

EU autonomous tariff quota for imported fisheries products

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EU explores linking certain fish quotas to sustainability criteria

[Sustainable imports of fishery products under the EU Autonomous Tariff Quota Regulation](#)

Update

Autonomous trade measures (known as autonomous tariff quotas, ATQs) for fishery and aquaculture products enable the EU fish processing industry to import raw materials at reduced rates or duty-free from non-EU countries when processors have insufficient access to such materials.

The EU is reviewing whether to link access to the EU market under the ATQ regime to certain sustainability criteria. These criteria address issues such as the conservation and management of fish stocks, and the social and labour conditions in which fishing takes place.

As part of this review, the European Commission is undertaking an impact assessment into the environmental, social, and economic consequences of the current ATQ regime.

Impacted products

Fish and fisheries products

What is changing?

The current ATQ Regulation [2023/2720](#) provides tariff-free access on a first-come, first-served basis for specific quantities of fisheries products, but there are currently no sustainability criteria in relation to fish entering the EU under this Regulation. The European Commission is evaluating whether such criteria should be introduced from 2026.

Why?

The lack of sustainability criteria in the ATQ Regulation raises questions about whether the EU can maintain a steady supply of fishery products in sufficient quantities and/or at competitive prices, and whether the Regulation is consistent with the EU's broader sustainability ambitions. Including sustainability goals in ATQs for fish would complement other EU sustainability initiatives such as the [Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive](#).

Timeline

The Commission is considering introducing sustainability criteria into the ATQ regime after 2026.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

If the EU chooses to introduce sustainability criteria into the ATQ regime, this could link access to the EU to (for example) the country of origin's ratification of environmental and/or labour conventions.

Recommended Actions

A [Call for evidence](#) closed on 4 November 2024. There will be a further opportunity to comment on the future ATQ Regulation during a public consultation in early 2025.

Background

In the fisheries sector, ATQs for the 2024–2026 period are currently provided for in Regulation [2023/2720](#). The Regulation opens 31 quotas covering unprocessed and semi-processed fisheries products needed for the EU's food processing sector in the context of increasing demand for fishery products across the EU. For most products, the in-quota tariff is set at zero ([European Commission 2024](#)).

Resources

European Commission (2024) [Sustainable imports of fishery products under the EU Autonomous Tariff Quota Regulation](#)

Sources

Regulation (EU) [2023/2720](#) opening and providing for the management of the Union autonomous tariff quotas for certain fishery products for the 2024–2026 period

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