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- Press Release -

EU Fish processors take positive messages from reported findings of EU-wide control plans on fish species substitution and similar results from the EU-funded Labelfish project

The European Commission has recently published the results of EU-wide control plans to assess the prevalence of fraudulent practices in the marketing of fish (see [DG SANTE Fish substitution \(2015\)](#)): 94% of samples (aprox. 4000) were fully compliant.

AIPCE-CEPⁱ welcomes these results which confirm that, although there are pockets of concern, there are many more areas where things are working very well. Industry and retailers are combining their efforts to make a hugely diverse supply base more robust and clear to consumers, and these results show we are progressing in the right direction.

“Both industry and retail sectors will embrace the results from this study - stressed Andrew Kuyk, AIPCE-CEP Sustainability WG Chairman – as the leading responsible players strive to remove all accidental mislabeling and to create standards and monitoring processes to drive out fraudulent practices from the wider industry. We are collaborating with scientists and regulators to develop improved detection methods and implementing comprehensive monitoring across our supply chains”.

“We should also note – he added – that the Commission’s findings make no suggestion whatsoever of any health or safety risk for consumers from these isolated examples of poor practice. Furthermore, the study itself makes clear that non compliance can be for many different reasons, of which deliberate fraud is only one”.

“One of the biggest problem areas was distinguishing between different types of broadly similar species - Mr. Kuyk explained - and such errors are more likely to occur at retail or in restaurants and catering than in processing operations (see [DG SANTE Questions and Answers](#))”.

Equally, the outcome of the latest and largest multi-species, transnational survey of fish labeling accuracy - within the EU funded [Labelfish project](#) – was published on 7th December, showing an overall mislabeling rate of 4.93%. This is substantially lower than levels previously documented by the initial wave of seafood identification studies conducted only a few years ago.

“But more needs to be done to ensure that the highest standards apply across the whole chain and throughout the Single Market – stated Mr. Kuyk - and processors are ready to work with their supply chain partners and relevant authorities in order to give consumers even greater reassurance”.

AIPCE-CEP also wishes to highlight that there is continual improvement in transparency and traceability in our supply chains with investment in electronic record systems and shared databases. EU fish processors have made step changes in this area and will continue to do so.

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ⁱ *AIPCE-CEP represents the Fish Processing and Trading National Associations from Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, NL, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and UK. This sector accounts for 120.000 employees, 3.500 enterprises and a production value of around €27 billion (<http://www.aipce-cep.org/>).*