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FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN EUROPE

High seas: pursuing sustainability

-  CFP reform: the debate
-  Rio+20: protecting the high seas
-  Cyprus: major port development

Conferences and meetings

NEAFC, annual meeting, London (United Kingdom), 12-16 November 2012
Website: www.neafc.org
E-mail: info@neafc.org
Tel.: +44 207 631 0016

ICCAT, special meeting of the Commission, Agadir (Morocco), 12-19 November 2012
Website: www.iccat.int
E-mail: info@iccat.int
Tel.: +34 91 416 56 00

SEAFO, annual meeting, Busan (Korea), 3-7 December 2012
Website: www.seafo.org
E-mail: info@seafo.org
Tel.: +264 64 22 03 87

WCPFC, regular session, Manila (Philippines), 3-7 December 2012
Website: www.wcpfc.int
E-mail: wcpfc@mail.fm
Tel.: +691 320 1992 or 320 1993

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)
• 6 November 2012, Brussels (Belgium)
• 28 November 2012, Brussels (Belgium)
• 18 December 2012, Brussels (Belgium)

Agriculture and Fisheries Council of the European Union
Website: www.consilium.europa.eu
• 28-29 November 2012, Brussels (Belgium)
• 18-19-20 December 2012, Brussels (Belgium)

2 CALENDAR

3 EDITORIAL

A responsible European fleet,
wherever it fishes

4-7 DOSSIER

RFMOs: sustainability in the high seas
Indian Ocean: better knowledge
of tuna stocks

8-9 IN THE NEWS

Reform is underway
Rio+20: a major step forward

10-11 OUT AND ABOUT

Limassol: at a crossroads

12 IN BRIEF

Note to readers

We welcome your comments or suggestions at the following address:
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or by fax to: (+32) 2 297 95 64 with reference to
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/index_en.htm
- Fisheries site > http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/index_en.htm
- Maritime Affairs site > http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/index_en.htm

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A responsible European fleet, wherever it fishes

The European Union (EU) fishing fleet is at work around the world. According to the latest statistics, 718 vessels flying the flag of a Member State fish outside EU waters. This of course represents less than 1 % of all EU fishing vessels, but these alone make up nearly one fourth of its fishing capacity. Indeed, production from these vessels accounts for 21 % of European catches – at least in species for human consumption. For certain species, such as shrimps and cephalopods, the proportion is even higher. For tuna fishing, 90% of catches occur in international waters or in the exclusive economic zones of partner states.

Management of the intense activity of this fleet falls under the 'external dimension' of the common fisheries policy, which also encompasses other matters such as participation in global fisheries governance and the fight against illegal fishing. In waters under its jurisdiction, the EU retains full discretion to exercise its responsibility for the sound management of fish stocks. It therefore has the freedom (and even the duty) to set and impose its rules. But as soon as the external boundary of a Member State's exclusive economic zone is crossed, this power disappears.

Due to the global presence of large freezer-trawlers and tuna seiners flying the flag of Spain, France, Italy or another EU State, the EU must assume its responsibilities, in keeping with the policy it applies to waters under its jurisdiction. It would be inconsistent and unacceptable for the EU to impose responsible fishing in the Bay of Biscay, for example, and to allow European vessels to overfish in the jurisdiction of a third country or in international waters. The EU adopts two actions in waters outside its competence to ensure that its fleet contributes to the responsible management of fish resources: it concludes agreements with third countries and it participates in the work of international organisations.

To enable a European vessel to fish or to follow shoals of fish in a third country's exclusive economic zone, the EU draws up agreements. Up until 2004, fisheries agreements were solely financial in nature: the EU paid the third country financial compensation in return for access to its fish resources. Since then, these agreements have evolved into 'fisheries partnerships' (for those with the Southern states and with Greenland) because they entail an additional dimension: part of the compensation is now used to help the partner state organise the sustainable management of its stocks. This approach helps put management at the heart of bilateral concerns.

Furthermore, the EU, represented by the European Commission, is a member of the leading regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) that manage the international waters of the planet's oceans. To be precise, the Commission participates in the work of five tuna RFMOs, nine non-tuna RFMOs and two purely advisory organisations (Western Central Atlantic and Eastern Central Atlantic). As a contracting party, it enjoys real power of action and initiative, which it uses to develop responsible and sustainable management in international waters. To ensure the success of its efforts, it works actively before, during and after meetings of these RFMOs to influence the decisions they adopt, generally by consensus. This work has been under way for a long time, but in the framework of its proposal for reform of the common fisheries policy, the Commission has announced its intention to take it further. How? That is the subject of the fact file contained in this issue.

The Editor



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The conclusions of the talks at the June conference confirmed the Commission's resolve to step up its action in RFMOs to promote sustainable fishing.

DOSSIER

RFMOs: sustainability in the high seas

The reform of the common fisheries policy includes ambitions beyond Europe's boundaries. The European Union sets the same sustainable fishing objectives for international waters as it does for its own waters. It therefore aims to help regional fisheries management organisations provide stringent management of fisheries in the high seas. How? A high level meeting was held last June in Brussels to consider this question.

The European Union (EU) has a number of good reasons to take an interest in fishing outside its fisheries jurisdiction.

The first is that overexploitation of stocks is a global reality. According to the FAO's 2012 assessment⁽¹⁾, 53% of stocks monitored worldwide are fully exploited, 28% overexploited, 3% depleted and 1% recovering. It is therefore urgent to establish sustainable fishing in all the world's oceans. Global food security is at stake.

The second is that a large part of the European fishing fleet is active worldwide. So it is only natural that the EU look after the interests of this fleet while ensuring the sustainability of the stocks it exploits.

The third reason is that the EU is the world's leading import market for fisheries and aquaculture products. International trade brings into the Union products caught in seas across the globe. It is therefore coherent for the EU to take action to ensure that their exploitation is sustainable in line with the principles it recommends in its own fisheries policy.

The EU therefore intends to shoulder its responsibilities as a major catcher and consumer of fish. As part of its reform of the common fisheries policy (CFP)⁽²⁾, it has decided to step up its action to help establish sustainable fisheries in waters throughout the world. To do so, it plans to act at global level through the major international organisations (UN⁽³⁾, FAO, OECD⁽⁴⁾, etc.), at regional level through regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and bilaterally through partnership agreements with certain coastal states.

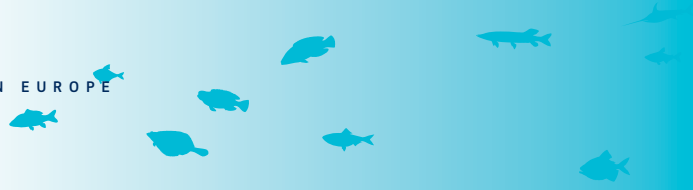
The focus of this Fact File will be on the EU's regional action and the role it intends to play within RFMOs.

(1) United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation – www.fao.org/fishery/sofia

(2) See COM 424/2011: Communication from the Commission on the external dimension of the common fisheries policy.

(3) United Nations – www.un.org

(4) Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – www.oecd.org



Objective: sustainable and effective

To begin, just what is an RFMO? It is an international organisation created under the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. A regional fisheries management organisation is in charge of managing fisheries in a precisely defined area of the high seas. This means that it is the body that issues licences to vessels, establishes fishing opportunities, restricts fishing effort, organises controls, etc. Generally, its decisions prevail over domestic laws and are directly applicable by its contracting parties⁽⁵⁾. As a rule, an RFMO's members are all the coastal states and fisheries operators in its zone of jurisdiction. For a vessel to be authorised to fish in international waters, its flag state must be a contracting party or cooperating party⁽⁶⁾ of the RFMO that manages the fishing zone concerned.

These RFMOs play a key role in managing high seas fisheries. So it is through these organisations that the EU, a member of most of them, plans to work to advance the cause of sustainable and responsible fishing in international waters. Accordingly, the European Commission, the Union's representative in RFMO decision-making bodies, intends to play a very determined role to promote the same approach it recommends for EU waters, and, naturally, in line with the general principles of international law on fisheries.

The EU has defined the following principal objectives for the external dimension of the CFP, in the framework of its reform:

- **Enhance the scientific basis of fisheries management** – The goal is to make sure that scientific data that underpin decisions taken by RFMOs are as solid as possible and derive from the best scientific advice available.
- **Improve compliance** – This requires a strengthening of control procedures as well as systematic review of how contracting and cooperating parties ensure compliance.
- **Establish better governance** – The idea is to see to the proper administrative functioning of these bodies, but also to make decision-making more effective, reviewing if necessary the rule of consensus that blocks the adoption of certain decisions.
- **Reduce overcapacity of the fleet active in high seas areas** – This is the same objective as in European waters: to ensure that licensed fishing capacity matches available resources, assessed on the basis of the best scientific advice available.

Stimulating debate

This is the backdrop against which Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, organised a conference on the future of the RFMOs entitled 'RFMOs – Fit for the Future'. It was held on 1 June in Brussels. The representatives of 14 RFMOs participated, along with Member States' top fisheries managers. The conference marked the first time such a large number of RFMOs had come together, with total attendance of over 100 people. The participation of eminent keynote speakers from the United States, China and New Zealand gave a global scale to the event. The aim of their addresses was to stimulate debate, giving RFMO representatives the opportunity to review their problems and make suggestions on how to improve the situation (see box).

What comes next? The Council and European Parliament have backed the Commission's communication on the external dimension of the CFP, enabling it to move forward. A report⁽⁷⁾ has been drawn up based on the 1 June discussions and sent to all the conference participants. It shows their broad consensus on the actions needed as well as considerable similarity of views between the EU's approach and that of RFMOs. All this confirms the Commission's resolve to strengthen its action in the RFMOs to promote sustainable fishing.

It will therefore work on different fronts to increase scientific capacity, develop management or capacity reduction measures, establish new control mechanisms and tools to combat illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing, strengthen compliance committees, allocate budgets for data collection, etc. Not all RFMOs are alike nor do they all need the same measures to improve the quality of their management. It should also be kept in mind that while the EU ranks high in certain RFMOs, in others it is more isolated and its room for action is narrower.

One thing is certain, though: the reform is already under sail in the high seas.



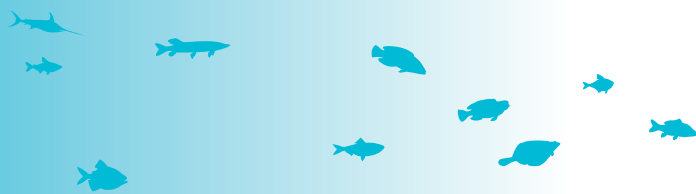
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(5) The term that designates, generally speaking, the states that are members of an international agreement, and in this case an RFMO.

(6) A cooperating party is a state that, without being a member, agrees to comply with the management measures decided by the RFMO.

(7) The report is available on: http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/events/2012/06/events_20120601_01_en.htm

Conference web streaming is also available: <http://webcast.ec.europa.eu/eutv/portal/archive.html?viewConference=15690>



The lessons of the conference:

Best available science – Sound management can be based only on sound scientific knowledge of stocks. The question, obviously, is how to optimise the quality of scientific data and of advice based on such data. This of course requires political commitment by States Parties, but it is also a question of financing. Budgets are needed to organise data collection, pay scientists and train them. This is problematic in RFMOs whose contracting parties include developing countries.

Compliance – The solution is to set up effective compliance committees that regularly assess how each State Party ensures compliance with rules set by the RFMO and that try to identify reasons for lack of compliance. Sometimes the problem can be a lack of political will but there may also be shortcomings in the state's capacity to organise fisheries control. The solution, in both cases, might lie in sanctions or capacity-building support.

Strengthening of administrative, management and control capacities – This is a crucial issue, since most RFMOs include many developing countries. The problem can occur with certain States Parties that lack the resources to maintain an effective fisheries administration or to organise surveillance of a large fleet of small-scale fishing vessels operating in the informal sector. The problem can also lie at the level of the RFMO itself, since some lack the resources to finance a secretariat due to their members' limited means. Payment of access fees by operators could be a solution to this problem, but in some cases participants mentioned the possibility of merging several RFMOs to achieve economies of scale.

Traceability – Everyone is convinced that organising strict traceability of catches is the key to ensure the conservation of species at global level. RFMOs would like to see electronic declarations, an indispensable tool, become the general rule. The model is the ICCAT⁽⁸⁾ bluefin tuna plan, in place since 2008 to restore the health of fisheries for this species in the Mediterranean and North-East Atlantic. Discussions are under way in the ICCAT to extend this plan to all stocks managed by the RFMO.

Illegal fishing – The RFMOs would like an effective and harmonised system to be organised for the listing of IUU⁽⁹⁾ vessels, to keep them from simply wiping the slate clean by moving to a different geographical zone. Many RFMOs suggested the establishment of a unique vessel identifier for this purpose, in other words a unique identification code that would follow the vessel throughout its life cycle. The participants also expressed their need for a global register of fishing vessels, a project under way in the FAO.

Fishing overcapacity – This is one of the key vehicles for IUU fishing. The discussions focused on how to match fleet capacity to available resources. The solutions must be adapted to the fisheries and states concerned. They can include a freeze in capacity or the introduction of individual quotas. It is essential to take the expectations of the developing countries into consideration, as they have the right to increase their fishing capacities to cover their food needs. Mechanisms between these countries and the developed world should be put in place to take this issue into account.

«Performance review» – Regular performance reviews are perceived as a key tool to help RFMOs improve their functioning. Certain RFMOs already use this tool, but independent reviews should be more systematic. It is also important to ensure follow-up on recommendations issued as part of performance reviews.

Closer cooperation – For now, individual RFMOs work independently of the others and are sometimes obliged to reinvent solutions to problems that have already been solved elsewhere. They therefore seek facilities for the exchange of best practice and cooperation. In some cases, it would be appropriate for two neighbouring RFMOs to coordinate their management principles, especially where they deal with the same species. Tuna RFMOs have set up the Kobe process to introduce global consistency in managing tuna stocks. The more general RFMOs have taken no such initiatives, however.

(8) International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas – www.iccat.int

(9) IUU refers to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Turbot

Psetta maxima

5



Biology

Turbot (*Psetta maxima*) is a prime flatfish with both eyes on the upper side. It is common on the Atlantic coasts of Europe, but less frequent in the Mediterranean. It lives in marine sandy and muddy bottoms, from shallow waters down to 100 metres deep, imitating the colour of the substrate. Spawning takes place from May to July in the Atlantic and earlier, from February to April, in the Mediterranean. Larvae are initially symmetrical, but after 40 to 50 days, as they develop, the right eye moves to the left side. The turbot is carnivorous. Juveniles feed on molluscs and crustaceans and adults mainly on fish and cephalopods.

Farming

Turbot farming started in the 1970s in the United Kingdom and was then further developed in France and Spain. Although other EU countries are involved in turbot aquaculture activities, Spain, particularly the Galicia region, has become the main EU producer.

Like most of the seabream and seabass seed supply, turbot juveniles are produced by technologically sophisticated hatcheries which require skilled staff.

Reproduction in captivity is carried out under strictly controlled conditions. Broodstock are maintained in concrete tanks, at low densities, under specific photoperiod and temperature conditions, and fed on specially designed moist pellets. This provides eggs all year round. The eggs are pelagic and are placed in incubation tanks until hatching.

Larvae are reared in semi-intensive systems (five larvae per litre) or intensive systems (twenty to forty larvae per litre). When their mouths open, they are fed zooplankton and subsequently artemia (a small crustacean). Phytoplankton may also be added to the tanks. During their second month they are weaned onto commercial artificial diets. In the following two months, the juveniles are fed on dry granules in nurseries and reach a weight of 5-10 g.

The juveniles are then transferred outside to bigger tanks for a pre-fattening period of several months until they reach around 100 g.

On-growing normally takes place in outdoor, land-based, square or circular tanks with open-circuit pumped seawater. The tanks are covered to protect the fish from sunburn. Density is 20 to 40 kg per square metre. Only a small proportion of European turbot is produced in recirculation aquaculture systems (RAS). Flat-bottomed cages can also be used for the on-growing stage but are less frequent. It takes 26 to 30 months to reach a commercial size of 1.5 or 2 kg.

Production and trade

Turbot production used to be limited to the European area before turbot farming was developed in China with broodstock imported from Europe. According to FAO data, China produces around 60 000 tonnes of farmed turbot, while EU aquaculture production is just under 10 000 tonnes and EU fisheries production around 6 000 tonnes per year. Within the EU, Spain is the main producer of farmed turbot, but a sizable development of turbot aquaculture is expected in Portugal soon. Trade with third countries is not significant. Intra-EU trade of farmed turbot is assessed at half the value of EU aquaculture production, with main flows from Spain towards France, Italy and Portugal.



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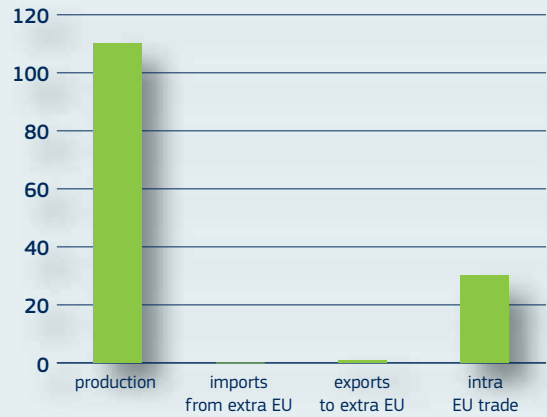
Presentation on the market

This prime flatfish is generally sold whole. Its main outlet is to the restaurant trade.

Nutritional value per 100 g (average)

Calories: 108 kcl
Protein: 18 g
Selenium: 18 µg
Vitamin D: 3.6 µg
EPA: 364 mg
DHA: 428 mg

EU turbot supply and trade* (2009) (MEUR)



* from fishery and aquaculture.

Source: Eurostat.

Turbot with wild mushroom risotto

Ingredients (serves 4)

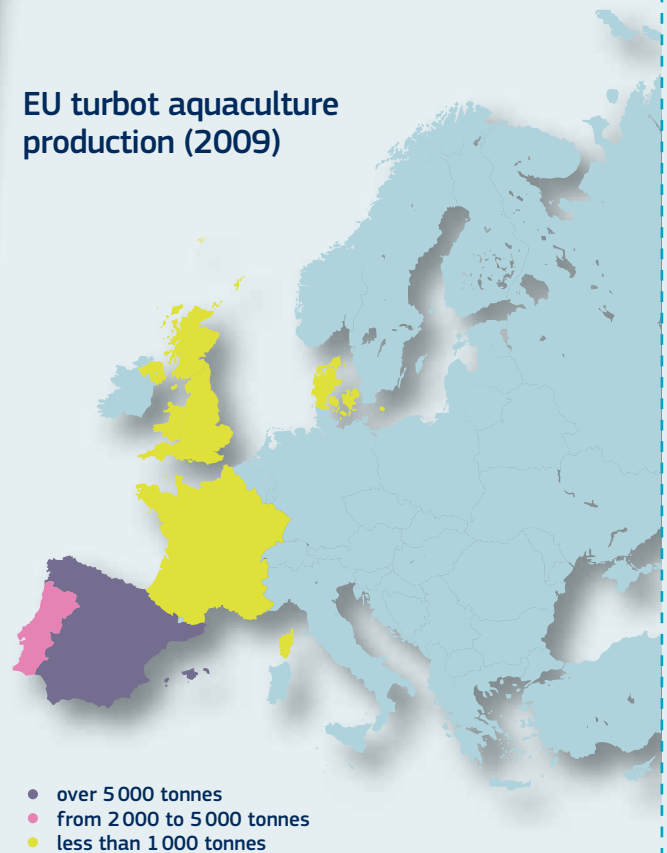
- 600 g turbot fillets
 - 150 g Arborio or Camaroli rice
 - 2 shallots
 - 200 ml chicken stock
 - 100 g wild mushrooms
 - 100 ml white wine
 - 50 g parmesan
 - 50 g butter
 - 1 sprig of dill
 - Olive oil
 - Salt and pepper
- For the herb-infused oil:
- 400 ml olive oil
 - 1 bunch of flat-leaf parsley
 - 1 garlic clove
 - 20 basil leaves
 - 1 green chilli

Method

1. For the herb-infused oil: Put all the ingredients in a blender, strain, then place in the fridge.
2. For the risotto: Melt the butter in a saucepan with the chopped shallots, add the rice and blanch. Pour in the wine and reduce. Add the stock to the pan in small quantities and at regular intervals, stirring continuously. Simmer for around 13 minutes.
3. Fry the mushrooms separately and add them to the risotto with a little grated parmesan and a knob of butter. The rice should be *al dente*.
4. Season the turbot fillets with salt and pepper and pan fry in a little olive oil.
5. To serve, place a spoonful of risotto in the centre of each plate. Lay the salmon on the rice, drizzle the spiced oil around the risotto and garnish with dill.

Recipe courtesy of chef Eric Patigny (Euro-Toques Belgium)

EU turbot aquaculture production (2009)



Source: Eurostat.

Salmon

Salmo salar

6



Biology

Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) is indigenous to the North Atlantic coast of Europe and the rivers flowing into it. It is an anadromous species. It reproduces in freshwater, where it also spends its first few years, but spends most of its life in sea water.

Spawning occurs from October to January. Eggs are released and fertilised in upstream gravel beds, and require very clean and well oxygenated waters. Many fish die after spawning. The alevins feed for around four to six weeks on their own reserves; subsequently the fry start to feed on insect larvae. The juvenile fish, called 'parr', stay in freshwater for two to five years, until they go through the smoltification process, whereby the fish adapt their physiology to seawater and migrate to the sea, usually between March and June.

Farming

Hatchery techniques for Atlantic salmon were originally developed in the United Kingdom in the 19th century for restocking purposes. However, it was in Norway in 1960 that a farm first marketed adult salmon produced in floating cages.

The initial stage of the salmon farming cycle takes place in freshwater. The reproduction of Atlantic salmon in captivity is strictly controlled. The eggs are removed from the female fish and are fertilised by mixing them with sperm taken from the male fish. They are then placed in incubation tanks. The rearing of hatched alevins takes place in two stages. The first stage, in silos or trays, lasts four to six weeks, until the larvae have absorbed their yolk sac and developed into parr. In the second stage, the parr are transferred to freshwater tanks (or floating cages in a lake), where they will remain for one to two years, the time required for smoltification.

The smolts are then transferred to a sea site, where they are placed in a floating cage. They stay in the cage for around two years, the time it takes to reach commercial size (2-5 kg).

Salmon are carnivorous and the smolts are fed pellets made of fishmeal and fish oil. These contain additional ingredients, such as vegetable meals and extracts (cereals, beans, soy etc.), vitamins, mineral salts and carotenoid pigment, which gives them their characteristic colour.

Production and trade

Worldwide, aquaculture accounts for two thirds of total salmon production. The main farmed species is Atlantic salmon, accounting for 93% of total aquaculture production. In 2009, the main producers of Atlantic salmon were Norway, Chile, the EU and Canada.

In the EU, salmon production is limited to Atlantic salmon. Farming of other species and fishery captures are negligible. The EU is very dependent on the rest of the world for salmon, since it imports 80% of its supply from third countries, and 80% of that from Norway. Imports from China are on the increase, but this is actually Norwegian salmon which has been filleted and frozen in China. The two major EU importers of Norwegian salmon are Sweden and Denmark, although they only act as hubs and actually re-export almost everything to the main EU markets for salmon (France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Poland). This specific role of Sweden and Denmark explains why the value of intra-EU trade seems to be as big as the value of imports. Poland and Germany also contribute to this important intra-EU trade by processing (mainly smoking) Norwegian raw material. Exports from the EU (mainly Scottish salmon towards the USA) are not very significant.



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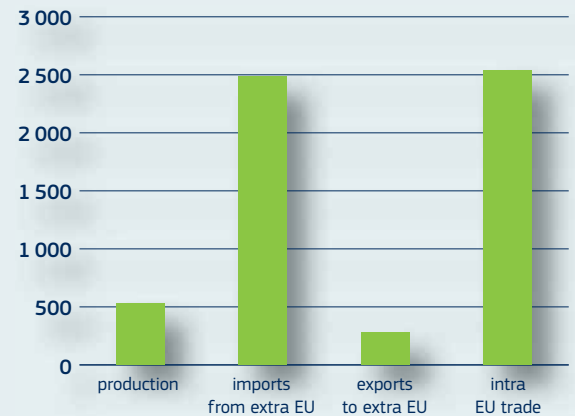
Presentation on the market

Salmon is a highly versatile fish, as reflected in the number and variety of salmon-based products on the shelves all over the EU. There is a high proportion of fresh sales, which fishmongers present as fillets or cutlets and supermarkets in pre-packaged format. Smoked salmon is a popular delicacy that is generally presented vacuum-packed and pre-sliced.

Nutritional value per 100 g (average for UK and Norwegian farmed salmon)

Calories: 198 kcal
Protein: 20 g
Selenium: 12 µg
Vitamin D: 5.7 µg
EPA: 612 mg
DHA: 869 mg

EU salmon supply and trade* (2009) (MEUR)



* from fishery and aquaculture.

Source: Eurostat.

Salmon waterzooi



Ingredients (serves 4)

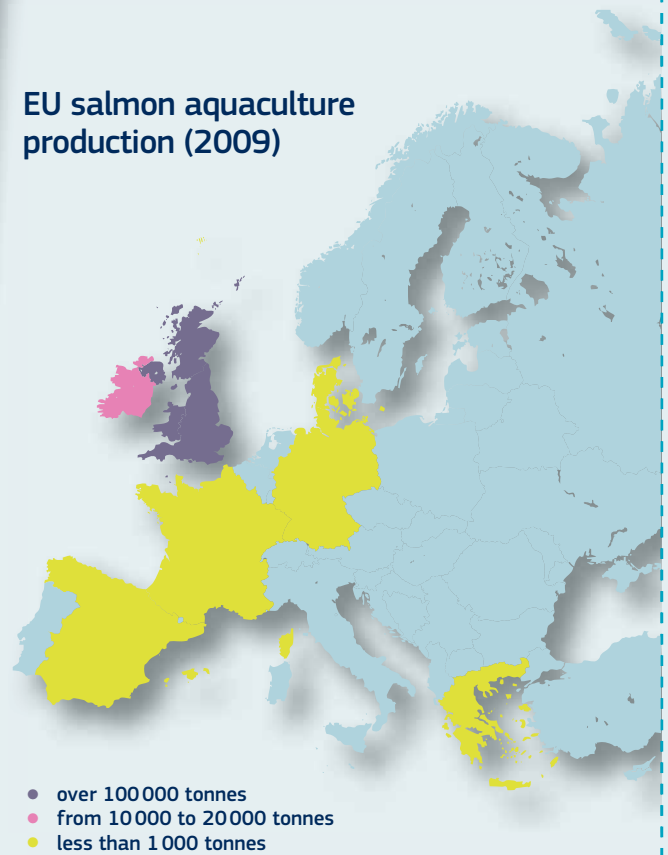
- 4 salmon steaks
- 150 g carrots
- 100 g celery stalks
- 50 g leeks, white parts only
- 50 g roux
(25 g butter and 25 g flour)
- 150 ml cream
- 2 egg yolks
- Butter
- Salt and pepper

Method

1. Finely slice the carrots, celery and leeks into evenly-sized batons. 'Sweat' the vegetables in a pan with a little butter for around 3 minutes.
2. Add just enough water to cover the vegetables, season and simmer for around 12 minutes. Strain the juices through a sieve and set the vegetables aside.
3. Grease a deep baking dish with butter and place the seasoned salmon steaks in the dish.
4. Add water to the cooking juices from the boiling vegetables to make 1 litre, then pour the juices over the salmon. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 175 °C for 15 minutes.
5. Remove the salmon steaks and keep warm.
6. Strain off the cooking juices and blend with the roux. Simmer for 5-6 minutes.
7. Blend the eggs with the cream and stir into the sauce. Add the cooked vegetable batons.
8. To serve, place one salmon steak on a soup plate and cover with a generous helping of the sauce.

Recipe courtesy of chef Philippe Votquenne (Euro-Toques Belgium)

EU salmon aquaculture production (2009)



Source: Eurostat.

 DOSSIER

Indian Ocean: better knowledge of tuna stocks

The European Commission has funded a large-scale scientific study on Indian Ocean tuna stocks, focused on the migratory habits of these species about which there are still relatively large knowledge gaps. The aim is also to improve knowledge of stocks vital to the European tuna fleet, so as to place their management on the best available scientific bases.

In international waters and in its own, the European Union wants to base stock management on the best scientific knowledge. This requires political will, financing and listening to expressions of scientific curiosity. Since the 1980s scientists in charge of advising the IOTC⁽¹⁾ had wished to learn more about the behaviour of Indian Ocean tuna stocks. Where do they go? Where do they reproduce? Where are their nurseries? And so on.

They had to wait until the 2000s for their request to be answered. The European Union (EU) provided the main contribution to finance a large-scale tropical tuna tagging programme. Why the EU in the Indian Ocean? In 2009 (the latest year for which figures are available), the Indian Ocean accounted for around one third of catches by the European tuna fleet, i.e. around 100 000 tonnes. So it was only normal that the EU contribute to better knowledge of stocks so important for its operators.

The Regional Tuna Tagging Project in the Indian Ocean was therefore put in place. It is financed by the EU's European Development Fund, steered by the IOTC Scientific Committee and is under the responsibility of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)⁽²⁾ which groups the region's main tuna centres. It targets the three species fished most in the region: skipjack tuna (or listao), bigeye tuna (or patudo) and yellowfin tuna.

Some 200 000 specimens were tagged between 2002 and 2009. Tagging consists of stapling a label to the back of each tuna, a delicate operation that takes a lot of know-how because tunas are fragile and made vulnerable by the stress of capture. The principle is that fishermen who catch a tagged tuna send the tag to the promoter of the programme and detail the circumstances of the catch. Not all fishermen are cooperative, but the IOTC has nonetheless received 30 000 tags, a retrieval rate of 16%, which is appreciable.

This data retrieval has contributed to major scientific conclusions, helping experts refine their knowledge of these species' migratory patterns, spawning habits, natural mortality rate, and so on. In other words, they now know a good deal more about the dynamics of Indian Ocean tuna stocks. This will foster more accurate stock assessment and better anticipation of their development.



Some 200 000 specimens were tagged as part of the Regional Tuna Tagging Project in the Indian Ocean.

Concretely, the recommendations of the IOTC Scientific Committee will have more solid bases and resulting management measures will be more in line with sustainable exploitation of stocks.

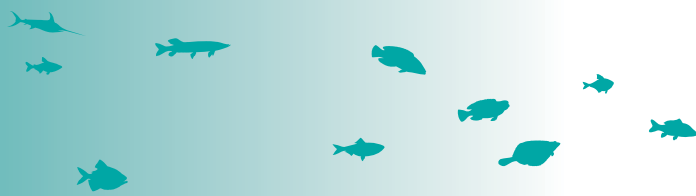
A symposium

Scientists wanted to go further, though. They are determined to generalise studies like this one, essential for establishing responsible stock management. The European Commission has therefore taken the initiative to organise a scientific symposium to disseminate the findings of this study.

It will take place in late October, in Mauritius. It aims to share the study's findings with the scientific community concerned and to convince the other large fishing states in the region that it is indispensable to support this type of scientific endeavour so that fish stocks can continue to feed the peoples of the Indian Ocean for a long time to come.

(1) The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is the RFMO in charge of the organisation of tuna, swordfish and shark pelagic fisheries throughout the Indian Ocean – www.iotc.org

(2) The IOC is an organisation for regional cooperation that groups the islands of the South-West Indian Ocean: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Reunion (France).



Reform is underway

Over a year ago, the European Commission presented proposals for reforming the common fisheries policy. These proposals are currently being debated in the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. Progress at a glance.

The proposed reform was adopted by the College of Commissioners in two phases. The first, on 13 July 2011, consisted of a regulation on the CFP, a regulation on the Common Market Organisation (CMO) and two Communications on the reform of the CFP and its external dimension. The second phase came on 2 December 2011, with a regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). It was on these dates that the reform began its legislative journey under the co-decision procedure.

Co-decision means that, to become an enforceable regulation, the proposals must be approved by both the EU Council of Ministers for Fisheries and by the European Parliament. If necessary, these two institutions may amend the proposals. Council, Parliament and the Commission may also need to sit together to negotiate a compromise that suits them all. But things have not reached that stage yet. Before entering this final phase of negotiation, both the Council and Parliament must take a stance on the Commission's proposals. Naturally, it is no easy task to work out a position that suits a qualified majority of 27 Member States in the Council as well as a majority of the 754 members of the European Parliament. Many will have requests for amendments, additions or deletions.

Amendments

In both the Council and Parliament there is a moderator responsible for identifying compromise solutions. In the Council, this role falls to the Presidency, which, since July 2011, has been held successively by Poland, Denmark and Cyprus. In Parliament, this role falls to the rapporteurs appointed for each of the Commission's proposals: Ulrike Rodust (S&D) for the 'basic' CFP regulation, Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD) for the Overarching Communication on the CFP Reform, Struan Stevenson (ECR) for the CMO regulation, Isabella Lövin (ALDE) for the external dimension, and Alain Cadec (EPP) for the EMFF regulation. This is the state of play for now.

The EP has already adopted the report of Mr Salavrakos at its plenary session in September 2012, which notably supports a gradual elimination of discards and argues that 'the elimination of discards should be accompanied by technical measures to reduce or eliminate unwanted by-catch'. At the same plenary session, the EP also adopted Mr Stevenson's report on the CMO regulation, which also refers to 'the landing of all incidental catches and by-catches' (i.e. a discard ban) as one of the objectives of the CFP reform.

The EP's Fisheries Committee gave overwhelming support to Mrs Lövin's report on the external dimension of the CFP, agreeing with the Commission that fisheries agreements should be made more sustainable. In particular, the report calls on Regional Fisheries Management Organisations to 'develop sustainable management systems, aiming to keep stocks above MSY'.

MEP Ulrike Rodust has presented a report which overall supports but at the same time proposes some changes to the Commission's proposal on the Basic CFP regulation. Members of several European Parliament committees have tabled amendments to this report, 2300 in all. The rapporteur is now reviewing these amendments and proposing compromises. The Fisheries Committee will then review and discuss the report in order to have it accepted by a majority of its members. The revised report by Ms Rodust is then to be put to the vote by the EP plenary; this vote is scheduled for the session in January. The vote on the EMFF regulation is also planned for January 2013.

In the Council, a general approach was reached during the Danish Presidency last June. This document is not a formal stage of the co-decision procedure. However, it can be considered the Council's preliminary position for negotiations with Parliament.

One of the toughest topics for discussion between Member States is the discards ban. The principle of this ban is no longer up for debate, but there are differences of opinion on how it should be implemented. A gradual introduction between 2014 and 2020 is taking shape. Some stumbling blocks remain, particularly regarding the specific characteristics of certain fisheries, how to enhance the value of by-catches landed and how to develop combined quotas for mixed fisheries. For the management of all stocks above maximum sustainable yield, the Council accepted the deadline of 2015 in its preliminary position, but added the possibility of phasing in the transition until 2020.

The principle of regionalising fisheries governance appears to have been agreed by the Council. Member States would cooperate with each other (primarily based on multi-annual plans) to decide on implementation measures. They would then communicate their decisions in the form of recommendations to the Commission, which would oversee their transposition into regulations. If, failing an agreement, there is no recommendation, the 'normal' procedure would run its course. On transferable fishing concessions, the Council supports application on a voluntary basis. A number of Member States are opposed to this, while others support it, at least for some of their fisheries. But no alternative has been proposed for adjusting fleet capacity.

The picture is not yet complete: discussions have also focused on other matters like labelling and the external dimension, and will soon address the EMFF. At this time, it is difficult to foresee specific dates for final adoption of the reform package. Discussions are likely to continue well into 2013.

Rio+20: a major step forward

Twenty years after the first 'Earth Summit', the Rio+20 Conference was convened with the aim of renewing political commitment for sustainable development. Fisheries and the marine environment occupied a considerable share of these debates, with significant progress being achieved in certain areas, in particular the protection of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June this year, as a culmination of several months of negotiations between 191 States together with the input of civil society. This conference is generally known by the more informal name of 'Rio+20', in reference to the first international conference focusing on sustainable development, held in the Brazilian metropolis 20 years ago⁽¹⁾. Sustainable development means meeting 'the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs⁽²⁾' by balancing economic, social and environmental concerns.

In the maritime domain, the biggest accomplishment of Rio+20 is having placed a highly sensitive and contentious issue on the United Nations' future agenda: how to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity outside national jurisdictions⁽³⁾. What does this mean? Quite simply, it means establishing specific international rules for the protection and exploitation of biological resources in the high seas and deep sea bed to develop the general obligation to protect the marine environment contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

In practical terms, at Rio, States decided that they would take a decision at the United Nations General Assembly on the development of a new UNCLOS implementing agreement on this issue, before the end of its sixty-ninth session, in other words in the course of 2014. This commitment was obtained at the last minute, thanks to the determination of the European Union and several other countries, in particular Brazil, and some other members of the G77⁽⁴⁾. In a few years this commitment should lead to a new international treaty.

Two spheres of action are concerned by this issue. The first concerns the creation of protected marine areas. In 2002, the participants in the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg committed to establishing a coherent network of protected areas in the oceans. Coastal States have the legal means to create such areas in their waters. However, due to a lack of legal and institutional basis, it is currently not possible to create marine protected areas that are universally applicable and enforceable outside these waters. Currently, in fact, this can only be done on a sectoral basis (for example in relation to fishing)



Fisheries and the marine environment featured strongly in the Rio+20 debates.

and only applies to the parties to the organisation establishing this measure. Thus, for example, even if a particular area is protected from fishing, underwater mining can still take place. The European Union believes it is time to close this loophole.

The second sphere of action concerns marine genetic resources. The Convention on the Law of the Sea, drafted in the late 1970s and early 1980s when research in this area was still in its infancy, does not consider such resources. The general opinion at that time was that below a certain depth, the sea bed was barren. However, since that time, we continue to learn more about the particular organisms inhabiting the deep sea such as 'extremeophile' marine organisms which are able to survive in the most hostile environments at great pressures and temperatures and which are of interest to genetic research and certain industries. The European Union and many other countries believe it is time to regulate access to and the sharing of the benefits that can be obtained from the exploitation of these resources.

Fisheries: continued progress

The Conference reiterated the need to advance further on issues such as restoring fish stocks to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield through the development and implementation of science based management plans, the fight against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.

For more detailed information:
www.uncsd2012.org

(1) United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 3-14 June 1992.

(2) United Nations. 1987. 'Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development.'

(3) Paragraph 162 of the outcome document – see www.uncsd2012.org

(4) The group of developing countries.

Limassol: at a crossroads

Limassol is changing. The old and new ports are being refurbished to meet the needs of an unprecedented rise in tourism and a likely increase in maritime activities. Coinciding with the Cyprus Presidency of the European Union, the centralised port authority is pursuing an ambitious goal: to reinvent the island as the maritime traffic hub of the eastern Mediterranean.

Less than ten years ago, the area around the old port seemed to turn its back on the stretch of international hotels, bars and restaurants of the tourist area that runs towards the eastern part of the city. Around the fishing harbour and against a backdrop of noise from traffic, the old port offered only local shops selling everyday necessities, one or two fishmongers, cafes where fishermen and locals would gather and a few fish restaurants. Tourism hardly seemed the main focus of the city's historic centre and its old Frankish castle was all but forgotten.

Today, the old town is becoming Limassol's main tourist attraction. It has been turned into a pedestrian area, houses have been renovated and numerous restaurants and bars have opened up around the restored castle. Visitors are flocking to the area. And that's not the end of it. The old port has become a construction site. It's going to be completely transformed. It will still be used mainly for traditional fishing, but will also have a marina and will be at the heart of a major real estate project, as recently announced in Cyprus Airways' inflight magazine. The harbour will be surrounded by a resort district comprising holiday homes, shops and restaurants.

This transformation is just the beginning of a major development of all the island's ports. In Cyprus, no port can really be looked at in isolation. All are managed centrally and in tandem by Cyprus Port Authority (CPA).

Flexibility

To fully understand how Cyprus is evolving, we must understand its political past. Following the events of 1973, the island's main port, Famagusta, ended up north of the dividing line, beyond the control of the Nicosia government. Due to the country's insularity, the Cypriot government had to recreate port infrastructure quickly. To do so, it requested funding from the World Bank, which asked it to transfer management of this aid and port development to a flexible, autonomous and professional body. This was how the CPA was created.

The agency is governed by a board whose members are appointed or reappointed every three years by the government. They are

generally chosen from among heads of maritime businesses: ship-owners, specialist legal experts, financiers, etc. The CPA manages the island's three main commercial ports – Limassol, Larnaka and Vassilikos – as well as smaller fishing ports – the old port of Limassol, Paphos and Latchi.

Due to the (already) semi-private nature of the port authority, Cypriot ports have not followed the general European trend towards privatisation. This is no 'landlord model', where the port authority grants management of the docks to specialist companies under long leases. Successive governments have so far opted to leave all aspects of port activity in the hands of the CPA.

Under construction

To fully understand the new port developments in Cyprus, you must look beyond the centre of Limassol, to the 'new' port. This is where it all started in 1974, when it was decided that Limassol should be an international port. If you look towards the huge grain silo that towers above stacks of multicolour containers, you can still see how the port would have looked originally, created almost as an entirely separate entity from the city itself, bordering the British military zone.

But looking the other way, it is the construction sites that really stand out here. Outside the port, new quarters are springing up – offices, brand new warehouses. The approach road has become a charcoal-grey, uniform, flat ribbon. In the port, new reinforced concrete buildings are emerging. One thing is clear: this port is expanding fast.

Limassol is Cyprus's major port. Of the 345 614 TEUs⁽¹⁾, 303 135 passengers and 5 388 204 tonnes of bulk cargo landed in Cyprus in 2011, Limassol received 99%, 85% and 67% respectively. The CPA is pursuing its aim of building on this leading position through major investments.

'Limassol will broaden its base in order to develop transshipment activities and to meet local needs better', says Yiannakis Kokkinos, managing director of the CPA, 'and most likely the local needs of a reunified Cyprus – since Famagusta has now become a very small port, by current standards. Last year, the seabed was dredged to a depth of 16 m and we have now begun extension works. Limassol is currently a multipurpose port. Our goal in the next two years is to separate activities so that we have a main area devoted to commercial activities and another for passengers. The budget for these improvements is 90 million euro, which is quite large by Cypriot standards. Half is funded by support from the European Union, the Cohesion Fund and Trans-European Networks.'

(1) Twenty-foot equivalent unit – the unit of measurement of containers.



Cyprus aims to regain its place as a hub of maritime traffic in the eastern Mediterranean and is investing ambitiously in its port development.

The construction work that can be seen when you enter the harbour is the passenger terminal. With the growth of cruise tourism, Cyprus has become an important stopover, not only as a tourist attraction in its own right, but also due to its ideal position between the Greek islands, the Middle East and Egypt. The passenger port will measure 7 000 m² and will offer the full range of cruise ship reception and transfer infrastructure.

The next phase of the works will focus on the other part of the port. The docks will be extended by 500 m to create a linear quay of almost 1 000 m within two years, offering all the facilities required of an efficient container port. In the same vein, the stacking area will be expanded and new ancillary equipment will be purchased, including a new tug suitable for larger boats, which the port will be able to accommodate upon completion of the works.

Eastern Mediterranean hub

This new capacity exceeds Cyprus's domestic needs, but the CPA's ambitions look beyond national boundaries. It wants to see the port regain its place as the 'hub' of the eastern Mediterranean.

'We are in a strategic position', says Yiannakis Kokkinos. 'As a European country on the European Union's eastern border, we are the threshold to Europe. Cyprus is also very well served by ancillary facilities such as banks, insurance, shipping companies, off-shore activities and

the like. These are all key ingredients for developing port activities. But there is still one obstacle: the embargo Turkey imposed on Cypriot vessels in 1987 and extended to Cypriot ports in 1997. No ship sailing directly from a port in Cyprus can make a stopover in a Turkish port. If you were a ship-owner and if shipping your cargo via Cyprus deprived you of a market of 80 million people, what would you do? You would take your business elsewhere. This is what major shipping lines did after 1997. All we can hope for is a political solution. We're optimistic about the future, which is why we're investing in developing our ports.'

This development encompasses the two other ports on the southern coast of Cyprus. In the next 10 years, Larnaka will become a marina and passenger port, a real maritime tourism hub in the region, through a commercial and real estate project. A consortium of European interests consisting of major cruise operators, builders and transport firms won the concession for a 35-year period, the first in Cyprus. Meanwhile, Vassilikos has become an important energy centre, following the recent discovery of large deposits of natural gas off the island: it will become the centre for the collection, liquefaction and export of this resource.

Cyprus was once an important maritime centre. By stimulating development of its ports, the island is hoping for a return to its glory days, on the doorstep of a rapidly changing Middle East, and for normalised relations with its closest neighbours.

Partnerships: agreements with Kiribati, Mauritius and Mauritania

The European Union recently renewed several fisheries protocols with three partner states. The principles of these agreements are consistent with the European Union's common fisheries policy: to enable EU vessels to exploit sustainably part of the stocks in these states' exclusive economic zones (the 'surplus') in exchange for EU financial compensation and a direct contribution by beneficiary European vessel owners. The EU also provides additional financing to support the development and governance of local fisheries. With Mauritania, the new two-year protocol concerns the exploitation of demersal (primarily shrimps) and pelagic fisheries, in exchange for an annual financial contribution of EUR 70 million. With Kiribati and Mauritius, the partnership focuses exclusively on tuna. The new protocol with Kiribati covers a three-year period in exchange for annual compensation of EUR 1.3 million, of which EUR 350 000 to support local fisheries policy. With Mauritius, the Commission has initialled a new agreement and a three-year protocol that entitles the European fleet to follow shoals of tuna in Mauritius' exclusive economic zone in return for annual compensation of EUR 660 000, including EUR 302 500 to support local fisheries management. In all three cases, the direct financial cost to European vessel owners is higher, in line with new guidelines for the external dimension of the common fisheries policy.

Arctic strategy: assuring a presence in this rapidly evolving region

The European Commission and the European Union's (EU) High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy have adopted the EU's new Arctic strategy. The Arctic region is of strategic importance for the European Union, which in the last decade has invested more than EUR 1.35 billion in research and sustainable development. Climate change forms the backdrop for this new strategy. The disruptions caused by climate change are significantly impacting the ecosystem and livelihoods of the region's inhabitants. In addition, with the rapid shrinking of the polar ice cap, new economic prospects are opening for navigation, mining, energy production and fisheries. The Arctic strategy foresees a range of actions to promote research and sustainable development. The measures announced concern research, satellite observation, the fight against climate change, development for the benefit of local communities, environment-friendly extractive technologies, and dialogue with representatives of indigenous peoples on the EU's policies and programmes.



Facts and figures on the CFP: 2012 edition

The new edition of the brochure 'Facts and figures on the Common Fisheries Policy – Basic Statistical Data' is now available on the DG website. It presents the latest data compiled by the EU statistics office, Eurostat, as well as data collected from Member States and international organisations like the FAO.

To consult the brochure, see:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/publications/pcf_en.pdf

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