

## The Bulgarian official seafood list: an urgent need of updating

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### Abstract

Food labeling is the elective tool for products traceability, identity verification and information for the final consumer. Given the complexity of commercial exchanges within the International and European seafood market, the European legislator has imposed a specific seafood traceability and labelling system currently described pursuant to (EU) Reg. No. 1379/2013. For seafood identification at purchase, the [Regulation](#) establishes the obligation to provide the consumer with the commercial and scientific name of the product and to this, each Member States shall draw up and publish a list of the commercial designations (CD) and scientific names (SN) accepted in their territory. The current Official Bulgarian list, not yet updated since its first publication in 2006, it has already been confirmed as not responding to the actual variety of fish species sold on the national territory (Tinacci et al., 2018). Thus, a nationwide market survey has been conducted as study model to propose a systematic review and update of the officially recognized seafood designations. 15 towns were selected according to their size and to the presence of fishery and/or aquaculture activities. The survey included a total of 71 point of sales consisting of 49 wholesale market, hypermarket and supermarkets belonging to four different great retailer chains, 11 local grocery stores and 11 local fish markets. All fish products presented on sale within each point were checked. The product type, as well as CD and SN were recorded for each product. Overall, 1610 products were recorded. As regards the category, the most part of products was fresh/frozen raw (N=1001; 62,2%) followed by canned (N=473; 29.4%). A total of 110 different CDs were used for all recorded products. 1195 products (74%) reported a CD associated with a SN while in the remaining 415 (26%) only the CD was available. The analysis highlighted the presence of a total of 50 Combination Items (CI) in which both CD and SN recorded on the market were not included in the official list; 12 CI in which a valid or obsolete SN included in the official list was associated to a CD not included in the list; 5 CI in which the officially accepted CDs were edited by adding of an adjective related to the fish origin or specific morphological features (official CDs editing); 6 CI in which the CD already existing in the official list were applied in association with a valid SN not included among the official records (extended use of the official CDs); 22 CDs recorded alone and not listed among the Official commercial designation reported in the Ministerial document. The survey confirmed the ineffectiveness of the official list in describing the products present

at retail and the need to provide a substantial revision of the designation to meet the offer of an expanding market and harmonize the terms applied for products identification. In this respect, the designations collected in the survey might represent an objective starting point for the selection of new designations to be included in the Official Bulgarian list for the identification of the basket of fish species not yet officially characterized although already recognized by the final consumer