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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **EAPO CALLS FOR NO DECREASE TO THE GUIDE PRICES FOR FISH AND FISH PRODUCTS FOR 2010.**

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The European Association of Producer Organisations (EAPO) is calling for no decrease to the guide prices for the year 2010 whereas the Commission's proposal COM (2009) 636 final is to decrease the guide prices for a range of important species by 1 to 6%. EAPO has addressed a strong letter of protest to the Commission.

EAPO's President Sean O'Donoghue states: "The effects of the price proposals, if decided will be a general reduction of the first-sale prices paid to the fishermen. This will only lower the already poor prices paid for flatfish, whitefish and shellfish and put further pressure on the economic viability for these sectors. We are calling on the Commission to reconsider the guide price proposal and at least to propose the same guide prices as those for 2009 to try and help stabilise the first-sale market for the catching sector. We find it unacceptable that our views expressed at the Commission's Advisory Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA) were not properly reflected or taken into account." He adds: "Due to imports, for example of Pangasius from Vietnam, mainly the flatfish market has been under tremendous pressure throughout 2009."

The buyers take the option to bid for products at a price just above the withdrawal price when fisheries products are sold under an auction system. Guide prices are the basis for the withdrawal prices. Accordingly, with its proposal the Commission issues a completely wrong message about the product's market value. Over many years the guide prices were not increased in parallel with the general increases in market prices. This has resulted in a steady weakening of the safety net for fishermen and has resulted in very low prices in the market when supply is greater than demand (caused primarily by imports).

Unfortunately the general fall in first-sale fish prices in 2009 has had no effect on the prices paid by consumers at retail level. This is stated by the Commission as one of the positive affects of a guide price reduction.

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*The EAPO groups 30 Producers Organisations from 10 EU Member States, representing approximately 10,000 vessels, 3.5 million tonnes of landings and a first sale value of € 3 billion.*