



European
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FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN EUROPE

✧ **A European Maritime and Fisheries Fund**

✧ The EU's Atlantic strategy

✧ The port of Gothenburg: growth and the environment

✧ TACs & quotas 2012

Shows and exhibitions

**The Fishing Expo, Glasgow (United Kingdom),
22-24 March 2012**

Website: <http://www.fishingexpo.co.uk>
E-mail: info@qdevents.co.uk
Tel.: +44 141 248 30 00

**European Seafood Exposition, Brussels (Belgium),
24-26 April 2012**

Website: www.euroseafood.com
E-mail: food@divcom.com
Tel.: +1 207 842 55 04

Conferences and meetings

**North Atlantic Seafood Conference, Oslo (Norway),
6-8 March 2012**

Website: <http://www.nor-seafood.com>
E-mail: jjl@messe.no; sfs@messe.no
Tel.: +47 66 93 91 00

**IOTC, Annual session, Fremantle (Australia),
22-26 April 2012**

Website: www.iotc.org
E-mail: iotc.secretary@iotc.org
Tel.: +248 22 54 94

Institutional agenda

European Parliament Committee on Fisheries

Website: www.europarl.europa.eu
E-mail: ip-PECH@europarl.europa.eu
Tel.: +32 2 284 49 09 (Brussels) or
+33 3 88 17 67 69 (Strasbourg)
• 21 March 2012, Brussels (Belgium)
• 24-25 April 2012, Brussels (Belgium)
• 30 May 2012, Brussels (Belgium)

Agriculture and Fisheries Council of the European Union

Website: www.consilium.europa.eu
• 19-20 March 2012, Brussels (Belgium)
• 26-27 April 2012, Luxembourg (Luxembourg)
• 14-15 May 2012, Brussels (Belgium)

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Note to readers

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Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe.
E-mail: fisheries-magazine@ec.europa.eu

- Website of Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
> http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/damanaki/index_en.htm
- Application: the European Maritime Atlas > <http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeatlas>
- Fisheries site > <http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries>
- Maritime Affairs site > <http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs>

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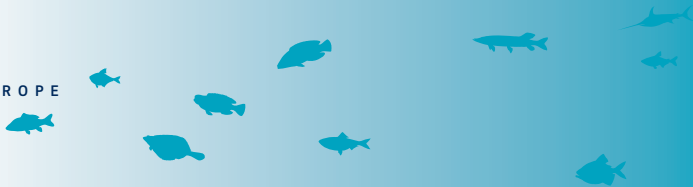
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New Fund sweeps in change

A few months after the announcement of the reform of the common fisheries policy, the fisheries and aquaculture sector was impatient to see the draft regulation spelling out the new conditions for access to European aid.

There is no denying that EUR 6.5 billion is a sizeable sum, one that can have immense influence on a sector that hardly shines by its economic prosperity. What is more, most of this financial manna (5.5 billion) is available only as co-financing, requiring financial contributions from other public authorities or private investors. So the total budget for projects that will benefit from this aid will easily add up to twice this amount.

The Commission is perfectly aware of the importance this budget represents and the influence it will exert over the sector until 2020. That is why it is crucial for it to be perfectly consistent with the objectives of the common fisheries policy. This policy will evolve significantly in the coming years, not only in line with the reform proposed last July, but also in order to achieve the objectives of the European Union's 2020 strategy, namely smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

European funding will therefore have to contribute to an overhaul of European fisheries and aquaculture, transforming them over the longer term into economically viable sectors that use modern, environment friendly and energy efficient techniques and methods, requiring competent and well-trained workers, and helping bring fresh impetus to fisheries dependent communities.

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) is probably better equipped to achieve this ambitious objective than any of its predecessors. The new Fund will not be available for fleet subsidies, which until now have accounted for the largest share of allocations granted to Member States. This change frees up large amounts for more constructive, more collective and more formative projects designed to innovate, enhance product value, create diversity, train players in the sector and so on.

The EMFF is a financial instrument at the service of a forward-looking approach, designed to provide support for the fisheries and aquaculture sector as it moves down the road to sustainable and inclusive change.

The Editor

The Maritime and Fisheries Fund

Encouraging change in fisheries and maritime policy

The European Commission has proposed to create a new fund to subsidise fisheries and maritime economy initiatives and projects. The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund would replace the European Fisheries Fund from 2014 for a period of seven years, up until 2020. Its objective is to help operators in these sectors move towards sustainable fisheries and an integrated maritime policy, in line with European Union policies.

An amount of EUR 6.5 billion is earmarked for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) for 2014-2020. Of this total, EUR 5.5 billion will co-finance private and public fisheries and aquaculture initiatives. The Commission will use the rest to finance actions under the integrated maritime policy and to cover expenditure related to implementation of the common fisheries policy (CFP). Even when inflation is factored in, the budget for fisheries is higher than in the previous fund.

In keeping with its aim of administrative simplification, the European Commission has decided to group all CFP-related financial instruments under the EMFF. This includes the European contribution to Member States' control expenditure and funds used for data collection and storage. Excluded from the EMFF are the EUR 900 million proposed for the same period to finance fisheries partnership agreements with non-EU countries and the European Union's participation in regional fisheries management organisations.

Fisheries dependent areas: ensure the continuation

Positive experience under Axis 4 of the current EFP has encouraged the Commission to develop the possibility of investing in territorial-based projects. There are no fundamental changes in this area. Fisheries areas will be eligible for funding to support their economic and social development, for example, by creating added value for the fisheries sector (processing, regional labels, etc.), or diversifying regional activity into other maritime sectors such as tourism.

The condition for such support is that development projects must originate at the grass-roots level, through fisheries local action groups. Such groups must involve all players from the local sector and determine the development strategy of the area concerned.

The four pillars

The EMFF naturally forms part of the overall framework of the CFP and its reform – we will come back to that in the following pages –, but also ties in with the European Union's 2020 strategy, which aims to ensure smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. EU 2020 also has ambitious targets for employment, innovation, energy efficiency, training and combating social exclusion. In this context, the Fund is structured around four pillars, presented as four key objectives.

Smart, green fisheries – Projects and initiatives financed under this pillar must foster a transition to sustainable fishing that is more selective, produces no discards, does less damage to marine ecosystems and even contributes to their management. Support under this pillar will also focus on innovation and added value, making the fisheries sector economically viable and able to stand up to competition from third countries.

Smart, green aquaculture – The idea is to encourage the development of economically viable, competitive and green aquaculture that can provide protein products for EU consumers.

Sustainable and inclusive territorial development – This pillar is the successor to Axis 4 of today's European Fisheries Fund. Its aim is to support the development of fisheries dependent communities by increasing the value of fishing and related activities and encouraging diversification to other sectors of the maritime economy.

Integrated maritime policy – Projects under this pillar will strive to develop cross-cutting initiatives that involve different sectors of the maritime economy – such as marine knowledge, protection of the marine environment, maritime spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management, integrated maritime surveillance, the development of emerging maritime industries, etc.

In addition to these four pillars, the EMFF will finance other types of measures such as data collection and scientific advice, the European contribution to control measures, fisheries markets and payments to regional fisheries management organisations.



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The EMFF should be seen from the angle of CFP reform. Projects financed by the new fund will have to help boost the sector's sustainability, selectivity and responsibility.

New fund, new objectives

The general principles of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) build on those of its predecessors. The guiding principle is to help the sectors concerned manage the change to sustainable fisheries and an integrated maritime policy by financing projects that can influence the development of fisheries or maritime affairs. There are nonetheless major differences between this fund and those that have come before it.

The first difference is that, as its name suggests, this fund no longer focuses solely on fisheries and aquaculture. It also contains provisions to finance projects that contribute to the European Union's integrated maritime policy. In addition, the budgets allotted to fisheries and maritime affairs will not work in the same way.

EMFF funding for maritime affairs will be placed under direct management. This means that the European Commission will develop and finance projects drawing on this fund, under the scrutiny and approval of the European institutions and Member States. The Commission will draw up an investment programme designed to take forward the principles of the integrated maritime policy launched in 2007, particularly with regard to maritime spatial planning, integrated maritime surveillance and development of a maritime knowledge database.

The amount earmarked for fisheries (EUR 5.5 billion of the 6.5 billion allocated to the EMFF) will come under shared management. Nothing will change in terms of allocation procedures for projects financed

by this fund compared with the way things have worked in the past. The European Union draws up support allocation rules, each Member State develops its public financing programmes based on its own priorities and the European Commission then makes sure that the programme is compatible with the common fisheries policy (CFP). Money drawn from this fund must also always be used in the context of co-financing. This means that a variable share of the total cost of each project must be put up by one or more public authorities: the national government or a regional or local authority. In addition, private operators must also contribute to funding for projects implemented by non-public operators.

What will change?

The principles for selecting projects to be financed by the future fund are the same as those applied under the existing European Fisheries Fund (EFF) and its predecessor, the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIG), but there are nevertheless major differences in terms of project eligibility for European funding.

As a preliminary to the latest proposal for CFP reform, presented last July, the European Commission established an indisputable finding: measures taken so far to safeguard fish stocks have led to advances on reasonable management of fish resources but have failed to transform European fisheries into a sustainable economic activity, one that is lucrative for operators, maintains the social fabric of coastal areas and helps protect the environment. The fundamental problem



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The Commission will earmark EUR 5.5 billion, from 2014 to 2020, to co-finance private and public initiatives in fisheries and aquaculture, and the remainder to finance actions related to implementation of the integrated maritime policy and the common fisheries policy.

Aquaculture: innovate and develop

In aquaculture as well, innovation assisted by scientific or technical bodies will be strongly encouraged with the aim of proposing new projects and new techniques, for example for the use of off-shore cages, far from sheltered coastal areas, which are increasingly taken up by diverse and often incompatible activities.

The fund will also strive to strengthen the economic solidity of aquaculture enterprises, for example by helping them develop business strategies, improve their management, diversify their activities, and explore new species or new types of development, or by enabling operators to improve their skills. It may also help entrepreneurs set up an aquaculture business and develop sites optimally from the standpoint of productivity, environmental protection and animal welfare. The fund may also provide support for converting aquaculture farms to organic aquaculture.

The EMFF will also finance efforts by operators and authorities to put in place environmentally sound aquaculture practices or even to participate actively in safeguarding biodiversity.

is overfishing. Available resources are exploited beyond their capacity to repopulate, creating a situation of near-shortage. The main reason for this overfishing is fleet overcapacity. To put it plainly: there are too many vessels for the numbers of fish to be caught. This is the problem the Commission intends to tackle with its reform and it was only logical to adapt the financial instrument to make it consistent with the CFP's new objectives.

Establishment of the EMFF should therefore be seen from the angle of this reform. The changes contained in the July 2011 proposal for the new CFP are also found in the new arrangements for access to European subsidies.

From the quantitative point of view, the most important change is undoubtedly the scrapping of certain types of fleet aid. Although financing opportunities in this area were already greatly reduced in 2004 when aid for the building of new vessels was eliminated, the public authorities could still grant aid to vessel owners and crews forced to halt their activities either temporarily or definitively.

The Commission proposes to abolish this aid. The reason is simple: it has not achieved its aim which was to reduce European fleet capacity. The impact of vessel elimination through such measures has been offset to a large extent by technological progress in the rest of the fleet. The Commission now counts on introducing transferable fishing concessions to help the fishing fleet adapt to the available quantities of fish by introducing an economic logic. Aid will also



be available to producer organisations or other fishing sector organisations to allow them to develop systems for the management, transfer, exchange, sale or purchase of such concessions.

Member States will still be able to use European funds to finance investments to improve gear selectivity, energy efficiency of engines and on-board working conditions. They can also support projects to improve catch quality, related for instance to storing, sorting, initial sale, etc. This latter heading particularly targets the use of unwanted catches in the framework of the ban on discards.

It is clear that opportunities to invest in vessels should be significantly reduced and strictly limited to headings that lead to real progress towards more sustainability, in every sense of the term. This is a major change, because in the past such headings absorbed a large share of Member States' budgets. The Commission hopes that transfers will be made to projects that are more effective over the longer term, related for example to innovation, establishment of partnerships with scientific institutions, product development and marketing, development of fisheries areas (former 'Axis 4'), aquaculture, etc.

Consistency

Another key change concerns conditionality. It is not new per se, because the 2008 control regulation introduced conditionality as an administrative sanction instrument. The Commission can suspend the payment of European aid to Member States that do not play by CFP rules or that do not enforce them among their fishermen. This measure is therefore expected to be confirmed in rules for access to EMFF funding.

The Commission also made a point of placing this fund and the projects it will finance in a framework that is wider than the fisheries sector alone. It did so at two levels.

To begin with, since 2007 the fisheries sector has been regarded as part of the integrated maritime policy and as such must build cross-overs to other maritime sectors. This is given concrete expression, even in the strictly 'fisheries' part of the draft regulation. For example: the fund can finance training for individuals or company start-ups outside the fisheries sector to encourage diversification. Similarly, local development strategies drawn up by local groups interested in financing reserved for fisheries areas must tie in with overall maritime and coastal development.

Fisheries: innovate, compensate and reinforce

In the area of fisheries, the EMFF will aim to encourage innovation in both fishing techniques and management of resources and their environment, with support from approved scientific or technical bodies. It will also support the establishment of partnerships between scientists and fishermen for the purposes of data collection, studies, dissemination of knowledge and best practices.

The fund will also provide support for fishermen who are facing severe difficulties or who have ceased their activity by helping them learn new occupational skills or by promoting economic diversification through aid for business start-ups (outside the sector) or the retrofitting of small-scale coastal fishing vessels for use in other types of activities, tourism for example.

Projects co-financed by the fund can also aim to limit fisheries' impact on resources and the marine ecosystem. The fund may finance measures for resource conservation, the acquisition of more selective or more environmentally friendly gears and ecosystem protection or restoration projects, such as the creation of artificial reefs, establishment of protected areas, etc.

The fund may also finance measures to improve product quality and create value from unwanted catches. It may contribute to works to improve port infrastructures or develop infrastructures serving to create value from by-catches.

Also for the sake of consistency, the EMFF will enter into the common strategic framework, being placed on the same footing, covering the same period and following the same general principles as other European funds. It will no longer be possible to manage each fund separately, a practice that in the past has led to overlaps and gaps in the areas covered by different European Union support programmes. The idea is to coordinate all funds in order to guarantee their effectiveness.

A maritime strategy for the Atlantic Ocean area

Can a common thread be found across the 3500 km of coasts that run from Thurso to Tarifa, are the same problems or elements encountered along the exclusive economic zones of the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal? After almost a year of reflection in the European Commission and in different stakeholder groups, the European Commission recently identified economic development opportunities and challenges to be met for the Atlantic region... In a word: a vision for the future of the European Union's western seaboard.

The European Union's new Atlantic strategy is the perfect example of a grass-roots initiative. Nonetheless the Atlantic strategy, following on that for the Arctic, Mediterranean and Baltic, was not announced at the onset of the integrated maritime policy. Why was the Atlantic missing, even though the policy obviously had to be structured around sea basins? The reason is that this long western coastline – running from the north of Europe all the way to its southern tip – seemed too disparate to be considered a coherent basin, whether in terms of geography, climate, economy, participation structures, problems to be addressed and so on.

The European Commission went in search of information from the usual maritime stakeholders, socio-economic groups, as well as national and regional authorities, to see whether they backed such a strategy and also to see whether the European Union could provide added value in addressing the different needs expressed. All these players expressed their interest and enthusiasm about the idea. The five Member States concerned, as well as the European Parliament and the European Union Council, were virtually unanimous in expressing the same interest.

The Commission then launched a major consultation of all maritime players, implementing the usual online process, which garnered contributions from more than 200 associations and institutions, along with meetings on the ground and exchanges of views with stakeholders. Players expressed their needs, concerns, hopes and expectations of what could be done for this vast maritime territory. The Commission then structured their suggestions around five development themes.

The five themes

Implementing the ecosystem approach

The ecosystem approach helps guarantee a healthy and productive maritime area. All activities developed in the European Atlantic area must therefore be governed by this principle, first among them fishing (which provides nearly 30% of fish consumed in the EU) and aquaculture. But there is also a need for better knowledge on how this ecosystem is evolving due to climate change and changes in the ocean.

Reducing Europe's carbon footprint

The Atlantic Ocean, through the strength of its waves and winds, has tremendous potential to boost the production of renewable power in Europe. The aim is to improve and encourage this type of development, but also to streamline shipping routes for intra-European goods transport, in particular by developing motorways of the sea on the Atlantic shoreline. Ships pollute far less than lorries for every tonne transported...

Sustainable exploitation of the Atlantic seafloor's natural resources

Minerals in the seafloor and the ocean's rich biodiversity are virtually unexploited today. Building knowledge, sharing it and determining forms of exploitation that do not endanger the environment or resources represent important economic development opportunities.

Responding to threats and emergencies

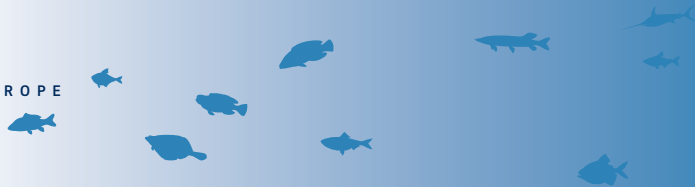
Recent maritime history has demonstrated the disastrous effects of accidents in this area. Local players want to make sure that every effort is made in the future to spare them from situations that are not merely inevitable. This requires further efforts to tighten legislation and raise maritime safety standards, but also to improve natural disaster prevention and early warning procedures.

Socially inclusive growth

The socio-economic context is changing in the Atlantic area. Employment in fisheries and shipbuilding is declining and mass tourism is moving to sunnier climes. On the other hand, the themes above show that new economic activities can be developed, such as water sports, nautical activities and cruise tourism, which relatively speaking are not well developed in the Atlantic basin. Training, occupational retraining and diversification are the new watchwords that companies and public authorities need to adopt to meet future challenges.

So what will happen now that these themes have been identified? Obviously, there is no question of their going unheeded. The Commission is already planning to develop them in the second phase of work, which will focus on the adoption in 2013 of an Atlantic action plan that will lay out in tangible measures the ideas outlined in the five themes. An Atlantic Forum, made up of representatives of bodies and institutions active in the coastal and maritime areas concerned, has been put in place to draw up this action plan.

The forum will meet several times before the end of 2012, when it will report to the Commission on the requests and suggestions of actors on the ground regarding the content of the Atlantic action plan. The plan is then expected to be adopted in 2013.



Use of EU funds

The 2013 target was not set by chance. The Commission wished to establish a direct link between its Atlantic strategy and the use of EU funds from 2014. In its determination to break down the barriers that characterised the previous method of managing different EU funds, the Commission has set up a Common Strategic Framework within which Member States will present, in 2013, their programmes for the use of European financial support. These programmes must be based on the themes of the European Union's new 2020 strategy and, once validated, will be established in the form of a 'partnership contract' between each Member State and the Commission.

So it is no accident that the five themes of the Atlantic strategy are in line with those set in the EU 2020 strategy, with the exception of maritime safety, a theme specific to this region, which has been dealt serious blows in recent decades.

There is clearly no question, however, of making use solely of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund discussed in the preceding pages. Member States will be able to present 'multi-fund' projects and the Atlantic strategy will unfold in areas that encompass many

more development objectives than the maritime dimension alone. Take the example of a future motorway of the sea between Le Havre and Algeiras, via Saint-Nazaire, Gijón and Vigo. Its development can be eligible for cohesion funds for its aspects of creating an economic development and employment pole, structural funds for its infrastructure creation aspects and maritime funds for its multi-sector integration aspects. Similarly, exploration of the full potential of the immense exclusive economic zones of countries like Ireland or Portugal will require resources that would be hard to raise at national level but which European support can make conceivable.

Apart from developing a vision of the maritime future of the Atlantic area, the new maritime strategy also offers a perspective on future use of European financial support, encouraging the five Member States concerned to set their maritime development priorities on the basis of strategic priorities and in a coordinated manner.

In conclusion, the Atlantic strategy will be vital in triggering actions and projects at EU level that offer real added value for the economy of the Atlantic area. In 2020 we will be able to measure the success of these efforts.

In its Atlantic strategy, the Commission proposes a vision for the maritime future of the European Union's western seaboard, taking care to tie it in with the EU 2020 strategy.



TACs 2012: under the sign of the economic crisis

In keeping with its yearly practice, last December's European Union Fisheries Council focused on setting total allowable catches (TACs) for Atlantic, North Sea and Black Sea stocks. The economic crisis had a considerable impact on the ministers' decisions during this year's exercise.

Atlantic

As in previous years, the Commission's proposals were based on securing progress by European fisheries towards maximum sustainable yield (MSY). For stocks not yet exploited according to this principle, this implied a phased reduction of fishing opportunities over a four-year period, so as to achieve optimal exploitation in line with MSY in 2015. To achieve this objective, the Commission therefore proposed sizeable decreases for 2012 in total allowable catches (TACs) for certain stocks. These reductions were meant to ensure rapid progress towards MSY in 2012 and full achievement of the objective in 2015.

The fisheries ministers discussed these proposals at length at last December's Council. They did not question the principle of advancing towards MSY – they are obliged to do so under an international commitment they made in 2002 – but insisted on progressive reductions up until 2015. For a few stocks, the ministers nevertheless preferred to slow down the rate of progress towards MSY, making it achievable in 2020. Their argument focused on the risk of job losses in fisheries due to the reductions imposed by the 2015 target. The stocks concerned are sole in the Bay of Biscay, northern hake (renewal of the 2011 TAC) and sole in the Irish Sea (23% reduction of the TAC).

TACs for stocks managed under a multiannual plan follow the plan's requirements and evolve on the basis of scientific advice.

The Commission's proposal also raised an important problem: the data provided by the Member States are insufficient to enable scientists to evaluate stocks precisely. Of the 104 stocks exploited in EU waters in the North-East Atlantic, only 48 are documented sufficiently to enable scientists to calculate TACs that correspond to MSY. To solve this growing problem, the Commission proposed to reduce TACs further, both to encourage Member States to ensure proper data collection and, as a precautionary measure, to remedy the imprecise knowledge of stocks.

The Council acknowledged the gravity of this problem. It urged the States to take seriously their obligation to collect and report data to international scientific bodies, primarily the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). In this context, the ministers committed to solve the problem of the lack of reporting of data on catches and discards for a number of important stocks. The Commission recognised the States' commitment and therefore accepted their request for a smaller reduction of TACs, in the context of a morose economic climate.

The ministers consequently raised most of the TACs proposed by the Commission, while maintaining significant reductions compared with 2011 levels, including those decided in an international context for fisheries in international waters or in seas neighbouring the Union. Among the most important are cod in West Scotland which, given the poor state of the stock, cannot be targeted in 2012. Other sizeable TAC reductions concern North Sea sandeel (-49%), Irish Sea whiting (-25%), cod in the Irish Sea (-25%) and the Kattegat (-30%), and Northern albacore and blue marlin in the Atlantic (-20% and -29%).

Fishing opportunities are higher for certain sound stocks: herring in the North Sea (+110%), Channel (+68%), Kattegat-Skagerrak (+50%) and Celtic Sea (+60%), as well as cod, anglerfish and megrim in Southern western waters (+87%, +110% and +11% respectively), Atlantic boarfish (+148%), and haddock in West Scotland (200%), the Celtic Sea (+25%) and the North Sea (+14%).

Black Sea

In the Black Sea, the two species subject to quotas are turbot and sprat. For these two stocks, fishing opportunities remain unchanged at 11 475 tonnes for sprat and 86.4 for turbot. For the latter species, the Council preferred not to implement the 15% reduction proposed by the Commission, but suggested that monitoring and inspection measures should be developed to put an end to illegal and unreported catches of turbot in the Black Sea.

The Council also highlighted the need for regional cooperation among all Black Sea rim states to establish common and sustainable stock management in this sea.



The port of Gothenburg: charting a course towards the future

The port of Gothenburg, in Sweden, has great ambitions and has given itself the means to achieve them. Its growth policy and environmental commitment are certain to interest participants in the European Maritime Days 2012⁽¹⁾, to be held in this port city.

No tides, no ice in winter, wide and deep access... Gothenburg, located on the Swedish shores of the Kattegat, has made the most of these strong points, which have helped it become Scandinavia's leading freight port. With 900 000 TEUs⁽²⁾, 200 000 vehicles and 22 million tonnes of oil per year, more than half the Swedish economy goes through the port every year.

In 2010, the city – which owns the port – decided to base its management on models that deliver the best results and to grant 25-year concessions for operation of the terminals to specialised companies. As a result of the concessions granted in 2011, APMT, a Dutch-Danish group, operates the container terminal, the Belgian-Danish consortium Cobelfret-DFDS manages the Ro-Ro terminal and Sweden's Logent runs the important vehicle terminal (the Volvo plants are in the city's northern outskirts). To complete the picture, the oil terminal operates for the two adjoining refineries and a forest products terminal is being fitted out. The port also hosts cruise ships, a growing activity thanks to the city's development of tourism.

Doubling traffic in 10 years

With this restructuring, the port authority's goal is to double traffic within 10 years. Although Gothenburg is Scandinavia's leading port, it still lags far behind Rotterdam and Hamburg in terms of tonnes landed... The ambition is to take market shares from these giants by establishing a profile as a hub port for transport to and from Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea, an ambition encouraged by the development of infrastructures tied to the Baltic motorway of the sea.

'We asked our industries what they expected of a port', explains Magnus Kårestedt, the port's CEO. 'What they want is the highest volume of traffic possible, to a large number of destinations, and lots of competition among shipping lines. Then we asked freighters what they expected, and naturally they hope to see lots of freight. The conclusion is that to be a profitable and attractive port, we have to grow very quickly by creating a positive spiral: more freight and higher frequency.'

Gothenburg and fisheries

West coast Swedish operators fish in the North Sea and the Skagerrak-Kattegat. The main catches are herring, sandeel, mackerel, saithe and cod for the North Sea and herring, sprat, shrimp, Norway lobster, saithe, cod and flat fish (plaice and scaldfish) for the Skagerrak-Kattegat. More than two thirds (in tonnage) of the Swedish fishing fleet is based on the west coast. Gothenburg is the home port to only 3% of this fleet, but the neighbouring fishing ports of Fiskebäck, Donsö, Hönö and Rörö account for 40%. The leading auction is in Gothenburg, however, so here is where most west coast catches are sold. The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management is also based in Gothenburg.

The port authority therefore wishes to draw more freight to its wharves. A huge logistics area is being developed north of the port to facilitate freight transfer. Most importantly, though, in recent years the port has hired the services of around 10 railway operators to set up a rail network that transports goods to 26 destinations, as far as the centre of Sweden and even Norway. Thanks to the network, a small entrepreneur based in the surroundings of Gävle, 600 km away from Gothenburg, can ship containers from his facilities to China. Some 50% of containers in transit in the port start or end their journey by train. This number is destined to rise, because management intends to continue to expand its land-based network at the rate of one or two rail destinations per year. This logistics effort represents an annual savings of 50 000 tonnes of CO₂.

Like anywhere in Sweden, a growth policy detrimental to the environment is inconceivable. The port has therefore made a strict commitment, particularly on air quality. Operators of ships fuelling up with low-sulphur fuels are reimbursed the difference in price compared with ordinary fuels. A high-performance electricity grid, fuelled by a wind farm, provides power to ships at berth, enabling them to switch off their engines. The port also uses a vapour recovery system to trap and reliquify vapours released during fuelling operations. As a result of these innovations, in addition to the logistics policy giving precedence to rail, the British organization Sustainable Shipping presented its 2011 award to the port of Gothenburg.

For more information:
www.portgot.se

(1) "See "In brief" p. 12.

(2) Twenty-foot-equivalent units: a container measurement unit.

ICCAT: new measures

At their annual meeting last November, members of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) adopted new management measures. For tropical tuna, the new multiannual plan for bigeye tuna maintains TACs at 85 000 tonnes but enlarges the moratorium area for the protection of juveniles and strengthens control measures. This plan also establishes new conservation measures for yellowfin tuna. For North Atlantic swordfish, a new multiannual plan is designed to maintain this stock (considered sound) at maximum sustainable yield. Additional measures are introduced for Mediterranean swordfish (considered in poor condition). The TAC for southern albacore is reduced, while the 2009 management plan for northern albacore is renewed. For Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna, the current plan will remain in force but control measures will be stricter. In particular, an electronic catch documentation programme will be set up under the EU's leadership. The management plan for white marlin and blue marlin is renewed, with a reduction in catch limits for blue marlin and a ban on catches of silky sharks. Technical measures are also introduced to reduce by-catches of seabirds in the South Atlantic. The ICCAT also announced at its meeting a significant improvement in data reporting and compliance in general: 15 of the 23 parties identified in 2010 as being in breach of ICCAT rules have satisfied the organisation's requirements. In the future, failures to report data can be sanctioned by the elimination of fishing rights. Lastly, the ICCAT also adopted measures to strengthen scientific advice, among which, on the EU's initiative, a recommendation on 'best available science' that aims to safeguard and promote the independence and excellence of the ICCAT's Scientific Committee. This measure establishes, inter alia, mechanisms for peer review and the participation of external experts in the Scientific Committee's activities.

Commission proposes total ban on finning

The European Commission has presented a proposal to amend the regulation that has banned finning since 2003, with the aim of making it more effective. Finning is a practice that consists of cutting off sharks' fins aboard fishing vessels and discarding the rest of the carcass at sea. The Commission proposes to oblige all vessels fishing in European waters and all European vessels operating anywhere in the world to land sharks with the fins attached to the body. To facilitate storage on board vessels, fishermen will be authorized to slice partly through each fin and to fold it against the carcass. This regulation will put an end to existing rules that allow processing on board under certain conditions (including keeping the carcass on board) and the landing of fins and carcasses in different ports. It is difficult for inspectors to enforce the existing regulation, and as a result, finning is not always detected.

European Maritime Days 2012 in Gothenburg

The 2012 event will be held in Gothenburg on 21 and 22 May, on the theme of 'blue growth', the new leitmotiv of the integrated maritime policy. Workshops will bring together different European public and private players, including Commissioner Maria Damanaki. Gothenburg will host numerous exhibitions for the occasion.
Info: <http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/maritimeday>

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