.

- **Outcome of the AGRIFISH COUNCIL, April 11th**

Data collection in the fisheries sector: The Presidency gave an overview of the key elements of a compromise text that was unanimously agreed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (Coreper) on 23 March, and of the next steps needed to take the file forward. The delegations that took the floor indicated general support for the compromise text and its overall directions. The Commission invited the Council to continue moving fast on this file, given that the current data collection programme expires at the end of 2016.

Conservation of fishery resources and protection of marine ecosystems: The Council instructed its preparatory bodies to start the technical examination of [THIS](#) file

Food fraud in the EU: The German delegation drew the attention of the Council to the problem of food fraud, which damages EU industry and may endanger consumers' health. It requested discussions and an intensification of suitable measures in the EU in order to carry out more pan-European control programmes, to quickly establish an EU reference center for the authenticity and integrity of the food chain, and to step up cooperation between the police, customs and food inspection authorities at European level

EU-Mauritius fisheries agreement - Renewal of protocol: The Council authorized the Commission to open negotiations with a view to the renewal of a protocol to the EU-Republic of Mauritius Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement, setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution. The current protocol entered into force on 28 January 2014 and will expire on 27 January 2017.

Central Arctic Ocean – Prevention of unregulated fisheries: The Council adopted a decision authorizing the Commission to open negotiations on an international agreement to prevent unregulated high seas fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean

Central Bering Sea - Conservation and management of Pollock: The Council adopted a decision authorizing the opening of negotiations by Poland, in the interest of the EU, to seek the status of Regional Economic Integration Organization for the EU, in order for it to become party to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea.

[Amendments to fishing opportunities in 2016](#): sandeel, small-eyed ray and others: On 30 March the Council adopted by written procedure amendments to regulation 2016/72 as regards certain fishing opportunities for 2016.

- **DG MARE, SANTE and TRADE at the Seafood Expo Global/Seafood Processing Global**

At the stand of the European Commission (Hall 7-1411) shared between DG MARE, DG TRADE and DG SANTE they presented the work of the FVO and discussed with the participants about common deficiencies and problems found during the audits on fishery products.

The participation in this important event is a unique opportunity to show and explain the work of the FVO, to get in direct contact with various stakeholders and to get informed about news and trends of the production, processing and marketing of fish worldwide.

In addition to this, a series of short information sessions will be held each day on the following issues:

- Sanitary conditions and procedures to import into the EU
- Hygiene requirements for fisheries products and bivalve molluscs
- How to label fishery and aquaculture products?
- Latest development in EU trade policies regarding fisheries
- European Observatory for markets and trade flows
- Which name for which fish? Discover the new data base of commercial designations
- Building a culture of compliance in Europe: the work of the European Fisheries Control Agency
- Fisheries Local Action Groups

- **Parliamentary Questions addressed to the European Commission**

Norbert Erdős (PPE) – Results achieved to date by the [EU Food Fraud Network](#)

*In 2013, after the notorious 'horsemeat scandal', the Commission set up the EU Food Fraud Network. Its purpose is to improve international cooperation between authorities and to enable uniform supervisory measures to be implemented more effectively.*

- 1. How many national authorities of Member States and third countries and how many EU Institutions have joined the Network?*
- 2. What results has the Network achieved to date with regard to the 'horsemeat scandal' and other cases of food fraud?*
- 3. What is the Network doing, and has it done, with regard to industrially produced and otherwise falsified honey imported into the EU?*

*Answer given by Mr Andriukaitis on behalf of the Commission (11.4.2016)*

*1) The EU Food Fraud Network (EUFFN) involves the 28 Member States of the EU and the Commission.*

*2) The EUFFN ensures cross-border cooperation in case of possible fraud. Since July 2013 the network has exchanged information and data on more than 200 cases. Since November 2015, a dedicated IT tool (Administrative Assistance and Cooperation system - AAC) enables the competent authorities to rapidly exchange information and data on potential cross-border fraud or non-compliances. Such initiatives have great potential to improve the capability of the EU control system as a whole to detect and address large-scale fraud along the food chain. Specialised training has also been offered to food inspectors and law enforcement agents on new investigation and control techniques related to food fraud (10 courses in 2014/2015).*

*3) The EUFFN has closely contributed to the identification, design and implementation of the coordinated control plan on honey as established by Commission Recommendation of 12 March 2015. As national contact points for food fraud, its members may ensure that relevant information*

shared within the network is duly taken into account to organise control activities at national level. Moreover, they can make use of the AAC system to process relevant findings.

**Agendas:**

- [Meeting of the International Trade Committee EP, April 20<sup>th</sup>](#)
- [Meeting of the Fisheries Committee EP, April 18th-19th](#)

**Useful links:**

- [EUMOFA – Guidelines on data and methodology for price structure analysis](#)
- [Report from the EC to the EP and the Council on the operation of Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1185/2003 on the removal of fins of sharks on board vessels, as amended by Regulation \(EU\) No 605/2013, and on the international developments in this field](#)

**Events:**

- [Tackling food fraud: Industry initiatives and analytical solutions to ensure the authenticity of food and drink.](#) May 13<sup>th</sup>. Campden BRI, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, GL55 6LD, UK
- [SEARICA Intergroup meeting: For a stronger marine and maritime Europe: steps forwards and funding opportunities, 20ht April.](#)
- [Post-Nairobi WTO agenda: Meeting with EU Trade Commissioner Ms Cecilia Malmström.](#) April 26<sup>th</sup>, Brussels.

**DG MARE:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/newsroom/cf/mare/news.cfm?subweb=342&sub=1&lang=en](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/mare/news.cfm?subweb=342&sub=1&lang=en)

EFSA: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/>

**Other events:**

<http://europa.eu/newsroom/calendar/?siteLanguage=en>

Cristina Fernández  
[Cristina.fernandez@seafish.co.uk](mailto:Cristina.fernandez@seafish.co.uk)