

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2889/03

by Samuli Pohjamo (ELDR) and Mikko Pesälä (ELDR)
to the Commission

Subject: Need for a minimum import price for, and import duty on, Norwegian salmon and rainbow trout

In recent years, Norway's production of salmon and rainbow trout has grown in an uncontrolled manner, leading to substantial overproduction, viability problems and a wave of bankruptcies among Norwegian fish farmers. It is cheaper to dump farmed salmon in the EU at prices equivalent to half of production costs than to pay the waste disposal charges which would be levied for the destruction of the excess product in Norway. There have also been repeated instances of Norwegian salmon escaping from pens, endangering valuable natural salmon stocks in the River Teno, for example, which remains in a natural state.

The EU is currently defenceless against the flood of imports, as the minimum import price which used to apply to salmon has been abolished and a minimum price for rainbow trout is only at the planning stage.

It costs € 3.25 per kg to produce salmon in Norway. Recent import statistics show that the product is being sold at a significantly lower price in Finland; at the end of July 2003, salmon was being imported from Norway at a price of € 1.98 per kg and rainbow trout at € 2.70 per kg.

By the end of July 2003, 6.4 million kg of Norwegian salmon and 4.4 million kg of rainbow trout had been imported into Finland. In the case of salmon, this represented an increase of 42% over the previous year, and in the case of rainbow trout, 144%. In Finland, 15 million kg of rainbow trout is produced per annum. A total of 1 million kg of salmon from the Baltic and the River Teno is fished in Finland per annum.

The fact that the import price of salmon is substantially lower than its production cost is rapidly destroying rainbow trout production in Finland. At the same time, imported salmon distorts price levels for wild fish caught by Finnish fishermen and makes it harder to work as a professional fisherman.

Will the Commission take measures to reinstate the minimum import price for Norwegian salmon, introduce a minimum import price for rainbow trout which is at least equal to production costs and impose import duty on such fish in European Union territory?