



## The Baltic Sea assumes increasing significance for the European Union

Geographically speaking, the Baltic Sea includes the Kattegat, but if the area of responsibility of the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission (IBSFC) is taken into account, it ends at the opening of the Belts, the straits separating the Danish islands. Defined in this way, the area covers 370,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Half closed-in, frozen in the north for part of the year, this continental sea is characterized by the low range of tides and circulation currents. As a result, renewal of the waters is very slow. The Baltic Sea is extremely sensitive to pollution from various sources and to over-use of its fishery resources. These problems occurring at regional level have prompted cooperation strategies among coastal states in the field of both fishing, within the IBSFC, and the environment.

The Baltic Sea is assuming increasing significance for the EU. For a long time, it was of secondary importance for the EU, at least in fishing. In Germany, the coastline was limited to the east of one Federal state, Schleswig-Holstein. In Denmark, the other Member State concerned, fishing activities were concentrated in the west, on the shores of the North Sea. Nevertheless, the EU's accession to the IBSFC in 1984 was proof of its interest in the region.

In 1990, the integration of East Germany, with the shores of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, provided a further step. The length of coastline under the jurisdiction of EU Member States practically doubled, though this still accounted for only a small proportion of the shores of the Baltic Sea. The Community continued to show interest in this sea with the signing of fishing agreements with the Baltic States: Estonia and Latvia in 1993 and Lithuania in 1994. A giant step was really taken in 1995, however, with the accession of Finland and Sweden, with almost two-thirds of the area of the Baltic Sea now bordered by Member States.

Its significance can only grow. Poland and Estonia are among the five States involved in the next phase of EU enlargement. With other Baltic States' prospects for integration in the EU and greater cooperation with Russia attention to the Baltic Sea will grow.

The Editor

European Commission Delegation  
Library  
2300 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

## Contents

- Region of the month: Newlyn, Cornwall, United Kingdom
- The Common Fisheries Policy: management of fisheries in the Baltic Sea
- PESCA on the spot: 'Pesca Partnership' in Oporto, Portugal
- Interview of the month: A. Pronk, Pronk-hollandvis BV, Scheveningen, The Netherlands
- Newsflash

### Region of the month

## Newlyn: between the English Channel and the Celtic Sea



Located at the extreme south-westerly tip of Great Britain, Newlyn is one of the United Kingdom's main ports and the leading port in England in terms of the value of products landed. Fishing is an important sector in Cornwall, a region providing few economic alternatives.

(continued on page 2)





After the slow death of the mining industry, agriculture remains the only other traditional activity. The only sector experiencing growth is the tourist industry, particularly evident in Penzance, just next to Newlyn.

The fishing industry is centred around fresh products, which, in the land of fish and chips, had long been underdeveloped. The position has since improved and the British market now offers greater possibilities, which a number of fish traders have seized on. A significant proportion of the production is exported, however. Sardines were already exported to Italy a century ago. Nowadays, demersal species are the main catches, particularly flat fish, but shellfish as well. Between 60 to 70% of these are exported to foreign markets, mainly France and Spain, but also Belgium.

The European dimension offers undeniable advantages to Newlyn. This can be seen in the origin of boats, in particular second-hand beam trawlers bought from The Netherlands and Belgium. Nevertheless, a number of Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) regulations regarding access to fishing resources are viewed in these parts as problematic.

For Andrew Wheeler of the Cornish Fish Producers Organisation, the main areas of concern – apart from limitations on fishing days, mentioned in the interview below – involve the limitation of quotas and fleet reduction. The latter has affected netters in particular, with six vessels withdrawn in 1997. Their profitability can cause problems and those who had managed to find an alternative in catching tuna using gill nets have been penalized with measures limiting the use of such gear. The lack of quotas has been

deeply felt, particularly if one considers the proportion allocated to Producers Organizations (POs) representing Dutch and Spanish boats which seldom land their products locally and employ practically no UK nationals. For this reason, the regionalization of fleets' activities is a sensitive issue in these parts; the local PO has wasted no time in discussing this with its counterparts in Brittany and the south-west of Ireland. It is prepared to involve anyone operating in the region in such an initiative.

A number of sections in Pesca provide opportunities regarding communication. According to Alison Elvey, responsible for Pesca in the south-west region, however, the professional world has not been very responsive to this section so far. The interview that follows seems to confirm this.

#### Questions to Elizabeth STEVENSON, partner of W. STEVENSON and Sons

*Pesca Info (P.I.): Your company is one of the major ones in Newlyn. Would you please tell us about your activities?*

*Elizabeth STEVENSON (E.S.):* We are trawler owners and fish merchants. We own 36 vessels, including 24 beam-trawlers and 8 netters, side-trawlers and seiners. Our fleet catches about half of the fish landed in Newlyn, most of which are high-value species. We employ 150 crew and 80 shore staff. We export a substantial proportion of fish, mainly to France and Spain.

*P.I.: Do you have any problems in sea-products trade?*

*E.S.:* The high value of sterling is causing problems. But the measures introduced to comply with the

MAGP IV fishing effort reduction on beam trawlers are my major concern at the moment. We are forced to reduce the number of fishing days from our 1997 level by about 20% over the next four years. This kind of reduction cannot be achieved without laying up vessels and laying off crews and staff.

*P.I.: Are you interested in any Pesca projects?*

*E.S.:* I refuse to discuss diversification out of fishing or have anything to do with any project that does not benefit our industry. I am only interested in improving and continuing the fishing industry in Newlyn.

#### Data sheet Newlyn

- *Location:* Cornwall, south-west England, United Kingdom
- *Type of fishing:* beam trawl, otter trawl, gill nets, pots.
- *Fleet:* (March 1996)  
31 beam trawlers, 22 netters, 16 otter trawlers, 9 pot vessels.
- *Output:*
  - *species:* demersal fish - megrim (*Lepidorhombus s.p.*), monkfish (*Lophius sp.*), hake (*Merluccius sp.*), sole (*Solea sp.*), ling (*Molva sp.*) – as well as crab and cuttlefish
  - *volume:* 12,270 tonnes (Cornwall: 29,300 tonnes)
  - *value:* £23.4 million, or **ECU 34.6 million** (Cornwall: ECU 48.2 million)
- *Jobs in fishing:* 350
- *Jobs in fish-trade processing:* between 200 and 250 people.







### **Common Fisheries Policy**

## **Management of fisheries in the Baltic Sea**

### ***Specific fishery resources***

While the Baltic Sea can produce over a million tonnes of fish per year, the geographical distribution of this resource is uneven: the north is not as well endowed as the south, which includes breeding areas for cod (*Gadus morhua*). Apart from this species, the main sea fish include herring (*Clupea harengus*), sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*), salmon (*Salmon salar*), and flat fish.

Fresh-water species are also caught in the Baltic sea, which is highly desalinated in the Gulf of Bothnia to the north and the lagoons all around the Baltic. For this reason, salt-water fishing includes whitefish and houting (*Coregonus sp.*), perch (*Perca sp.*), bream (*Abramis sp.*), zander (*Stisostedion luciorka*) and pike (*Esox lucius*).

### ***The International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission (IBSFC)***

This Warsaw-based organization was set up by the convention of the same name which came into force in 1974. The European Community, with just 12 members at the time, did not become a member of this convention until 1983. It became subject to its rules the following year.

The IBSFC coordinates the management of living resources – by gathering, analyzing and disseminating

statistics – and scientific research. It can make recommendations regarding regulations on fishing gear, catch sizes, and fishing grounds and seasons. Its decisions and recommendations are taken by a two-third-majority, but only become effective in the waters under the jurisdiction of the states that voted in favour.

Each year, on the basis of recommendations from the world of science and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the IBSFC sets total allowable catches for the four main species mentioned above (cod, salmon, herring and sprat) and shares them out among the contracting parties.

### ***Action by the EU***

As regards technical measures, the EU has incorporated those established by the IBSFC in its legislation relating to gear meshes used by vessels and the minimum size of fish caught locally. These measures apply to all its Member States. Finland and Sweden adopted the CFP regulations when they joined the European Union in 1995. Nevertheless, provisional arrangements were drawn up in the field of access to fishing grounds and resources (management and conservation measures, questions regarding international relations and structural policy). The quotas that were once allocated to Finland and Sweden are now incorporated in the Community's share and are then shared out among the Member States.



### **PESCA on the spot**

## **'Pesca Partnership', Oporto, Portugal**

The first 'Pesca Partnership' will be held in the Portuguese city of Oporto on **21 and 22 September 1998**. This event is organized by the European Commission (DG XIV) in close cooperation with the Directorate-General for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Portugal.

'Pesca Partnership' aims to promote the development of cooperation projects through bilateral contact between operators in an area dependent on fishing (Portugal this year) and companies from other Member States of the European Union (EU). This initiative covers the whole fishing industry and aquaculture and is open to all forms of cooperation (joint ventures, trade agreements, technology transfers, technical assistance, training, etc.).

'Pesca Partnership' is a highly effective means of business canvassing, especially well adapted to SMEs whose activities are mainly oriented towards their national market and for whom it can be difficult to find international partners. Over 30 projects should be submitted in Oporto and at least 100 companies from the rest of the EU are expected to discuss and negotiate potential cooperation projects.

Interested companies wishing to obtain more detailed information may contact the consultants responsible for the project at the Commission:

Nautilus Consultants  
Rod Cappell  
30/6 Elbe Street  
UK-Edinburgh EH6 7HW  
Tel. +44 131 555 0660  
Fax +44 131 554 5902  
e-mail: rod@nautcon.win-uk.net





### Interview of the month

## Interview with Arnaud Pronk, of PRONK- HOLLANDVIS b.v., Scheveningen, The Netherlands

*Editor's note: intended as a medium for freely voiced opinions, this PESCA section publishes the views held by professionals. These articles therefore express the opinions of the authors alone.*

*Pesca Info (P.I.): Would you briefly tell us about your activities?*

**Arnaud Pronk (A.P.):** We are a seafood trade company. We are involved in import, export and sale of sea products. We export to Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, the UK and Italy... Our exports consist almost entirely of fish, mainly flat fish, landed by Dutch boats in Holland. Other catches by Dutch vessels, bought in Dutch fishmarkets, are sold to local wholesalers, shops, restaurants and traders on the open market. We also supply them with imported fish from nearly all EU countries and also from Asia. We do not process the fish we buy, which are mainly fresh or smoked. We also handle a lot of frozen fish, shrimps and other sea products.

*P.I.: Are your products clearly identified?*

**A.P.:** The products sold to our wholesale customers, shops and restaurants are not labelled. Exported products simply specify species; we only put a sticker on the box to indicate what is in it. There is no information concerning the port of landing, the gear used to catch the fish or the vessel which

caught the products. None of our customers are interested in that type of information and it would be impossible to provide it.

*P.I.: What do you think about the issue of traceability within the EU?*

**A.P.:** When we are talking about fresh products which will be sold on the same day or a few days later, we think it is only possible in theory but absolutely not in reality. It would be too complicated. If, in the future, fish businesses have to identify their products, it will never be realistic to expect compliance with such measures.

*P.I.: Don't you think that the consumers would be interested in a better knowledge of the origin of sea products?*

**A.P.:** We do believe that they are not very interested in it. They are more concerned with the quality of freshness than by finding out which boat caught the fish. Perhaps consumers would like to know more about quality approval schemes granted to shops and also perhaps about the impact of fishing gear which comply with regulations (for example, that avoid catches of dolphin in tuna fisheries).

*P.I.: What alternative measure could you propose to improve the information to consumers concerning quality of sea products?*

**A.P.:** I think that fishing, sea-food trading and processing companies must work under HACCP rules that would allow those which comply with quality regulations to be recognized as an EU-approved company. That would be a better guarantee for consumers than knowing the origin of the fish, which would be very difficult to establish seriously.

### Newsflash

#### Fisch '98 – Seafood, Bremen

The exhibition **Fisch '98** international – **Seafood** Europe will be held at the Trade and Convention Centre in Bremen, Germany, from 5 to 8 June 1998. The exhibition received over 700 exhibitors and almost 20,000 visitors in 1996 and expects just as many this year. A significant number of them are expected from Russia and other Eastern European countries in particular, on account of the partnership established with the organizers of **Polfish** in Gdansk, Poland.

#### Chart of fishing TACs and quotas 1998.

This Commission publication is available in wall-poster format and in all official languages of the EU. To obtain one, please write to us or send a fax to the address below.

**Pesca info** is published by  
INFOPARTNERS S.A. on behalf of  
the European Commission, DG XIV.  
*PESCA Info* is published 10 times a  
year in all Community languages.

Editor in chief:  
Director-General DG XIV

*The views expressed are those of the  
authors and not necessarily those of  
the European Commission.*

Comments and suggestions are welcome at:

**Pesca Info**  
European Commission  
DG XIV/A/2 - J99  
Rue de la Loi, 200  
B-1049 Brussels  
Fax: +32 2 299.30.40

URL: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg14/pesca>