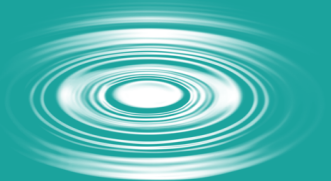


El Anzuelo

EUROPEAN NEWSLETTER ON FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT



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TOWARDS CLOSER DIALOGUE



Emma Bonino
EC Commissioner for Fisheries

Fisheries are no longer an issue confined to fishermen. As a result of its direct impact on the market supply, consumption, trade, relations with third countries, and the environment, the fishing industry affects other groups of society today. These groups feel they are concerned by the developments, management and future of the sector.

Therefore, the challenges facing the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) go beyond the fishing industry itself to involve society at large.

CLOSER AND BROADER DIALOGUE TO MOVE THE CFP FORWARD

Bearing this in mind, I am convinced that if we are to move the CFP forward, closer dialogue must be achieved with the whole of the fisheries sector: not only the fishing industry, but also other interests which, up to now, have been under-represented (such as the aquaculture industry), those who manage fish markets, and scientists. However, it is also vital to broaden this dialogue beyond the fisheries sector to include non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in the environment, consumer protection and overseas development. We should acknowledge that in the space of a short time, these issues have become unavoidable aspects of the debate on the CFP and its future.

All the actors concerned need to be given more responsibility in conducting the CFP and they must be more closely involved in a two-way dialogue with the European Commission.

Lastly, we need to ensure that there is greater understanding of the CFP's existing decision-making process and above all, of the role that each of the actors involved can and should play during the different stages of the process.

This is why I have put forward a three-part Action Plan for the fishing industry and the groups affected by the CFP. I hope to be able to submit the plan to the Commission for adoption in the next few weeks so that it can be formally put before the European Parliament and Council before the end of the year.

AN ACTION PLAN BASED ON THREE PARALLEL APPROACHES

● *Renewal of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries*

The first part of the Action Plan that I have put forward aims to reform the Advisory Committee on Fisheries (ACF). The ACF is a consultative body whose main task is to help the European Commission define its positions on fisheries at EU level. Today, it comprises representatives from the major trade organisations of the fishing industry but it no longer adequately takes into account the interests of all the players involved in the sector.

There is a need to make the ACF more effective and broaden the parties represented so that the fishing industry and the other groups (including NGOs) can express their opinions at EU level, taking account of common interests and allowing solutions to CFP issues to be sought at EU level.

The reform focuses on a "two-chamber" system: (i) the plenary committee where the different interest groups will be represented at EU level and where they will express their opinions for which they have a mandate and (ii) the working groups where the players involved will address the technical issues, depending on their area of expertise.

I propose that in the plenary committee, each European organisation representing a sector of the fishing industry, or each interest group bringing together bodies with a common objective, have one seat only. The idea is to make the system more effective, so as to avoid ending up with an unworkable committee made up of over a hundred members. The aim is also to make sure that the committee's positions are made from a European perspective. It would be absurd to reproduce, within this committee, national conflicts within the trade since these are already played out in other fora. If that were the case, the same discussions and the same arguments would come up again and again. All organisations whose members share common objectives should be able to express a common position within the plenary committee.

Work undertaken in the plenary committee should be supported by the working groups with a technical remit. All the players will be represented in these groups, depending on the area of expertise in

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Edited by Clare Coffey of IEEP London.
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Contributions from Cristina Alvarez (IPAE Madrid) and Brian O'Riordan (ICSF Liaison Office)



IEEP London

Consultation draws to a close

Clare Coffey
IEEP London

In September 1998, the Commission started down a long road of consultation meetings in the European Community (EC) Member States to discuss and develop the agenda on CFP reform. The meetings provided an opportunity for the Commission to talk to stakeholders, including those not normally involved in the CFP decision-making process. It also provided a forum for identifying some of the main wishes and concerns of the sector and other affected parties, and to hear new ideas on how to make the CFP's fisheries management regime more effective. As the last of these consultative meetings approach in June, it is perhaps worth reflecting on what they have achieved and what now lies ahead in the next stage of the review process.

There has been little official indication of progress to date, although there has been informal feedback from a number of individuals and organisations who have attended the meetings. From the Commission's

perspective, it would seem that the meetings have been successful. They have engaged a wide range of interest groups, including representatives from the small scale sector and others normally excluded from formal CFP discussions. This has helped open up the debate to new ideas and influences, and created a platform for exchanging views and building consensus among the interests groups, as well as between these groups and the Commission.

There has been a notable level of attendance and active participation by environmental interest groups. However, more traditional industry concerns, such as the maintenance of subsidies, and access to fishing grounds in Europe and third countries, have also been at the forefront of debate, sometimes at the cost of more detailed discussions on CFP reform. Overall the level of debate has been variable, depending on the country and the region. Some meetings achieved constructive discussion on existing and new policy options; others were rather less productive, dominated instead by the concerns of Euro-skeptics.

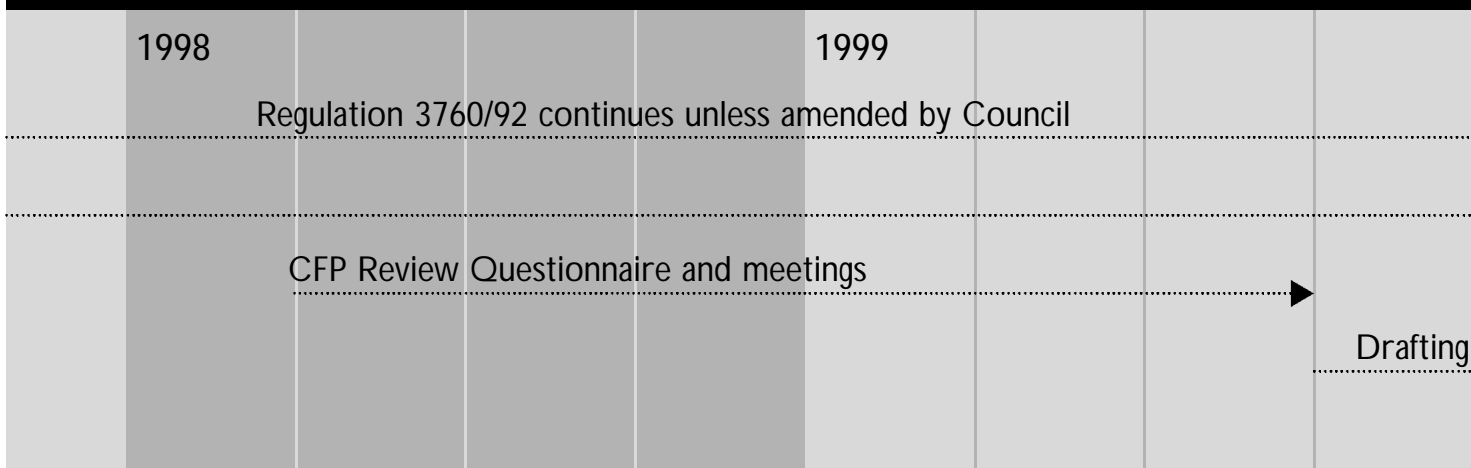
Once the meetings end in Italy in June, the Commission will need to reflect on the issues and points raised, and draw its own conclusions. The findings are to be presented in the form of a Commission Communication addressed to the Council and the Parliament. The intention is that copies of the document will be sent to all those who participated in the consultation meetings. Commission presentations and discussion of the Communication are likely to be confined to more formal institutions, however, such as the Parliament and the Advisory Committee on Fisheries.

The Commission must then start the more chal-



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● TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW OF REGULATION 3760/92



lenging task of reviewing how the conservation regime has performed, and how best it might be reformed in future. At the very minimum, the Commission must produce a report reviewing the fisheries situation in the Community and particularly the economic and social situation of coastal regions, the state of fisheries resources and their expected development, and the implementation of the conservation and management regime as a whole (Regulation 3760/92). To complete this task, a number of specific studies are being commissioned, including some aimed at assessing the socio-economic profile of the sector. There are also a growing number of other reports and positions being developed elsewhere, by independent organisations, regional, local and national governments (see boxes) which the Commission may take into consideration.

Developing positions and proposals which are workable within the European framework is a challenging task even under the best of circumstances, but the Commission faces the added problem of having to operate in what is effectively a political vacuum as a result of the European Parliamentary elections and the related delay in appointing a new Commission. It seems unlikely that any radical new ideas for reform will be tabled until a new Fisheries Commissioner is in post.

The entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam will undoubtedly prolong the process of agreeing a new Commission, as it gives the European Parliament status equal to that of the Council in vetting individual Commissioners. As outlined under 'European Scene', the Treaty also places sustainable development among the European Community's key objectives, to be achieved by integrating environmental considerations within other policy areas. There is clearly an onus on the European Parliament to ensure that a new fisheries Commissioner is capable of delivering the new sustainable development agenda, as part of the CFP reform. It will also be up to the 'greener' elements of the Parliament to ensure that environmental issues are prominent in what is likely to be an increasing number of discussions, reports and draft resolutions prepared by the Fisheries Committee on the subject of the 2002 CFP review.

● REPORT ON REGIONALISATION

The European Parliament Committee on Fisheries published a report in January 1999 calling for the regionalisation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) (A4-0018/99; Gallagher).

The report explores ways of widening, developing and institutionalising regionalisation, particularly by dividing Europe's 'common pond' into fisheries management regions, for example, the North Sea, Irish Sea and the West of Scotland.

The role that regional management bodies would have compared to existing EC institutions is unclear, although some form of devolved management committee structure is possible. If such an approach is to find support among the requisite number of Member States, however, it will be important that decisions can

be taken in one region without impacting on regions elsewhere. However, ultimate responsibility would need to continue to rest with the Commission and the Council, not least, as the report notes, 'to ensure that all regional management regimes are sufficiently robust to ensure the long-term sustainability of stocks'.

During its plenary session in March, the European Parliament adopted a resolution approving the report's call for regionalisation and asking that the Parliament be consulted this year 'to enable the CFP to be regionalised following the 2002 review'. It also supported extending to 24 miles the current 12 mile inshore access restriction.

For further information see: European Parliament www.europarl.eu.int European Parliament Committee on Fisheries Secretariat, tel +32 2 284 4593

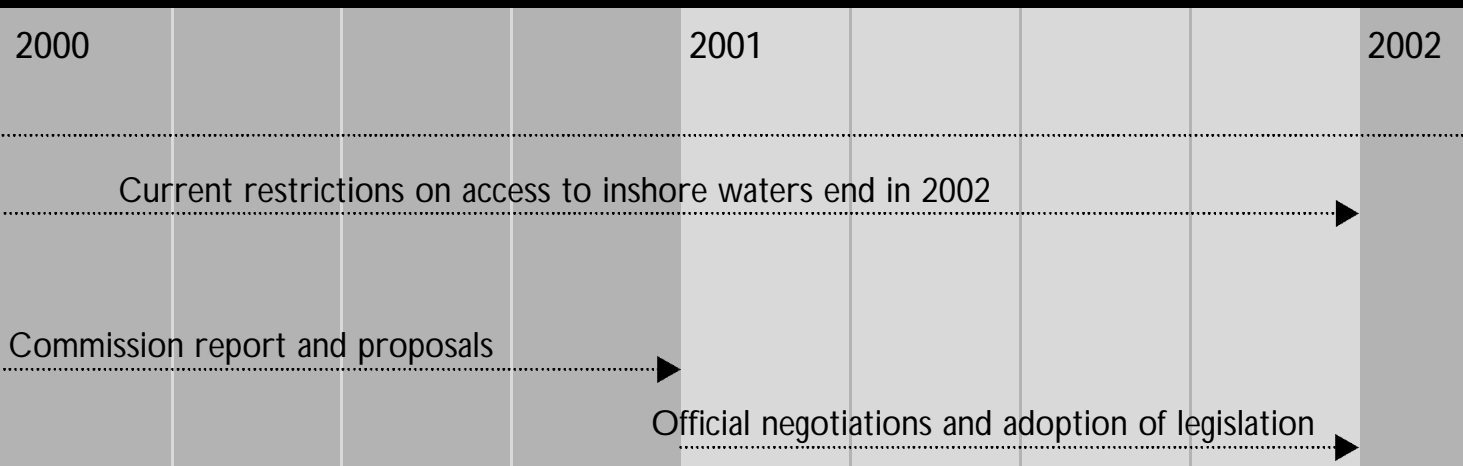
● IRELAND LAUNCHES CFP REVIEW GROUP

Ireland has launched a National Common Fisheries Policy Strategy Review Group to co-ordinate and develop national strategies and to guide Ireland's negotiating position in the review of the CFP in 2002. Speaking at the launch in December 1998 Dr Woods, Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, said 'decisions on the review of the CFP may be 3 years away but I am kick starting our preparations now to ensure that Ireland's position is well developed, well understood, and well argued.'

The National Strategy Group includes key players from the catching, fish-farming and processing sectors of the industry, as

well as a range of state agencies, including the BIM (Irish Sea Fisheries Board) and the Marine Institute. Dr. Woods said that he had tasked the Group 'to consult fully with all interests, as well as the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors of the industry.' He noted that the Group will also 'commission research from within Ireland and internationally on the legal, economic, scientific, marketing and environmental aspects'. The Group's final report is due early in 2001.

For further details contact: Denis Maher, Media and Information Unit, Department of the Marine and Natural Resources, tel: + 353 1 6785444; fax: +353 1 6766161; email Press_Office@marine.irlgov.ie



EU Distant Water Fisheries: Who Pays and Who Benefits?

The fisheries sector is increasingly having to operate in a global environment, both to catch fish and to access markets for fish and fish products. In Europe the EU takes the lead on international or 'external' fisheries policy, an area that absorbs more than a third of the EU's annual fisheries budget. The policy has three basic areas: extra-Community trade in fish products, multilateral agreements to conserve and allocate high seas fish stocks, and bilateral agreements to gain access to fish stocks in waters of third countries.

Bilateral agreements, the focus of this edition of *El Anzuelo*, are negotiated between the EU and individual third countries. They account for the single largest share of the fisheries budget: Euro 246 million in 1997 alone. There are several types of bilateral fishing agreements, including so-called 'first generation' agreements where fishing rights are exchanged for access to markets or financial compensation or both. They currently involve Morocco, 14 Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and Greenland. A 'second generation' agreement with Argentina provides for the exchange of technological expertise and the establishment of joint ventures and enterprises.

As the following article explains, some bilateral agreements have been subject to criticism because of the social, environmental and economic costs that they incur in countries outside the European Community. In order to address this issue, the Commission has commissioned a cost/benefit analysis of the agreements. The results of this study are to be made available in mid 1999, at which point the Commission is to develop guidelines to inform future activities in this area. This guidance is especially necessary given that a large number of the fishing agreements, including a major agreement with Morocco, are due to expire during 1999.

Brian O'Riordan
ICSF Liaison Office, Brussels

Europe's fishing industry is highly dependent on distant water fishing for investment opportunities, employment, and supplies of raw material. Since 1977 the EU has used fisheries agreements to maintain and expand its distant water fishing fleet, in order to help meet these needs. More recently, and in the absence of an adequate policy framework for dealing with social, economic and conservation problems at home, distant water fishing has increasingly been used by the EU as a means of reducing pressure on fisheries in Community waters.

WHY THIRD COUNTRY AGREEMENTS?

According to the Commission, some 1,300 vessels and 20,000 jobs in fishing directly depend on fisheries agreements with third countries. Fisheries agreements possibly also provide as many as 50,000 – 100,000 jobs in such ancillary industries as ship building, fish processing, transport, marketing, etc.

The agreements also provide between 20 to 25 per cent of the fish consumed in the EU. Self-sufficiency in fish from the Community's own waters is falling, from 83 per cent in 1984 to 58 per cent in 1994, and the deficit in supplies from home waters is now estimated to be growing at an annual rate of 15 to 25 per cent. The EU consequently needs to import 35 to 40 per cent of its fish supplies, which annually incurs a commercial deficit of Euro 1.4 million.

The EU is also using fisheries agreements and vessel transfers as a way of dealing with fleet over capacity and overfishing of commercial fish stocks in its own waters. Over capacity of the EU's fishing fleets is seen as the main problem facing the sector, leading to serious depletion of fish stocks in EU waters: 55 per cent of stocks are over exploited; 42 per cent are seriously over exploited, and 7 per cent have collapsed. Over capacity in the fleets fishing EU waters is a growing concern and in 1994 was estimated to be as high as 40 per cent in segments targeting the most heavily exploited stocks. According to a recent study (CFFA 1998), over the period 1970 to 1983, subsidies provided to modernise and restructure the Community fleet contributed to an estimated 64 per cent increase in fleet capacity. The EU's Multi-Annual Guidance Programmes (MAGPs), starting in 1983, were initially aimed at slowing down the production of increasingly powerful vessels. They are now used to scrap and transfer what has come to be recognised as an unmanageably large fishing fleet.

The shift in emphasis towards scrapping vessels or transferring them to third countries is reflected in the proportion of the fisheries budget allocated to these areas. The annual fisheries budget currently runs to some Euro 875 million, with in excess of 80 per cent allocated to the following two areas:

- Euro 260 million, 30-35 per cent of the budget, is spent on securing and subsidising access licences for EU distant water vessels to fish in other waters; and
- Euro 450 million, 50-55 per cent of the budget, is spent on restructuring and modernising the fishing fleet under the Structural Funds. Over the period 1991 to 1994, part funding to support vessel transfers

through Joint Enterprises (permanent transfers) and Joint Ventures (temporary transfers), combined with funds from Member States, amounted to some Euro 212 million.

The budgetary allocation illustrates the important role of third country fishing agreements in addressing the Community's vessel overcapacity. However, the dangers of such a policy were recently highlighted by the FAO: "Excessive fishing capacity is largely responsible for the global degradation of marine fishery resources... When removing surplus vessels from one fishery, care must be taken that those vessels are not transferred to fisheries where they create over-capacity. Over the past years, vessels that were taken out of the markets in industrialised countries were often transferred to developing countries with already overfished resources". The EU distant water fishing policy has been a major contributor to this type of redeployment of overcapacity.

REVIEWING THE BENEFITS OF THIRD COUNTRY AGREEMENTS

The need to develop a more coherent approach to these issues was underlined by the Development Council in 1997 with the adoption of a Resolution on "Fishery and Development". This "stressed the need for an integrated policy approach to sustainable fishing in third countries, which takes into account, besides the interests of the EU, the interests of the local fishery sector, as well as the principle of sustainability of the resources".

In the same year, the Council of Fisheries Ministers highlighted the degree of dependence on fisheries agreements at its October meeting. The Council "reaffirmed its commitment to Fisheries Agreements that are and will continue to be an essential and integral component of the Common Fisheries Policy. In this context the Council underlines that safeguarding the traditional distant-water activities and also other traditional fishing activities of Member State's fleets is a fundamental objective of Fisheries Agreements". Unfortunately, the Council failed to acknowledge that fisheries agreements are increasingly used to extend the EU's fishing activities in distant waters. Describing all such activities as 'traditional' is no longer valid.

In follow-up to the Fisheries Council, the Commission was asked to provide a report on the costs and benefits arising from the EU's Fisheries Agreements. In commissioning this study, the Council urged "that...account also be taken of non-quantifiable elements, such as the Union's political relations, the strategic importance of the Community's fleet presence in the waters of the third countries, the contribution of fisheries agreements to sustainable fisheries throughout the world and the development effects of the agreements for third countries".

In practice, the terms of reference for the cost-benefit analysis cover five key areas:

- Achieving greater flexibility, in terms of adjusting fishing opportunities in line with the sustainable exploitation of stocks; the implications of reduction or under-utilisation of fishing opportunities on levels of financial compensation payable; the transfer of fishing possibilities between Member States; the role of Joint



Fish being landed in Elmina, Ghana

Committees and other institutional arrangements in achieving flexibility;

- Improving monitoring and control mechanisms;
- Improving scientific research;
- Adjusting levels of compensation payments to reflect actual fishing possibilities available; and
- Sharing access costs more equitably between the Community and the ship owners who benefit most directly from the agreements.

What are given less emphasis in the terms of reference for the cost-benefit analysis are the hidden costs, particularly the social and environmental costs incurred by the coastal communities in the third countries concerned. The following two existing fisheries agreements demonstrate how the failure of the EU to take these costs into account has impacted negatively on the local communities:

THE AGREEMENT WITH MAURITANIA

The EU has a five-year agreement with Mauritania, where access to cephalopod species is a key feature. Despite a 1992 report to the Government of Mauritania which warned that the total octopus catch was "30% more than what could be regarded as optimum", the agreement allows the progressive increase in the number of cephalopod trawlers from 25 (7,500 GT) in 1996 to 50 (15,000 GT) in 1999/2000.

While there is a two month closed season for octopus, the EU trawlers carry on fishing during this period and in so doing, take a large by-catch of octopus that has to be discarded. A 1997 report by the French institute IFREMER observed that "stocks of demersal fish could be depleted as a result of the massive discards from the trawl fishery for cephalopods". It could also jeopardise a local small-scale pot fishery for octopus which has developed since the mid 1980s. This fishery provides the mainstay of the Mauritanian small-scale

fishery, which has grown from around 500 small-scale vessels operating along the coast in 1986, to 2,800 in 1997. Initially a minor source of local protein, artisanal fishing now earns 25% of all export income and, directly and indirectly, provides 25,000 work places.

THE AGREEMENT WITH ARGENTINA

This five-year agreement, signed in 1992, is the first and only "Second Generation Agreement". The main emphasis of the agreement is on the transfer of vessels through Joint Enterprises, and access to non-surplus stocks (hake) and surplus stocks (non-hake stocks). A key objective was to modernise the Argentine fleet without increasing its capacity. This would be achieved by transferring licenses from old Argentine vessels withdrawn from the fishery, to more modern EU vessels brought in. Aspects of this agreement which have proved particularly negative include:

- An increase in the capacity of the hake fleet: according to reports from Argentina, a result of the transfer of vessels from the EU, the fishing capacity of the hake fleet has increased by 137,000 tonnes since 1995. An unpublished Government report comments that "each incoming vessel licensed to catch surplus species has tried, with or without success, to diversify into catching

non-surplus species or (species) not included in their original license". In other words it was European policy first to establish a presence on Argentine fishing grounds, and then to expand activities, contrary to what was agreed. It has been able to do this through illegal fishing and fraudulent use of quota allocations.

- Overfishing has had a major impact on hake stocks, which have been reduced to 25% of their pristine biomass in only 9 years. Despite this, due to the subsidised transfer of vessels from the EU, hake prices remain low, encouraging fishermen to fish harder. The fishery is now characterised by very high discard levels (in excess of 40% of the catch) and a large proportion of juvenile fish (75% of the landings comprise 2 and 3 year old fish).

- The transfer of freezer trawlers has exacerbated existing tensions between coastal vessels, which land their catches ashore for processing, and freezer trawlers which process their catches at sea for direct export. The coastal sector, which provides an important source of income and employment in Mar del Plata and other ports, now finds itself put at a considerable disadvantage as a result of a new fisheries law which will introduce transferable quotas. The freezer trawlers will be provided with a considerable share of the limited quotas during the initial allocation. This will mean that many Argentine coastal vessels will have to exit from the hake fishery, jeopardising thousands of jobs in the industry.

● THE MOROCCAN AGREEMENT

Dr Cristina Alvarez
IPAE Madrid

Morocco is among the numerous countries which have signed agreements allowing EC vessels to fish in their waters. The Moroccan agreement originated in the bilateral Spanish – Moroccan agreements that existed before Spain joined the then European Economic Community in 1986. Moroccan fisheries have traditionally been very important for Spain, which in turn is the main EC consumer of fish. 53 per cent of the fish which is consumed in Spain comes from third countries, and of this, 79 per cent comes from West African and Moroccan waters.

In 1995, negotiations took place to renew the Moroccan agreement for the period 1996 to 1999. However, the rapid and serious decline in available fish resources made negotiations very difficult. It highlighted the enormous dependence of the Spanish fleet on foreign fisheries, but it was also clear that first generation agreements would no longer be viable in the future. Indeed, Fisheries Commissioner, Emma Bonino acknowledged in 1995 that this would probably be the last agreement of its type to be concluded. It therefore comes as no surprise that Morocco, with support from the EC, has confirmed that it does not wish to renew the

existing fishing agreement when it expires on 30 November 1999.

Spain recognises that responsibilities for negotiating alternative arrangements now rest with the EC. However, given the effects that non-renewal of the agreement would have on the Spanish fishing sector, Spain has proposed a new framework for cooperation to the Moroccan government. The aim is to conclude a 'second generation' agreement that can address issues such as marketing, processing, equipment, training and resource conservation. This type of agreement would require the creation of private Mixed Enterprises; the role of the State would be limited to promotion.

The Spanish Fishing Ministry has also made clear its wish that mixed Spanish / Moroccan companies diversify fishing activities, seeking out alternative fishing grounds in other parts of the African Atlantic. Finally Spain also aims to encourage the reconversion of some of its Moroccan based vessels. Since many vessels no longer have the capacity to go to other distant-water fisheries, attempts will be made to convert vessels to other uses like transport or tourism, making it easier for fishermen to find employment outside fishing.

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In conclusion, like other components of the CFP, the EU's distant water fishing policy has over-emphasised short term economic concerns at home whilst under playing longer-term sustainability. Promoting an industrial model of development, small-scale community based fisheries are effectively being "engineered" out of the fishery. The rules and regulations have favoured large scale operators, have encouraged unfair competition for resources and markets, and have led to increasing inequities in the fishery.

This is a cause for concern for many fisheries dependent communities. They see themselves threatened by a bureaucratic system which is geared towards making centralised management easier and more cost effective, by favouring a smaller, larger-scale, vertically integrated fishing industry owned by fewer operators. In a sense, the benefits of the CFP have accrued mainly to European industry interests at the expense of community-based fisheries and the environment in third countries.

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Sharks are to be the subject of national action plans

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FAO plans for sharks, seabirds and fishing capacity

At its meeting in Rome in February, the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) approved three International Plans of Action relating to sharks, seabirds and the management of vessel capacity (see Vol 2 of *El Anzuelo*). The voluntary Plans have been elaborated within the framework of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Where relevant, States are called upon to assess their fisheries, and if necessary draw up and implement national plans of action.

Funding is being made available to support the programme, and particularly research, development and training in relevant subjects, as well as technical assistance to individual countries and to regional fisheries organisations. Technical guidelines for implementing national plans are expected to be drawn up by the FAO Fisheries Department in the course of 1999.

For further details contact: Erwin Northhoff, UN FAO, tel +39 06 5705 3105; fax +39 06 5705 4975; website <http://www.fao.org>

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European Parliament pushes for action on North Sea stocks

The European Parliament is pushing for further action to ensure that fishing in the North Sea is sustainable. A non-binding resolution adopted on 10 March (A4-0063/99), drafted by UK Socialist MEP Veronica Hardstaff, welcomes progress being made but calls for more work to integrate environmental considerations into fisheries policy.

The Parliament is insisting that the Council reduce current levels of fishing effort in the region as well as progressively reducing Total Allowable Catches (TACs), based on the precautionary principle. It also calls on the

Commission and the Council to ensure that fishing is properly controlled, and to combat illegal catches and landings.

For further details contact: European Parliament, <http://www.europarl.eu.int> European Parliament Committee on Fisheries Secretariat, tel +32 2 284 4593

Fisheries sector should be top priority

The network of European Environment Advisory Councils (EEAC) has stressed the importance of the fisheries sector in its contribution to the Commission's Global Assessment of the EC's Fifth Environmental Action Programme.

EEAC is made up of statutory governmental advisory bodies from different Member States. Its

contribution to the assessment states that fisheries should have been included among the sectors targeted by the Fifth Action Programme. 'The conservation of the character and dynamics of marine ecosystems is of prime importance, with overfishing being a key threat alongside accidental capture of target species and changes to both the structure of the ecosystem and the seabed'.

For further details contact: Focal Point for European Environmental Advisory Councils: www.eur-focalpt.org/fifthact.htm

State of world fisheries and aquaculture

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has released

its latest State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) report. According to the report, total world fisheries production amounted to an estimated 122 million tonnes (mt) in 1997, with a decline of over 1mt in marine catches offset by increases in aquaculture and inland fishery production. The EC's fisheries and aquaculture production and trade accounted for 6.3% of the world total in 1996, a decline from 9.1% in 1984.

The report notes the continued slowdown in the growth of fish supplies which, it says, is likely to persist for a few more years to come. It also analyses a selection of issues facing fishers and aquaculturalists, including national fisheries governance, sustainable aquaculture, integrating fisheries into coastal area management, control and reduction of fishing capacity, and reduction of by-catch and discards.

For further details contact: Erwin Northhoff, UN FAO, tel +39 6 5705 3105; fax +39 6 5705 4975; <http://www.fao.org>

New directions for EU fishing subsidies?

The need for a more complete understanding of the nature and impact of EU fishing subsidies was highlighted by a director of DG XIV, John Farnell, in a recent speech to the Annual Conference of the European Association of Fisheries Economists in Dublin. The importance of the fishing industry in some regions of Europe meant that subsidies would continue for some time to come, according to Mr Farnell. However, growing international concern about the impact of subsidies meant that the EU would not be free to follow its own way indefinitely.

The issue of subsidies to the fishing sector is increasingly being discussed in international fora, with three key international bodies, FAO, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and OECD already addressing the issue.

FAO is focusing on the role of developed country subsidies in keeping out developing country imports, and the impact that distant-water fishing can have on the sustainability of developing-country fish stocks. The WTO

has discussed the issue as part of its Committee on Trade and Environment deliberations.

Ongoing OECD research aims to obtain a more accurate picture of the actual extent of financial transfers to fisheries.

For further details contact: Madame C. Gariazzo, Head of Unit, Communications and Information Unit, DG XIV. tel: +32 2 299 9255; email: cgariazzo@dg14.cec.be

Conservation in Action for the North East Atlantic

Groundbreaking conservation decisions on mackerel and deep-water species were taken in February by the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) with the aim of safeguarding and sustaining stocks in the region. NEAFC, the body responsible for management of fish stocks in international waters in the North East Atlantic, has agreed a total allowable catch of 44,000 tonnes of mackerel, divided between Denmark, EC, Iceland, Norway, Poland and Russia.

Agreement has also been reached to convene a workshop to review existing data, research and management measures on deep water species, preparing the ground for possible new NEAFC measures to regulate these stocks. The 'Open Hearing on Deep-Sea Species' will be hosted by the European Commission in Brussels on 22 to 23 June 1999.

For further information contact: Mr Sigmund Engesaeter, tel +44 171 238 5435, email s.engesaeeter@fish.maff.gov.uk

NGOs criticise Danish approach to harbour porpoises

The Danish Government's plan to reduce harbour porpoise bycatch in its bottom set gill net fishery has been criticised by a group of non-governmental organisations, including WWF. The NGOs claim that the action may be in contravention of EC legislation to protect important habitats and species, and have therefore lodged a complaint with the European Commission.

Danish fisheries are estimated to kill more than 7,000 harbour porpoises every year, a problem which the Danish government is

Policy Update – the Amsterdam Treaty

The new Treaty of the European Union, the Treaty of Amsterdam, came into effect on 1 May 1999 bringing with it significant changes to the EU's environmental policy. The most immediate effect is to complicate the process of appointing a new Commission to replace the caretaker regime, which could have a knock-on effect in terms of delaying important environmental initiatives.

In the longer term however the Treaty of Amsterdam has undoubtedly strengthened the EU's environmental policy. The Treaty:

- makes sustainable development an explicit objective of the Union.
- strengthens the requirement that the environment should be integrated into other EC policies.
- gives more powers to the European Parliament in the development of new legislation.

Although the integration of environmental consider-

ations into other policy areas was a requirement before Amsterdam, it now forms a separate article at the beginning of the Treaty. In addition, a (non-binding) Declaration attached to the Treaty commits the Commission to undertake 'environmental impact assessment studies when developing proposals that might have significant environmental implications'.

These provisions have already had an impact by lending authority to the new integration initiative launched at the Cardiff European Council in June 1998 (see El Anzuelo, Vol 2). Several formations of the Council of Ministers have been called upon to present integration strategies for their sectors to the European Council in Helsinki in December 1999.

For further details concerning the Finnish Presidency and the Helsinki Summit contact: Mrs Leena Simonen, Director, European Affairs, Ministry for Environment; tel: + 358 9 1991 9394; fax: + 358 9 633 106; email: Leena.Simonen@vyh.fi

aiming to resolve through the use of 'pingers' as a deterrent to the cetaceans. Pingers are acoustic devices used underwater to move the porpoises away from fishing areas. The NGOs believe that the use of pingers could potentially a) fail to be effective over time and b) exclude porpoises from large areas of important habitat.

In the latter scenario the Danish government could be in breach of their commitments under the EC habitats Directive, the conservation groups say. According to the NGOs, the use of acoustic deterrents cannot be relied upon as a sole means of decreasing bycatch given the lack of knowledge of the way in which they work, their variable success rate and the fact that the marine environment is already an acoustically loud place, where

additional noise should be discouraged.

For further information please contact: Stephen Lutter, WWF NE Atlantic Programme; email lutter@wwf.de Tommy Dybbro, WWF Denmark; email t.dybbro@wwf.dk Bo Håkansson, Danish Society for Nature Conservation, Masnedogade 20, 2100 Copenhagen O; email dn@dn.dk

Network for the Eastern Mediterranean in Greece

The first plenary session of the Kavala International Maritime Forum (KIMF) was held on 20 to 22 May 1999. The forum was launched in 1998 as a joint initiative of the European Commission and the Greek government, and is the starting point of a maritime network in the East Mediterranean, Black Sea and

South Eastern Europe. It will have its permanent base in the Greek town of Kavala, which was also where the first meeting took place.

The Forum is set to highlight a new spirit of co-operation among maritime companies and organisations, aiming at their involvement in the application of information and communication technologies, and at enhancing the social and economic development of the region. The Forum will act as a contact point between the European Union and private/public operators in this region.

For further details contact: Website www.otenet.gr/kimf or www.detakav.gr Mr E. Maroulas (Municipality of Kavala) detakav@otenet.gr

Fisheries Production in EU Candidate Countries

The total fisheries production of the eleven candidate countries for accession to the EU is only 10 per cent of that of the existing EU Member States, according to recent figures from EUROSTAT. Total production in 1996 was 776,000 tonnes, with Poland the largest single contributor at 370,000 tonnes. Most production in the candidate countries was concentrated in the four coastal states of the Baltic Sea (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland). Aquaculture production accounted for 75,000 tonnes of fish in 1996, compared to 1.4 million tonnes produced by the EU.

The first wave of candidates for accession to the Union, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Cyprus hope to have their policies, including those related to the fisheries sector, in line for enlargement by 2003.

For further information see: Eurostat website: <http://europa.eu.int/eurostat.html>

European Conference on No-Take Zones

As part of a ground-breaking initiative, the Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation (CFPO) is organising a series of three meetings to discuss the idea of 'No-Take Zones' or 'Closed Areas' as a fisheries management

tool to enhance fish stocks and safeguard livelihoods in the long term.

The first of three conferences is due to be held in Cornwall in June, with representatives of Fish Producers' Organisations from France, Spain, Ireland and Belgium, as well as the UK. Academic experts will also attend what is intended to be an open and frank discussion of the issue. The conference is the first industry led initiative to bring together Producers' Organisations from the different countries with a stake in ICES Area VII fisheries (the Bristol and English Channel and the southern approaches). The project is being financially supported by the EC. It is to be followed by a meeting in Cork in September and a final meeting in Brittany at the beginning of next year.

For further details contact: Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation, 1, The Strand, Newlyn, Penzance; tel: +44 1736 351050; fax: +44 1736 350632

IMM Follow-up under the German Presidency

The German Presidency is coordinating activities for the second

annual review on progress since the North Sea Intermediate Ministerial Meeting (IMM) on fisheries and environmental issues in Bergen in March 1997.

The main initiative is a joint fisheries and environment meeting to be held at Council Working Group level, with discussion focusing on progress reports which are being drafted by both the Presidency and the Commission (DG XIV). The meeting is scheduled to take place in mid June 1999.

The German Federal Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt – UBA) is also funding a project on the state of research on fisheries and environment, based on Articles 14 and 15 of the IMM Statement of Conclusions.

The aim is to identify areas where additional or new research is needed, as well as areas where research may now be sufficient to underpin concrete policy measures. The results of the study, which is being led by Ecologic in Berlin, is to inform the IMM and the broader North Sea Conference processes.

For further details contact: German Presidency – Bundesministerium für

Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit; tel +49 228 305 2650
Herr Ralph Piotrowski, Ecologic;
tel+4930 20452994; fax +4930 22651136

Commission proposes overhaul of marketing regime

The Commission has proposed new rules for marketing fish and fish products (COM(1999)55). One aspect of the proposal attempts to improve consumer information by the introduction of detailed labelling requirements at retail level. Specific provisions on the certification of responsible fishing have not been included, but are expected to follow at a later date.

The proposal follows a 1997 Communication on the future for the market in fisheries products in the European Union (COM(97)719). Other areas covered by the proposal include: increasing responsibility of producer organisations for the management of fish resources by *inter alia* promoting more environmentally sensitive fishing methods; and changing market prices and intervention levels to reduce the amount of wastage.

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the issues to be addressed.

By issuing technically sound opinions that represent the interests of the whole sector, this system should enable greater involvement of all the groups concerned in the dialogue.

● Reinforcement of European trade organisations

The second part, which is directly linked to the first, aims to reinforce the European trade organisations representing the fishing industry. If we ask these organisations to take on more responsibilities and be more closely involved in the process, we need to give them the means to do this.

Reducing the number of seats in the plenary committee must not lead to less involvement of the various members because they are not able to hold preparatory meetings in Brussels. I propose therefore that the European Union provide financial support for organising European trade bodies' meetings in order to prepare for plenary committee meetings.

● Better communication with the industry and the other groups concerned

The third part aims to improve communication and ensure that the industry and the other groups concerned gain better knowledge and understanding of a policy as complex, and at times, as conflictual as the CFP. I place considerable importance on this aspect since a good understanding of the CFP is a pre-requisite for the interested parties to be able to express an opinion with full knowledge of the facts. In this way, they can play an effective role in the European decision-making process. In addition, the work that they carry out within the plenary committee will enable all the players concerned to communicate better with each other and improve their understanding of the issues affecting the sectors and communities that they represent. This can only make their contribution more effective.

This is certainly an ambitious reform but in my experience as Commissioner, I believe that the efforts made by all those involved in the fisheries sector will show that it is a suitable instrument to meet their needs.

Translated into English by Mark Tuddenham

Nordic Council report on International Cooperation

'International co-operation on fisheries and environment', a report by the Nordic Council, is available in English on the Council's website. It provides a comprehensive overview of conventions, agreements and organisations relating to fisheries and environment.

The report studies a range of global-level bodies, and also focuses on agreements and organisations relevant to the North-East Atlantic and the North and Baltic seas. A variety of other publications are available on or through the website, including a recent report, 'Nordic Fisheries in the New Consumer Era'.

For further details: Nordic Council fisheries website: <http://fisk.norden.org>
Nordic Council: <http://www.norden.org>



Oxford Scientific Films

Fishermen pulling a net out of the ice in Poussu, Finland

Opportunities for fisheries

FIFTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH

The EU recently adopted a new research programme with a budget of EUR 15 billion extending over the period 1998 to 2002. The Fifth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP5) offers significant opportunities for part funding large multi-national research projects, with a focus on improving research and technological development at the European level. A major emphasis of FP5 is on multi-disciplinary research that is policy relevant.

Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture are among the specific priorities identified for funding in 1999, with a focus on environmental impacts and how to assess and reduce them. Projects should support work on the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem, concentrating on food-webs, the physical impact of fishing gear on the seabed, the demographic struc-

tures of exploited fish stocks and on genetic diversity. Aquaculture research is to focus on the effects of farm effluents and on the interactions between wild, farmed and ornamental organisms. Other priorities include work on monitoring and enforcement of the CFP, and on tools and models for the integrated and sustainable development of rural and other areas.

First calls for proposals were published in March 1999; deadlines for submitting applications vary, with the first applications due in June 1999.

For further details, including national contacts see: www.cordis.lu/fp5/home.html

LIFE III INSTRUMENT

LIFE (*L'Instrument Financier pour l'Environnement*) is the only EC financial instrument dedicated to the environment. The existing LIFE II instrument is due to expire at the end of 1999 and the Commission has proposed a new LIFE

III, to cover the years 2000 to 2004 and with a budget of Euro 613 million.

Of the areas to receive funding, LIFE-nature is perhaps the most relevant to fisheries. Eligible projects would need to further the objectives of the habitats and birds Directives, and the Natura 2000 network. Fisheries projects would thus need to have explicit links with marine or coastal Natura 2000 sites, or species such as bottlenose dolphin, harbour porpoise or grey seal.

The proposal is not expected to be agreed until the end of 1999. The timetable for getting applications to the Commission for the first round of funding is therefore uncertain but may be near January 2000. Any applications would need to be submitted to Member States first, however.

For further information contact: Mrs Isabelle Venti, European Commission, DG XI.D.2 TRMF 02/04, 200 rue de la Loi, B 1049 Brussels; fax: +32 2 296 9556; email nature@dg11.cec.be

IIEP London is an independent body for the analysis and advancement of environmental policies in Europe. While a major focus of work is on the development, implementation and evaluation of the EC's environmental policy, IIEP London has also been at the forefront of research and policy development in relation to the integration of environmental considerations into other policy sectors.

This Newsletter is part of IIEP's work programme on Policy Measures for the Sustainable Management of Fisheries which aims to identify, develop and build a consensus around alternative approaches, with a view to influencing the review of the Common Fisheries Policy in 2002.

The Newsletter is funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust and DG XI of the European Commission. It is sent free of charge to key practitioners in the Member States of the European Community. If you wish to subscribe to the Newsletter, or wish to register additional recipients, please fill in the form and fax to: Clare Coffey, IIEP London, on +44 171 799 2600.

Name

Organisation

Address



Structural Funds 2000-2006: conserving nature, creating jobs

An EU-wide information and awareness programme aims to show local and regional authorities and environmental organisations how the Structural Funds can be used to protect nature and create jobs at the same time. The programme is jointly sponsored by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, English Nature and Scottish Natural Heritage and is being co-ordinated by IIEP London. Project partners include WWF, the Nova Institut in Germany, Legambiente in Italy and TERRA in Spain.

A key output of the project involves the distribution among interested parties of information dossiers.

To receive copies of the information dossiers contact: Janet Dwyer, IIEP London, email jdwyer@ieeplondon.org.uk