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## **No. 5**

### **Contents**

Quotas to prevent overfishing

Region of the month : Leiria - Peniche

The Common Fisheries Policy: The TAC and quotas

PESCA on the spot : the fisheries research vessel "Thalassa"

Interview of the month : Kim Jordas, Head of the Association of Finnish Fishermen.

Newsflash

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◀ back

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## Quotas to prevent overfishing

The end of each year is marked by a closely argued discussion on fixing the quantities of fish which may be caught the following year. The total allowable catches (TAC) are first laid down for a certain number of species, and subsequently shared among Member States in quotas. The management of the EU fishing grounds using these mechanisms is worth calling to mind; this aspect of the CFP will be dealt with in this issue.

Since 1983, reputable and reliable scientific methods have been used to effectively seek a means of distributing natural resources between Member States. Sometimes the total amount of the TAC is disputed by professional fishermen who, locally, do not always observe the same phenomena as the scientists commissioned with evaluating the resource. The ensuing quota reductions do not always go down well. The reaction is the same from Aberdeen to the Baltic, as illustrated by the interview with the Head of the Association of Finnish Fishermen which deals with the specific case of salmon. This example reveals the highly complex reality of the problem.

Discussions on the effectiveness of fishing regulations are in full swing on the Internet. The discussion forum Fishfolk is the scene of fierce debate on the limitation of access to resources, on the ITQs (Individual Transferable Quotas) adopted for the management of certain fishing grounds. One thing is certain: it is difficult to reach agreement on an effective system. The analyses also differ as regards the cause of certain phenomena. So, was it overfishing which led to the ruin of the sardine fishing grounds (species not subject to TAC) of Peniche? As this month's report shows, the fleet has been cut by half in the last ten years: but what exactly caused this ?

The system of TAC and quotas are intended to prevent these problems. The results are sometimes disputed and the system was considered to be too inflexible. The Commission listened to the professional fishermen and finally complied with a request for year-to-year flexibility in quota management. All that remains to be done now is to make good use of it.

### The Publisher

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 [back](#)



## Region of the month

### Peniche: on course for diversification

Peniche is a harbour located on a peninsula; a headland which juts out into the ocean, ready to take up all challenges. As on the other shores of Europe, there is no shortage of these here.

For Peniche, the most recent challenge was the 1993-94 crisis which particularly affected the species which made the fortune of the harbour : the sardine...

This activity has declined slowly since the prosperous fifties. While in 1986 there were still more than 55 sardine boats, ten years later the fishing fleet has shrunk to half this size.

Today, the worst of the crisis is over. Even though the catching of small pelagics with seine fishing nets is no longer the only activity, it still makes up over 80 % of the haul and supplies the three local canning factories.

Non-industrial fishing for demersals has increased, in particular in value. It now employs more fishermen than the sardine (1,000 as opposed to 700). Longliner fishing mainly targets swordfish, close to the Portuguese coast or in the South Atlantic. Lastly, deep-sea fishing has survived the vicissitudes of fishing agreements (some of which operate as private agreements) and the exhaustion of lobster stocks.

It is fortunate that the other fishing sectors are enduring, for in Peniche there is hardly anything else. The branch provides 3,500 jobs for the 16,000 residents of the town ! The only other major employer is a packaging factory. As far as dependency is concerned, this takes some beating !

Generally speaking, everybody wants to attach greater importance to fishing in future. The non-industrial fishing vessel owners co-operative (CAPA) wants to see all efforts focused on improving the functioning of the fishing sector. The head of the co-operative is calling for action to facilitate the revival of the fleet, for in this area and in others it is felt that the procedures currently take too long.

Others, who also support all efforts aimed at diversification within the branch towards the processing industry, consider it particularly important to take advantage of the opportunities offered within the framework of Pesca in order to establish new areas of activity, for example the development of commercial activity in the harbour, ship repair and tourism.

### Data Sheet

#### Peniche

- *Location* : Leiria, Portugal
- *Type of fishing* : sardine fishing with seine nets, multipurpose non-industrial fishing; coastal and deep-sea longliners (Latin America), semi-longrange fishing (Morocco; Mauritania)
- *Fleet* : 27 sardine boats with seine nets, 200 multipurpose boats, 20 longliners, about thirty semi-longrange fishing boats
- *Catches* (1996) :
  - *haul*: **23,780 tonnes** (of which 18,955 tonnes of sardine)

- *value*: **23.5 million ecus** (about 4.688 billion escudos)
- *species*:
  - small pelagics : sardine (*sardina sp.*), anchovy, mackerel
  - coastal demersals : frogfish (*Lophius sp.*), octopus (*Octopus sp.*), red porgy (*Sparus pagrus*), ray (*Raja sp.*), bass (*Dicentrachus labrax*)
  - African demersals : croaker (*Scianidae*), sea bream and king of the breams (*Sparus spp*), damselfish (*Pampus sp.*)
  - swordfish (*Xiphias sp.*), tuna (*Thunnus sp.*),
- *Number of fishermen* (1996) : 2,300
- *Processing* : 1,300 jobs in 3 canning factories and 15 deep-freezing plants.

The Association for the Development of Peniche (ADEPE) was set up for this purpose. Its members, which include representatives of the town, the harbour administration, tradespeople, unions and certain producer organisations, clarified their requests in the following interview.

### **Questions put to Humberto Jorge d'Opcentro and Jorge Abrantes, representatives of Fenacoopesca and members of ADEPE.**

*Pesca Info* : Can you specify the projects to be presented within the framework of Pesca ?

*H.J and J.A* : We have drawn up six proposals aimed at diversifying economic activity in Peniche :

- creation of a centre of dynamism for companies to provide increased exposure and support for existing projects.
- creation of an area (industrial zone) where new activities can be established.
- development of nautical and tourism activities in the vicinity of the former market which would offer possibilities for the conversion of certain fishing vessels.
  
- setting up a technological marine laboratory focused on the analysis and quality control of fishing products.
- organisation of a fair / exhibition on Peniche and the sea.
- participation in national and international exhibitions on the subject of either fishing or tourism.

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◀ back



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## **Common Fisheries Policy**

### **The management of fishing grounds : TAC and quotas**

The policy of conserving fishery resources is based on various technical measures and on fixing total allowable catches (TAC). The latter, which only affect a certain number of stocks considered important for the Community fishing fleet, are fixed each year by the Council. In short, fixing the TAC sets the upper limit of the catch level which represents the optimum balance between the biological constraints of the stocks and the needs of the fishing industries.

The various TAC are then divided between the Member States in national quotas based on a fixed percentage. Each State is allocated a fixed share whereby the principle of relative stability, one of the foundations of the Common Fisheries Policy, is observed.

#### **Scientists determine the TAC**

The TAC are calculated on the basis of the work of the scientific authorities of the Member States. The results of these activities are essentially collected within the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). This working group is concerned for the main part with the management of the stocks in the North-East Atlantic. Those stocks located outside the geographic area of ICES are managed by other working groups. These are in particular NAFO (Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization) or ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas).

We generally differentiate between two types of TAC : (i) the so-called analytical TAC which could be defined precisely on the basis of scientific data (in short biological data on the species in question and data on the fishing of this species as well as catches and rejects), and (ii) the so-called precautionary TAC for which the scientific data are insufficient.

#### **The quotas are managed by the Member States**

The management of national quotas falls within the responsibility of the Member States. These must register the catches of their fishing fleets in real time by means of a statistical follow-up of the activity. When a quota is considered to be exhausted, fishing activities should cease in order to prevent excess fishing which would be detrimental to the stock balance.

An element of flexibility has recently been introduced to quota management, which was otherwise inflexible and fixed on an annual basis (Council Regulation (CE) 847/96 of 06.05.96). From now on, if a Member State has not exhausted its quota during the course of a year, its quota may be increased. Likewise, a quota may be reduced if the Member State has exceeded its quota. This system thus allows "well-behaved" pupils to be rewarded and those who regularly exceed their targets to be punished. It makes the Member State more aware of its responsibilities. The flexibility concept also frees the Commission to revise the so-called precautionary TAC in the course of a year under certain conditions.

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 [back](#)



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## **PESCA on the spot**

### **France and Spain in the same boat**

In early 1996, a new ship joined the fleet of Génavir, the body which manages the naval resources of l'Ifremer (French Institute of Research into the Exploitation of the Sea).

In contrast to its predecessor, which has been converted into a museum in the port of Lorient, the « Thalassa » is not an exclusively French ship. In fact, it is the result of a co-operation with the IEO (Spanish Oceanographic Institute) which made a financial contribution to the construction of the vessel and which will carry out oceanographic research projects on board for one or two months each year.

The scientific equipment on board is likely to be partially financed from PESCA funds - the final details were still under discussion at the end of February - which would amount to almost 11 % of the total cost of the project (3 million ecus from a total of 28 million). This aid would come from French funds (1 million ecus), and Spanish funds (2 million ecus).

This vessel which is almost 75 m in length can trawl to a depth of 2,000 m. It will be able to take up to 25 scientists on board. It will have a variety of assignments. Although it can be used for physical oceanographic projects, its main purpose will be fisheries research (population ecology, stock evaluation, catch methods, product processing). It is equipped with fishing depth sounders, two of which were developed jointly in France and Spain within the framework of the Eureka Halios programme.

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 [back](#)



## Interview of the month

### Interview with Kim Jordas, Head of the Association of Finnish Fishermen, December 1996

*Editor's note : intended as a medium for freely voiced opinions, the PESCA bulletin reflects the views held by professionals of the trade. Signed articles and comments contained herein express the opinions of the authors alone. References in Latin have been included to enable the subject to be more accurately identified in other languages.*

*P.I (Pesca Info) :* Would you briefly explain fishing activities in Finland?

*K.J. (Kim Jordas) :*

In Finland fishing employs about 1,100 full-time fishermen and about 1,900 part time fishermen. The principal marine fish taken are Baltic Herring (*Clupea harengus*) with about 95,000 tons in 1995; sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*: 4,100 tons), cod (*Gadus morhua* : 1,850 tons), and salmon (*Salmo salar* : 1,200 tons). There are also important harvests of fresh water species with high market value such as powan (*Coregonus lavaterus*) with 1,200 tons and some 500 tons of pike-perch (*Stizostedion lucioperca*).

*P.I :* What are the changes in fishing since the entry of Finland into the EU?

*K.J. :* We have encountered various types of problems. For example, the removal of price subsidies in the herring fishery and the reform of value-added taxes in all fisheries have caused a fall in financial returns to the fishermen. The reduction in salmon quotas have affected salmon fishing. This caused a crisis, aggravated by the growth of imports from Norway. As threats in the future could be mentioned the ban of fodder fishery and the ban of drift net fishing.

*P.I :* What proposals will you be making to address these issues?

*K.J. :* The right thing to do is to improve the competitiveness of Finnish fisheries (both marine and freshwater). The promotion of the product should be the most effective solution, on both the domestic market and the export market. Another good thing would be for the Salmon Action Plan of the International Commission for the Baltic Sea Fisheries to pay more attention to the needs of the professional fishermen.

*P.I :* What proposals of PESCA will interest you ?

*K.J. :* We have no experience of PESCA because it will only be put in practice during this year in Finland. But I believe there exists a danger of diverting funds towards studies, at the expense of the direct needs of the industry. Assistance should be used for the development of fisheries and not for their destruction, because in Finland there are not many opportunities for re-employment of fishermen. The fisheries professionals are in need of advice on matters of development and of diversification in the heart of their activity. Toward this end, co-operation between fishermen should be helped and new strategies encouraged.





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## Newsflash

### "Map of TAC and 1997 fishing quotas"

This DG XIV publication is now available. It is also distributed by various European professional journals such as "France-Eco-Pêche" and "Industrias pesqueras". This document offers the advantage of concentrating, in a single publication, a vast amount of information such as:

- the TAC and quotas per species, total for EU and per Member State;
- the TAC for large groups of species (benthics and demersals, pelagics, fish for industrial purposes);
- the general map of the ICES zones in the north-east Atlantic where the majority of European fishing fleets operate.

*This column is available to you if you wish to announce various events or actions likely to interest the fishing world.*

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◀ back