



Consultation in the fisheries sector on post-2002: initial developments

The international Expo in Lisbon, focusing on the future for the oceans, has provided an appropriate setting for reflection on the common fisheries policy after 2002. During a seminar organized at the end of June with the European Parliament and the Advisory Committee for Fisheries, the European Commissioner responsible for Fisheries, Mrs Emma Bonino, reported on the initial developments arising out of the consultation of the sector launched by the Commission in February of this year.

The project (cf. Pesca Info No. 13) was divided into two stages: 350 questionnaires would be sent to all parties concerned (producer organizations, the processing industry, consumers, environmental and scientific organizations) and direct encounters in the form of meetings would be organized in the Member States starting in September 1998. By the time Mrs Bonino arrived in Lisbon, the Commission had received around 150 replies. Given the scope of the questionnaire, which covers all aspects of the CFP, and the time required for an in-depth examination, it is too early to draw any major conclusions. However, a number of developments can be extracted. Overall, criticisms of the CFP were made; however, a number of constructive proposals also were given.

Opinion was divided from one country to the next, though views did converge on maintaining a number of measures, including the system of access to the 6/12-nautical-mile band, relative stability and aid schemes. A number of topics provoked fierce opposition, including the imposition of transferable individual quotas. Many requests were made, however, to enforce stricter and more uniform controls and to develop methods enabling the level of discards to be reduced. Opinion is divided on other matters, including maintaining the Shetland box, the system of access to the North Sea, extending partnerships between companies in the EU and third countries, etc. Concerns regarding the preservation of resources were confirmed. The industry also demonstrated the need to take greater account of environmental aspects. Pesca Info will deal with replies to this consultation in greater detail in a future edition. These directly involve all those who were good enough to respond. The Commission will set out its own proposals in due course. But so far, the consultation undertaken is proving to be most helpful.

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Region of the month

Pasajes: quality pays!



Pasajes is one of the main fishing ports in the Spanish Basque country, the 'País Vasco' where there is a wide concentration of fishing activities with a long tradition: tropical tuna and tunny at Bermeo, tunny and anchovies at Hondarribia and Getaria, demersal species at Pasajes, and all the above species at Ondarroa.

(continued on page 2)



The Spanish fleets fish in the entire Gulf of Gascony and as far away as the Celtic Sea. Cohabitation with fleets from other Member States is not always peaceful. There have been a number of conflicts in the past few years with French fishermen; the most bitter of these have involved tuna fishing and, in particular, the use of gill nets.

In this atmosphere of conflict between the French and the Spanish, Pasajes is an exception. Numerous French trawlers from La Rochelle, Arcachon and the French Basque country (St. Jean de Luz, Hendaye), land their catches here; some have been doing so for the past ten years or so. Pasajes has its doors wide open, allowing the port's number one rule to be fulfilled, i.e. meeting the quality requirements of fish traders.

This development was brought about by the decline of what was once Spain's leading port. In the 1960s, it received over 200 industrial trawlers engaged in distant-water cod fishing. In ten years, their numbers plummeted to just 25 by 1975. Nowadays, only a dozen or so make a living from this activity. The inshore fleet is composed of netters and trawlers. The latter are all registered in the neighbouring French district of Bayonne, but the owners and crewmembers – with the exception of the skipper – are Spanish. Another sign of Pasajes' firm commitment to Europe. The port also features among advanced naval bases, including La Rochelle, Lorient in Brittany, Castletownbere, County Cork in Ireland and Lochinver, the landing centre for the Highlands of Scotland.

Pasajes has also been a major trading centre and has fought to keep it that way. It offers advantages underlined by the fishermen of La

Rochelle, including flexibility in receiving them, an absence of discrimination towards foreign boats, lower overheads and more favourable rates. These are the same points highlighted by local players.

Questions put to Antxon Corman Mugika, Director of the Cofradia de Pasajes and Luis Echavarri, fish trader

Pesca Info (P.I.): To what do you attribute the attraction Pasajes holds for fishermen?

Antxon Corman: This is a major trading centre, with around 400 authorized buyers, including at least 50 fish traders and over a hundred regular retailers. As a result, prices tend to be very advantageous. Nowadays, apart from the French, it also attracts boats from the region's other ports, from Cantabria and purse seiners from Galicia, which land their anchovies here. 85% of supplies from inshore fishing are actually derived from foreign boats, including Franco-Hispanic trawlers. As for the French, I think that, with the exception of a number of demersal species, such as ray, cod or ling, which have to be processed (a rare activity here), the prices of whole fresh fish are much higher here than in their country. Obviously, in order to benefit from this, our marketing standards must be met (grading in water tanks, which absorb water and enable handling to be reduced).

P.I.: How can the high level of prices be accounted for?

Luis Echavarri: For a start, compared with France, the Spanish market is particularly favourable for fresh fish. The distribution network enables practically all villages in Spain to be reached within reasonable time. It is so diversified that

there is always an outlet, whatever the product. In addition, Pasajes has a long-standing and solid experience in marketing. The decline of the industrial fleet has prompted fish traders and retailers to favour this sector. Fish traders, individualists as they may be, managed to pool their means of transport when supplies fell sharply, enabling loads to be combined.

**Data sheet
Pasajes**

- *Location:* Guipúzcoa, País Vasco, Spain
- *Fleet:* 12 industrial trawlers, 23 inshore trawlers, 12 netters, 2 tuna vessels
- *Type of fishing:* industrial trawling for hake, fresh fish
- *Output:*
 - *species:*
 - demersal: a wide variety, including hake (*Merluccius sp.*), cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis*), mullet (*Mullus sp.*), sole (*Solea sp.*), megrim (*Lepidorhombus sp.*), monkfish (*Lophius sp.*)
 - pelagic: anchovies
 - *volume:* around 20,000 tonnes (including 9,500 tonnes in 1997 for fresh fish)
 - *value of fresh fish:* 3.45 billion pesetas, or **ECU 20.7 million**
- *Jobs in fishing:* 500 fishermen (around 6,000 for the Spanish Basque country)
- *Processing:* 1 company





Common Fisheries Policy

Banning of drifting gill nets

At the Council of 8 June, the Fisheries Ministers from the EU resolved to ban the use of drifting gill nets for tuna fishing in the Atlantic and Mediterranean from 1 January 2002.

There are a multitude of reasons for this ban:

- biological and ecological, on account of the risks of the spread of this fishing gear, which already poses the problem of by-catches of susceptible species, particularly dolphins, and which, owing to its high profitability, could lead to overfishing;
- economic, owing to a reduction in revenue which would occur in the long run if these nets became widespread, leading to overfishing and a reduction in stocks. Furthermore, increasing public awareness of the negative consequences on the environment of this indiscriminate fishing gear would undoubtedly damage the economic outlook for this type of fishing;
- finally social, with the possi-

bility of increasing conflict between fishermen using different techniques.

Tuna fishing is not in question here; it can continue, but with more selective and economically attractive methods.

Drifting of craft

Drifting gill nets are used in various fishing grounds throughout the world. In the EU, this technique is used by Italians in the Mediterranean to catch swordfish (just under 700 boats), some 70 French and 30 or so Irish and British boats for long-finned tuna-fishing in the North Atlantic.

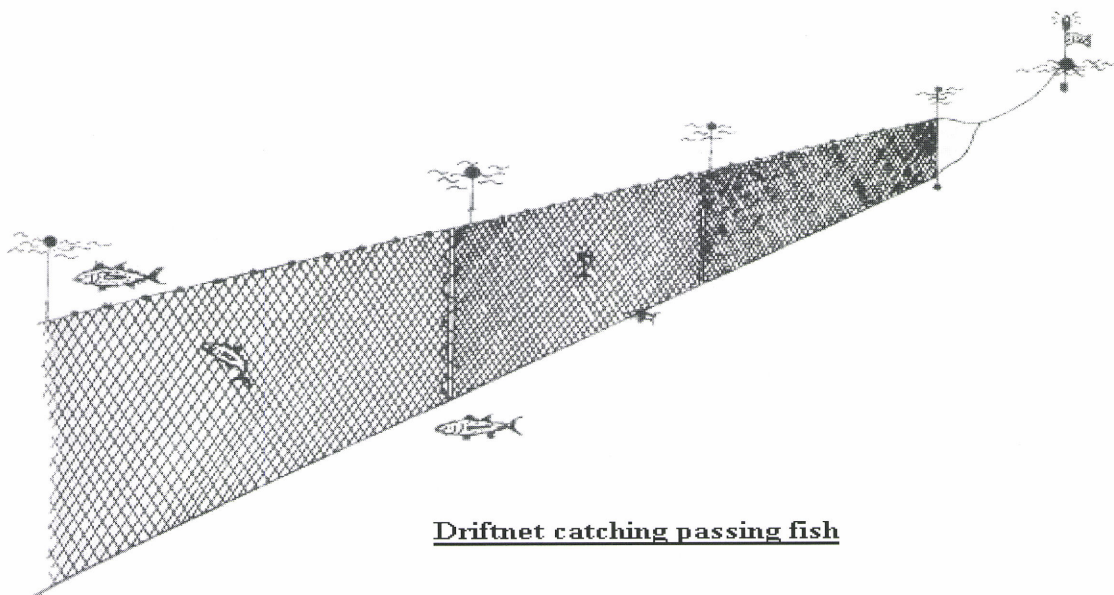
Initially, these nets were used to fish small-sized pelagic species. However, their use was gradually extended, their meshes became increasingly wide and they became longer in order to optimize catches. Problems then emerged regarding by-catches of mammals, including dolphins, as well as whales and sharks.

Alarmed by environmentalist organizations and the media, public opinion was roused at the fate of these animals. In the early 1990s, the United Nations declared a

moratorium on the use of large drifting gill nets and, in 1992, European ministers decided to impose a maximum length of 2.5km. Despite existing regulations, however, gill net fishing – particularly for long-finned tuna in the Atlantic – has continued to grow, owing to its higher profitability compared with other traditional techniques, such as troll lines or rods, which are more selective but more costly in terms of manpower.

Gradual abandoning and accompanying measures

Drifting gill nets will be gradually abandoned by 2002 in order to enable fleets to adapt. From this year, however, the number of boats using this type of fishing gear will be reduced by 40% compared with the past three years. The Member States concerned will submit national plans, and socio-economic measures financed by the EU within the framework of Structural Funds will be decided by the end of 1998. Studies and pilot projects will also be financed by the Commission to enable more selective and profitable fishing techniques to be used.



Driftnet catching passing fish

**PESCA on the spot****Sailing and fishing in the Basket Islands off County Kerry, Ireland**

The Basket Islands emerged from the unknown following the wealth of books written about them, particularly by the islands' original inhabitants. Its fame has led to a significant tourist sector. There is even a museum across from the islands devoted to them. The annual influx (around 10,000 tourists) has led to the creation of fishing and sailing activities.

Two 13-m-long boats were launched in the summer of 1997, for example, intended for passenger transport. This enabled seven full- and part-time jobs to be created. Former fishermen have been the ones to benefit. The project owes its success to the participation (at 50%) of PESCA funds in financing the project, which totalled IEP 320,000, or just over ECU 430,000. Both of these vessels were built in the neighbouring port of Dingle. This additional activity enabled another 20 people to be hired during the six months of work generated.

This project is the latest in a series of initiatives in County Kerry which PESCA has contributed to, involving not just tourism, but mollusc-farming, the management of lobster stocks, training and feasibility studies. Kerry is another example of Irish initiative when it comes to making use of PESCA funds.

**Newsflash****Information file on 'The Common Fisheries Policy'**

DG XIV has just published a new general information publication on the Common Fisheries Policy. This document consists of some 20 coloured files and tackles the various aspects of the CFP (policy on conservation of resources, agreements with third countries, structural aid, common organization of markets, etc.) from the viewpoint of the 'general public'.

The publication will be available in the 11 official languages of the EU.

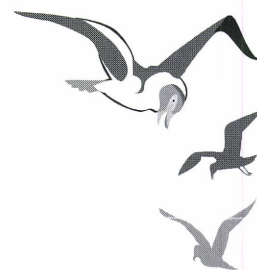
It may be obtained on request from Unit XIV/A/2 by mail or fax, or consulted on Internet under the following address:
<http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg14/dg14.html>

Creation of a European association of auction centres

The 'European Association of Fishing Ports and Auction Centres' is a new organization set up by representatives from auction centres in Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. The association aims to bring together some 400 auction centres in the EU in order to obtain better prices and improved distribution for seafood products. Furthermore, the association aims to establish an electronic interconnection of markets in order to optimize sales, thereby reducing the quantity of unsold products.

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

Corrigendum: a mistake crept into Pesca Info No. 15 (page 3, CFP section 'Management of fisheries in the Baltic Sea'): in 1983, there were ten Member States in the European Community and not 12, as stated in the article.



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