



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

Business as usual is not an option:

Europêche calls for an end to the 35,000-tonnes tuna loins ATQ

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Europêche calls on the Council to reject the rollover of the 35,000-tonne Autonomous Tariff Quota (ATQ) for tuna loins and eliminate it altogether. As preferential access expands through successive trade agreements, maintaining an additional global zero-duty quota no longer reflects market reality.

The issue is their cumulative impact: all African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) and Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) countries¹ Indonesia, Mexico, India and Vietnam already benefit or will benefit from preferential access, while negotiations continue with Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia. These concessions cannot continue to be assessed in isolation while the 35,000-tonne ATQ remains untouched.

The 35,000 tonnes of tuna loins mainly benefit China and Indonesia

The 35,000-tonne zero-duty ATQ is systematically exhausted within the first days of January, with its benefits highly concentrated among a few Asian suppliers. Europêche calculations based on January trade flows for 2024–2026 indicate that China and Indonesia together accounted for close to 88% of tuna-loin imports from the main ATQ supplier countries².

Indonesia, which uses 26% of the tuna loins ATQ, will now also receive an additional 5,000-tonne duty-free bilateral TRQ for tuna loins under the EU-Indonesia CEPA.

“Vietnam, Indonesia, Mexico... and Thailand and Philippines are coming: how many trade agreements will continue adding new volumes of low-cost duty-free tuna loins competing with European products on the EU market, without questioning the 35,000 tonnes already imported under the ATQ regime?” asked Leduc. “Enough is enough. We call for the complete elimination of the EU tuna loins ATQ system from 2027 onwards and proper consideration of the EU tuna fishery in free trade agreements.”

Trade concessions keep accumulating, 11 000 tonnes for the sole 2026 agreements

The EU-Indonesia CEPA adds a 5,000-tonne duty-free tuna-loin quota, while the modernised EU-Mexico agreement provides another 6,000 tonnes annually during its first three years, before moving towards full liberalisation. These two agreements alone therefore add 11,000 tonnes of bilateral tuna-loin quotas on top of the existing 35,000-tonne ATQ. India has also secured

¹ Currently 134 countries all together

² Europêche calculations use January, which is the month in which the quota is exhausted each year, based on data available under COMEXT.

preferential tariff treatment, while negotiations continue with Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia.

European-origin tuna loins averaged around €4,900 per tonne compared with €3,500 for Chinese-origin loins in 2023. Granting zero-duty access to lower-standard products benefiting from such a substantial cost advantage only widens the competitive gap.

More duty-free imports, but not under the same standards

While market access continues to expand, the Commission is reportedly planning to postpone by another year the introduction of sustainability criteria under the ATQ regime and simply roll over existing volumes.

This also raises serious transparency concerns. The Commission launched a public consultation on sustainable imports under the ATQ Regulation, but neither stakeholders' contributions nor its results have been published. An independent study commissioned by DG MARE to assess how sustainability criteria could be integrated into ATQs has likewise not been made public.

Europêche has called for sustainability criteria to apply from 2027, including social, environmental and traceability requirements, effective fisheries management, RFMO membership, ratification of ILO Convention No. 188, and full traceability, including under the Port State Measures Agreement.

"The Commission launched a public consultation and commissioned an independent study on sustainability criteria, but neither has been made public. Yet 35,000 tonnes of tuna loins could simply continue entering the EU at zero duty without any sustainability conditions" said Anne-France Mattlet, Director of the Europêche Tuna Group. "Before extending these tariff benefits, the Commission should publish the evidence, explain its decision and deliver the sustainability criteria it announced."

What is Europêche requesting?

- Eliminate the 35,000-tonne ATQ for tuna loins in the next ATQ Regulation.
- Publish without delay the independent sustainability study and the results of the public consultation.
- Introduce robust sustainability criteria from 2027 for products benefiting from ATQs.
- Assess the cumulative impact of existing and future tuna trade concessions rather than considering each agreement in isolation.

Rolling over another 35,000 tonnes at zero duty while trade concessions multiply is no longer an option.

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