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EU seafood eco-label planned

The European Commission could release communication regarding a seafood eco-label by year's end.

The European Commission signaled on Wednesday that a bloc-wide seafood eco-label is in the works.

"The European Commission's communication [regarding a seafood eco-label] could be released by the end of 2009," a press officer at the EC's fisheries commission in Brussels told SeafoodSource.

The EC kicked off discussions regarding the advent of a new European seafood eco-label back in 2005. Since then, stakeholders across the EU have discussed the framework of an eco-label.

Generally, an eco-label displayed on a product signifies that it has been produced in accordance with certain environmental and social standards. According to the EC, a seafood eco-label would be designed to educate consumers and promote sustainable resources and a sustainable ecosystem.

In order to be recognized by the EU, an eco-labeling scheme must consist of certification standards, independent accreditation bodies and independent certification bodies.

"Eco-labeling schemes presuppose independent third-party certification that the product concerned meets the predefined standards and that strict and continuous compliance with the standard by producers is ensured," said the EC when it launched discussions in 2005.

At a national level, member states have invited feedback from players across the seafood industry. The French government, for example, set up a working group in 2007 that stretched from producers to consumer associations.

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