



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

**Europêche welcomes new EU freezing-in-brine regulation as a major step
for consumer safety and fair competition for EU fishing sector**

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Europêche welcomes the adoption of Regulation (EU) 2025/1444¹ setting strict brine-freezing conditions for tuna purse seiners. For once, a European regulation rightly recognises and values the high sanitary and technological standards already applied by the European tropical tuna purse seine fleet, that only responsible operators can meet.

A regulatory evolution that rewards EU fleet excellency

Applicable from 27 January 2026, the new rule requires freezer vessels to demonstrate a validated, continuous process capable of reaching -18°C in the fish core. Crucially, brine temperature must be monitored electronically in real time, with records available to competent authorities. Only vessels whose capacity has been validated and documented at approval will be entered on an authorised list, a condition for placing tuna on the EU market. This should eliminate fraudulent practices of re-freeze at -18°C tuna that was first frozen at higher temperature and meant for other use, to sell it to consumers as “fresh” or “frozen”. Such practices can make tuna develop dangerous levels of histamine, which poses a serious health risk to consumers.

This new regulation finally aligns market-access conditions with the level of control and investment that characterises the EU fleet. It recognizes the long-term commitment of the EU fleet to measurable performance and verified safety. Long before this regulation, European operators had already equipped their vessels with advanced brine-freezing and monitoring systems, tested and documented under real conditions. The industry did the science and proved the technology to make EU-frozen tuna at -18°C a global reference for safety and reliability. This is the standard others will now have to match to reach the EU market.

Consumer safety first

The new rule also addresses a public-health concern. When it comes to food safety, alignment of all products sold in the EU with EU standards is a necessity.

Anne-France Mattlet, director of Europêche Tuna Group, insists: *“The two latest RASFF alerts in October concerning histamine contamination in tuna from Indonesia and Sri Lanka clearly highlight the need for such a level playing field. European consumers have the right to expect that any tuna sold in the EU is completely safe, regardless of its origin. The high sanitary standards applied by the EU fleet must therefore become the prerequisite for any fleet wishing to access the EU market.”*

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¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32025R1449>