



press release  
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## **Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association introduces pingers as precautionary measure to avoid bycatch of dolphins**

**The Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association (PFA), representing ten European freezer-trawler companies operating pelagic fisheries for direct human consumption, has decided to use acoustic dolphin deterrent devices ('pingers') with immediate effect on its pelagic vessels in those waters where dolphins tend to occur. Pingers are designed to be attached to the fishing gear and to scare away cetaceans (such as dolphins) by emitting underwater acoustic signals.**

"Last year we have introduced the latest generation pingers on part of our fleet to test their effectiveness. In light of the results so far, we have decided to apply these pingers on the entire PFA-fleet aiming at the avoidance of any incidental bycatch of dolphins to the highest possible extent", says Gerard van Balsfoort, president of the PFA.

The pingers are of the latest generation which can be used up to a maximum depth of 200 meters. The pingers will be applied in PFA's herring, mackerel and horse mackerel fisheries that take place in waters shallower than 200 meters depth. The devices will be used in fishing areas 6 (West of Scotland), 7 (South and West of Ireland and Channel area) and 8 (Gulf of Biscay area).

Under the current EU-legislation the use of pingers is not mandatory for pelagic trawlers.

The PFA has a strong and year-long record of engagement, investment and collaboration in research projects to further reduce the already very low level of unwanted bycatch (less than 1% on average) by continuously developing more selective fishing gears, technology and equipment. Bycatch consists of other fish species not being the target species of our pelagic fisheries. Bycatch of cetaceans occurs very rarely. The use of pingers on our vessels can therefore be considered as a precautionary measure.

### **Catching with care**

Members of the PFA catch fish in a sustainable manner, with a low impact on the marine ecosystem and based on effective, science-based fisheries management. "Sustainable and responsible production of healthy pelagic seafood to feed the growing world population is what we are committed to", says Gerard van Balsfoort.

Important fisheries operated by the PFA member companies have been certified over the years under the standard developed by the Marine Stewardship Council. The MSC standard is defined by the health of the stock in question, the impact of the fishery in question on the marine environment and on how well the fishery in question is managed. The PFA North Sea herring fishery was the first large-scale fishery in Europe certified by MSC in 2006 and has been certified since then.

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