



Spanish Industry Unites In Call For Level Playing Field

22 June 2015



Karmenu Vella

Canners and seiner operators in Spain have united in a request for a “level playing field”, urging the European Commission to ensure fair competition in the EU. These two Spanish tuna sectors want IUU regulations to be taken seriously into account when Europe is negotiating trade agreements with third countries.

Juan Vieites, General Secretary of Anfac-Cecopesca, was accompanied by representatives of the country’s fishing fleet, Juan Pablo Rodriguez (ANABAC) and Julio Moron (OPAGAC), in a request to the European Commissioner of Environment, Fishing and Maritime Affairs, Karmenu Vella.

Both sector organizations stressed to Vella the importance of ensuring that the Spanish tuna industry has fair competition in the EU market with products from third countries. It was asked to DG MARE that it begins to rigorously apply the IUU Regulation No 1005/2008, promoting the inclusion of chapters on the fight against IUU fishing in trade negotiations with third countries.

Speaking at this year’s European Tuna Conference in Brussels, Nicholas Dross, Head of the Fisheries Team at DG Trade, said that yellow or red cards should not come into play as part of GSP+ decisions and trade negotiations.

However, in response to questions on accessibility to information on yellow/red card IUU decisions and processes, DG MARE’s Director, Stephen Depypere, suggested that if a nation has a yellow card, perhaps it’s time to source from elsewhere.

The Spanish tuna sectors also called on the European Union to create stronger regulations on compliance, monitoring and verification of social, labor and environmental standards in the tuna and fishing industries of non-EU nations, to be taken into account during trade negotiations.

Despite uniting in their current call to the European Commission, Spanish seiner operators in the Indian Ocean (ANABAC) have been contesting with the Spanish canners Association (Anfaco) recently, due to differences of opinion on the EU’s zero duty quota for pre-cooked tuna loins. While ANABAC opted for total elimination of the system, Anfaco argued that the quota is fundamental to the future of the nation’s canning sector and should be increased substantially.

Comments

