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N°14/EN

The future for the market in fishery products in the EU: responsibility, partnership and competitiveness

The European market for seafood products is changing rapidly, and the whole industry is having to adapt. The Commission is aware of this and seeks to support this development. Legislative proposals should be presented as of this autumn, 1998. The Commission does not wish to act alone, however, and seeks to involve experts from the world of fishing, fish-trading, processing and distribution in carrying out its reforms. It even seeks to involve other players concerned, including consumers, whose needs and tastes are changing and who play a decisive role in the mechanism of supply and demand.

The Commission has set out the objectives to be achieved and guidelines for reflection in a communication, which is detailed in the section on the CFP. There are three key ideas underlying the debate which the Commission seeks to initiate: responsibility, partnership and competitiveness. These ideas should be complemented and enriched by other contributions, which will form the basis of an in-depth discussion within the Community institutions, Member States and the industry. This debate should, based on the broadest possible consensus, lead to the definition of legislative proposals and other initiatives capable of ensuring the optimum operation of the Community market in fishery products in the context of increasing globalization of trade.

The two French ports presented in this edition are a good illustration of the European, and even global, dimension of the markets. At Port-Vendres, the most lucrative share of red tuna caught by vessels is landed and sold to fish traders in Spain (en route to Japan). While Boulogne sur Mer may be a French port, it functions mainly as a European trading site where goods from Ireland, Scotland, Denmark and countries outside the EU, e.g. Norway, are shipped. Likewise, a significant proportion of the lorries leaving its harbour depot are bound for various regions in France, as well as Spain, Italy and Germany. The globalization of trade is a reality facing the European fishing industry every day. Regardless of frequently diverging interests, and in order to fulfil the needs of conservation, the industry must now do everything it can to be in the vanguard of the market.

The Editor

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Region of the month

Port-Vendres: red tuna and bluefish



Less than 20 kilometres from the Spanish border, Port-Vendres has experienced considerable changes these past few years. The creation of a red tuna-fishing sector and the upswing in the bluefish sector (anchovies and, in particular, sardines) have been the dominant features.

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In the late-1980s, fishing at Port-Vendres was in a rather bleak state. Demersal fishing was collapsing as in other ports in the Gulf of Lion and the ageing fleet of "lamparas" – small seiners catching small pelagic species by lamplight – could no longer sell its output. A little further north at Sète, the leading French port not only in the region but also in the French Mediterranean, there had already been a considerable increase in red tuna-fishing.

This example has attracted interest and fishermen from Port-Vendres have started taking up this activity. Initially, they bought Italian seiners, before some of them could afford bigger vessels for improved fishing. Quality soon became an essential condition, particularly in order to meet the demands of the Japanese market! The fishermen of Port-Vendres were quick to take note of what was happening south of the border. Contact was made with Spanish fish traders working with Asia. While nowadays only 10% of catches from the Gulf of Lions are exported to Japan, 80% of fish caught around the Balearic Islands in the summer is destined for this market.

Many people are involved in red tuna-fishing in the Mediterranean. There are 50 French vessels, some 40 of which are specialized in this type of fishing, as well as 7 Spanish and 30 Italian seiners. In addition to these large vessels (over 20m) there are approximately 400 Spanish and Italian longliners – mostly fishing in the Tyrrhenian Sea to the north of Sicily – which are usually smaller, not to mention the Japanese and Korean fleets. During the season, catches from the Balearic Islands using seiners from Port-Vendres are landed in various ports stretching from southern Catalonia to the Murcia region and the Cartagena

region in particular. This port is the main departure point for refrigerated vessels which ship the catches, packaged by local firms, to the Canary Islands, from where they are transported as far as Asia using bigger cargo ships. A proportion, albeit much smaller, is loaded onto refrigerator lorries to be taken to the airports of Madrid, Barcelona or even Paris.

Improved market conditions have also enabled the fishing of small pelagic species to be revived at Port-Vendres. After a number of dismal years, the vessels would have to be modernized to allow for a wider range of catches in better conditions. A number of multi-purpose "lamparas" would be ready to abandon tuna-fishing to devote themselves entirely to this activity.

Questions put to Serge Perez, President of the Proquaport PO.

P.I. (Pesca Info): What impact has the EU had on your activities?

S.P. (Serge Perez): Brussels has imposed constraints on us but this has actually been beneficial, particularly in the field of product quality. European requirements in this respect have corresponded to the demands of our Spanish and Japanese buyers, encouraging us to develop. It is true that perhaps not everyone has been in a position to follow, but some of us have managed to invest in brand-new vessels, enabling us to provide high-quality work.

P.I.: ICCAT⁽¹⁾ is not very optimistic about red tuna!

S.P.: This is true, but we should not overlook the presence of over 200 Asian longliners in the Mediterranean. We are Europeans and the EU is a force which I believe will defend our interests. We have im-

proved co-ordination among the French by setting up AMOP (Association of Mediterranean Producer Organizations), and we intend to do likewise with our Spanish and Italian colleagues.

⁽¹⁾ *International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna*

Data sheet Port-Vendres

- *Location:* Languedoc-Roussillon, France
- *Type of fishing:* red tuna by seiner, sardines and anchovies by seiner ("lampara"), multi-purpose.
- *Fleet:* 3 tuna purse seiners (7 in the maritime area^(*) of Port-Vendres), 5 "lamparas" (9), 7 trawlers (33), 32 non-industrial boats (192)
- *Output:*
 - *volume:* from the maritime area (1996): 13 135 tonnes, including 7 700 tonnes of sardines (*Sardina pilchardus*), 2 248 tonnes of anchovies (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) and **2 126 tonnes of red tuna** (*Thunnus thynnus*)
 - *value:* from the maritime area: 107 428 million FF (**ECU 16.2 million**), a third of which is provided by red tuna.
- *Jobs in fishing:* 146 at Port-Vendres, 508 in the maritime area
- *Number of firms:* maritime area: 3 firms employing a total of 55 people.

^(*) *Administrative subdivision extending as far as Port la Nouvelle.*





Common Fisheries Policy

Communication from the Commission on the future for the market in fishery products in the EU

The communication ⁽¹⁾ referred to in the editorial defines the objectives to be achieved by action on the part of the authorities and economic operators to enable optimum operation of the Community market. The Commission's proposals focus on a number of key ideas, including:

- the need for **responsible** fishing as well as trade, associated with ensuring the lasting exploitation of resources;
- the involvement and integration of all the industry's players who are called on to work together in a spirit of **partnership** regardless of diverging interests;
- an improvement in **competitiveness** in the context of an open market, along with demands for transparency and fairness in competition;
- the promotion of product **quality**.

In order to fulfil these objectives, it will be necessary to adapt and renew the legal framework of the market, in particular the common organization of the market.

The Commission plans to continue supporting the activities of the Producer Organizations but, in return, is encouraging them to cooperate even further and to strengthen their role in managing resources and adapting to the market. It thereby

aims to bring about a renewal of the withdrawal system, encouraging the conclusion of procurement contracts and support towards private storage.

The promotion of an integrated market based on quality is one of the strong points of this communication. Particular attention must be paid to the identification of products (the notorious "traceability").

To guarantee fair competition, the Commission emphasizes the need to apply the same demands to producers from third countries as those required of their European counterparts. This means that minimum sizes and trade descriptions of imported goods should be respected and rules of origin and health standards should be properly applied.

Within this legal framework, it will of course be necessary to ensure that these rules are being applied. Finally, the information available to the various operators in the industry should be improved, particularly by means of new communication technologies.

All interested parties are invited to comment on this communication before the end of June 1998.

This document is available in all 11 languages and may be obtained from Unit XIV/A/2 by mail or facsimile, or on Internet site <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg14/dg14.html>

⁽¹⁾ COM (97) 719 final of 16.12.98



PESCA on the spot

Small-scale coastal fishing – pilot projects

Small-scale coastal fishing accounts for a significant share of European fishing, both in terms of the number of direct jobs and the vital role it plays in a great number of coastal communities.

For this reason, the Commission has decided to launch a pilot project in July 1998 with a budget of ECU 6 million, with the aim of encouraging local projects in favour of both the fishermen themselves and fishermen's wives. 58 projects (out of 231 proposals) have benefited from Community aid.

The projects selected in favour of fishermen chiefly involve:

- professional training (safety on board, health conditions, environment and conservation of resources)
- the exchange of experiences owing to the use of new technologies.

Projects in favour of fishermen's wives are chiefly directed at training them in fields such as accounting, computing or the marketing of fishery products with the aim of recognizing the role of women and promoting the additional added value provided by their active participation in the field of fishing.



Interview of the month

Interview with Daniel Fauquet, responsible for relations with the EU at "Boulogne sur Mer développement", France

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.

P.I. (Pesca Info): Today, Boulogne sur Mer is a major trading platform for fishery products. What are its characteristics ?

Daniel Fauquet (D.F.): Boulogne is both a major trading site, accounting for 30% of France's fish-trading, and an industrial site. It is a concentration of firms involved in the processing of fishery products that is unique to France and even Europe. There are over 130 of them, both traditional (canning, smoking, semi-preserved) and modern (vacuum freezing, prepared dishes). The products which pass through and are often processed there offer a great variety of packaging.

P.I.: Could you provide some figures for this field?

D.F.: Of course! Boulogne handles 300 000 tonnes of seafood products, two-thirds of which are fresh. Fresh fish is still landed to a large extent by the local fleet (approximately 60 000 tonnes), but most of it (150 000 tonnes!) comes by lorry from Norway, Denmark and Scotland. Despite

the predominance of fresh fish, frozen products still arrive by container from Le Havre and Antwerp or by refrigerated cargo ship. Canned tuna is also frequently overlooked. Finally, we should point out that just over a third of French seafood imports pass through Boulogne!

P.I.: Boulogne is now well equipped for distribution!

D.F.: You are referring to the new harbour haulage depot which opened in spring 1996. Indeed, with over 11 500m² of refrigerated rooms and 110 loading areas for high-capacity lorries, it provides some one hundred scheduled daily departures throughout France as well as Spain, Italy, Germany and Switzerland.

P.I.: So it is a facility with a European mission. What could hinder this development?

D.F.: Very little in the field of fresh fish, except disparities between the socio-economic conditions for road haulage, but this is not unique to seafood products! In the field of frozen products, the biggest hindrances are national disparities in the application of European standards.

P.I.: This does not stop you from having ambitions for the future.

D.F.: Of course not! Boulogne now has the facilities to one day handle 500 000 tonnes of seafood products, without having to reinvest too heavily. There are already three large fish-trading buildings surrounding the harbour haulage depot, and other developments are possible!

Newsflash

Sixth interregional 'PESCA' meeting

The sixth interregional meeting organized within the framework of the PESCA Community Initiative will be held in Scotland on 2 and 3 April next. It will be devoted to the future for the market in fishery products.

Second themed 'PESCA' conference

'The future for the structural policy in the field of fishing', 5 and 6 June 1998, Thessalonika, Greece. This conference, organized by the European Commission (DG XIV), will provide a wide-ranging discussion among professionals and the European, national and regional public authorities on the future for structural intervention in favour of the fishing industry and regions dependent on fishing beyond the year 2000. For enquiries and enrolments: CRPM
Fax: (+33) 2 99 78 12 21

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

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.

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