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-Press release-

EU consumers go wild on cod, but EU landings at all time low

Third country imports ensure sustainable consumption of healthy cod in the EU

Cod is one of the main consumed seafood species in the EU. With a per capita consumption of 2.1 kg per inhabitant, cod was ranked third just behind tuna (mostly canned) and salmon (*source: Eumofa, The EU Fish Market, 2021 edition*). Fulfilling consumer demand by using EU domestic catches alone is not possible. For many decades the appetite for the tasteful cod was satisfied by third country imports. “For every 10 kg of cod consumed in the EU, 9 kg needs to be imported from third countries” - EU seafood market expert Mike Turenhout from AIPCE-CEP mentioned. “Even if all available EU quota for cod is fully utilised by EU fishermen, around 85% of the cod should come from outside the EU”.

The maximum contribution of cod by EU fishermen is limited by the level of the EU cod quota available for EU and non-EU waters. The EU quota can be divided into quota for North Sea cod, Baltic cod, Barents Sea/Norway Sea cod and cod from other seas (for ex. Canada & Greenland). “Around 50% of the EU catches come from non-EU waters, which in technical terms can be seen as imported cod via EU vessels. In this case import dependency is even bigger.” - points out Turenhout.

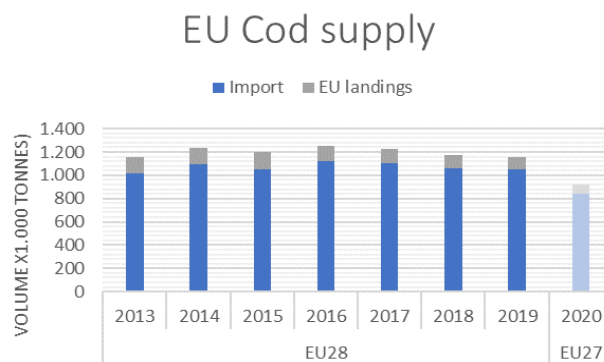


Figure: EU Cod supply from EU landings and third country imports, years 2013-2019 (EU28) & 2020 (EU27 ex. UK); source: AIPCE CEP Finfish study 2021.

In the EU28 period around 1.2 million tonnes of cod (WFE) was available for the EU seafood market. From this volume around 0.1 million tonnes was exported outside the EU. The rest was consumed by the EU consumers where it is a popular product in retail, wholesale and HoReCa.

Cod is sourced from many sustainable stocks. The most important stocks for the EU are the Atlantic cod stocks from the Barents Sea and mid-Atlantic region around Iceland. “By sourcing from sustainable third country cod stocks it is possible to offer MSC-certified products, what is of importance in especially Northern European countries”, Turenhout said.

It is obvious that for the future supply of cod in the EU, imports from third countries are vital to secure the right amount of cod for consumption as a healthy seafood for consumer. With the negative impact of COVID-19 and with view of the new EU27 where the UK left the EU, third country import dependency for cod will further increase (>90%). In addition, with respect to reduced quota potential (for ex. Svalbard and Baltic where the reduction of quota amounts to 88%) for EU fishermen the dependency will increase even more in 2022.

To ensure continued access to opportunities and to avoid any additional cost for the supply chain, industry should not be hampered by unnecessary burdens of tariff and non-tariff barriers.

For more information on the subject please contact AIPCE CEP Secretariat at aipce@kellencompany.com

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