

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1979 - 1980

10 May 1979

DOCUMENT 130/79/ANNEX

ANNEX TO MR LEMP'S REPORT

on a fact finding visit of the Sub-Committee
on Fisheries to Humberside, 9 - 12 April 1979

PE 58.025/Ann.

REPORT

on

A fact finding visit of the Sub-Committee
on Fisheries to Humberside, 9 - 12 April 1979

2 may 1979

Introduction

1. At the invitation of the city councils, the Subcommittee on Fisheries visited the fishing installations, training centres and food (fish) processing industries of Kingston on Hull and Grimsby during 9 - 11 April 1979.
2. The visit enabled the Subcommittee:
 - to gain a very clear idea of the problems presently facing the fishing industry and requiring immediate solutions;
 - to assess the requirements of a future common fisheries policy;
 - to examine the problems facing the fish processing sector; and
 - to study in depth the needs for, and the requirements of, a common fisheries education and training policy.

The Deep Water Fleet

3. During the last three years, there has been a drastic decline in the number of active deep sea fishing vessels operating from Humberside. The number of freezer trawlers operating from Hull has dropped from several hundreds to less than ten. The number of freezer trawlers operating from Grimsby has dropped from eight in 1977 to zero, and the number of wet fish trawlers 140 ft and above from forty-two in 1975 to four.
4. The impact upon the fishing industry, the port and related industries is traumatic. In Hull, the ports are leased and operated by the trawler owners at a cost of £1 -£1.5 million. The very low rate of landings (several thousands of tons rather than hundreds of thousands) will be insufficient to warrant maintaining the fish docks in use.
5. The decline in the deep water fleet is the direct result of quotas implemented to conserve fish stocks in Community waters and the extension of fishing limits to 200 miles by third countries.

The difficulties encountered by the deep water fleets have been compounded by the inability of the Commission to negotiate adequate access to these third country waters. The bureaucratic division of responsibility prevents the Commission from offering greater access to Community markets in exchange for greater access to third country waters. The Canadian authorities would be willing to grant larger quotas to Community fishermen in return for market access. The same may be true of Norway or the Faeros.

6. Having negotiated agreements, the Commission is unable to act rapidly and energetically to ensure their full and equitable implementation. For example, the Norwegian Government, shortly after the entry into force of an agreement providing for fishing quotas for Community fishermen in Norwegian waters north of 62°N, closed three-quarters of those waters at the moment when Community vessels had arrived in Norwegian waters, after a voyage involving considerable expense.

7. The Community, if it is to be responsible for fisheries negotiations with third countries, must be far more vigilant in the defense of Community fishermen, and must demonstrate the ability to coordinate the different facets of external policy - fisheries, market access, tariff levels etc.

Middle Water Fleet

8. It is now generally accepted that the fish resources within Community waters are limited and in danger of extinction unless proper conservation measures are implemented. This means a move to a more selective form of fishing, with a reduction in costs offsetting reduced catches.

This development has two implications.

Firstly, that the structure of the Community's fishing fleet will change, with greater emphasis on the middle water and inshore vessels. This restructuring of the Community's fishing fleet demonstrates the need for a Community policy on retraining. This point is dealt with in greater detail below.

Secondly, the Community's fishing policy must reflect the need to exploit fish stocks in the most rational manner possible, that is, that species for human consumption should only be landed when of a minimum size and fishing methods should not damage the fishing grounds.

9. In the interests of an optimum exploitation of fish stocks, the middle water fishermen of Humberside believe that the Common Fisheries Policy should incorporate the following:

- (a) the one net rule - the ability to carry two nets, one small mesh and one regulation mesh is still the biggest source of "cheating" switching illegally from one net to the other;
- (b) the introduction of a 70mm. mesh of net for catching of nephrops;
- (c) a progressive increase in the minimum size of meshes of nets and also the minimum sizes of fish which can be landed;

- (d) a ban on beam trawlers with beams above 8 metres length in aggregate;
- (e) further restrictions on industrial fishing and also on by-catches;
- (f) an extension of the pout box area;
- (g) the introduction of a licencing scheme for all vessels fishing in EEC waters.

The onshore and food processing industries

10. The reduction of landings has had very serious implications for the onshore industries. For example, two fish processing factories, each employing over a thousand people, are running at 30% of capacity simply because the fish are not available. Clearly factories cannot run for a long period at 30% of capacity, and one factory at least is under threat of closure.

11. The Community, however, could make a significant contribution to easing the restructuring of the fishing fleets and aid the onshore industries by providing finance for research and development for the processing and marketing of species of fish not traditionally used by the trade. Blue whiting and horse mackerel are two species to which much greater attention has been paid in recent years.

However, with these and other previously under-utilized species, new machines must be developed for filleting operations, new techniques developed for processing into a finished product, and public acceptability generated.

One food processing company on Humberside has invested already £0.5 million in research and development on new fish species. These efforts must be encouraged and underpinned by specific Community investment grants.

A Community policy on fisheries education and training

12. The introduction of 200 mile fishing limits by Third Countries and the need to improve strict quotas to conserve stocks within Community waters has led to a fundamental restructuring of the Community's fishing fleet. Increases in costs, particularly of fuel, have further encouraged this process of rationalization.

13. The majority of the distant water grounds have been closed to Community fishermen. The vessels are becoming increasingly uneconomic. New fishing techniques are required based on a more versatile multipurpose vessel. The very concepts underlying the exploration of the seas are being radically revised. The fisherman is a harvester rather than a huntsman.

14. Restructuring of the fleet requires retraining of manpower, together with coordinated management and administration in order to ensure the optimum deployment of a trained labour force. With the restriction of manpower requirement, recruitment and training must be given a much higher priority than previously.

15. Given the highly specialized and costly equipment required - simulation tanks, radar etc. - and the need for close contact between academic centres and the fishing and associated industries, it is essential that a common policy on fisheries education and training be established in order to

- (a) coordinate and develop existing material resources, so as to ensure their most effective utilization;
- (b) identify the courses, subject and level, required to meet the industry's development needs;
- (c) develop links between educational centres, research centres and industry;
- (d) harmonize teaching programmes and qualifications throughout the Community and the development of new training techniques and materials;
- (e) promote research and exchange of results, information and technology
- (f) encourage the exchange of instructors and students;
- (g) establish the capability to provide specialist advice, technical aid assistance for fisheries training in developing countries, as part of the wider fisheries development policy, with the Lomé countries in particular.

A network of fisheries training centres

16. A Community policy on fisheries education and training, and wider international coordination, would best be implemented by the setting up of a network of fisheries training centres in the Member States. These centres would have the function of providing at a Community level for an exchange of information, students and teachers, and, at the same time, could have the responsibility of implementing fisheries programmes on a national basis. One or more of these centres could have the responsibility of training instructors in order to establish common standards of education and training, and also provide a means of communicating new developments from research activities.

17. The network of centres would create a platform for disseminating Community information on fisheries subjects, such as, for example, conservation, mesh regulations, certification, marketing, etc.

18. As well as providing a progressive educational system for young fishermen, the centres would have the responsibility for retraining established fishermen, so as to facilitate the adaptation to changing fishing patterns, so reducing the associated social problems.

19. The European fishing industry is changing both at sea and onshore - but the industry depends entirely on the activities of the primary producer - the fisherman must, therefore, be given the chance to keep up with the changing times and be aware of the problems arising throughout the Community's fishing industry. Without the cooperation of the fishermen the introduction of a common fisheries policy will be extremely difficult.

Necessity for greater information

20. At present there is no clear picture of the resources and facilities which are available in the Member States for fisheries education and training. It is more than likely that no-one can provide an overall complete picture of the Community's resources and of their potential use.

As a first step, the Community should seek to identify all of these resources together with associated expertise; and then coordinate them in such a way that they are available for the use of a European fishing fleet as well as for national participation. In this way each country may contribute something to different elements of an overall Community wide training scheme.

21. This proposed network of centres cannot be set up overnight but will need a great deal of thought, planning and finance if it is to be established. It will also need a great deal of cooperation and goodwill.

However, in an attempt to identify the potential for establishing such a network it has been suggested that a feasibility study is required to investigate the present and future training requirements in each maritime Member State. The Humberside fisheries training centres have submitted outline proposals to the Commission to carry out this feasibility study. Before the concept of a network of centres can be created or, for that matter, can be deemed desirable, detailed information on the existing education and training provision in each country requires examination.

To fulfil this requirement, one Humberside centre, The Hull College of Higher Education, have requested Community aid in order to undertake a study of the current education and training resources within the European fishing industries and formulate proposals for future action on coordinated manpower development. The staff of the Unit have considerable experience of the practical, academic and administrative aspects of European sea fisheries and have already established associations with a number of appropriate contacts throughout the Community. Preliminary details of existing resources could be collected and collated by staff members through visits to and discussions with the relevant organisations and authorities within the EEC. The back-up resources in the College such as, for example, business and management experience, computation facilities, marketing, etc. would be available to assist in both an advisory capacity on the initial survey and for the analytical processes prior to formulating proposals. The proposals would then be put forward to the Commission and would detail the action required by each Member Country to amend its education and training systems and so comply with an overall strategy of common action and utilisation of resources. The resulting network of Centres would ultimately provide a useful platform for disseminating Community policies and proposals for the development and control of the sea fishing industries.

The time required for an in-depth study at national and port level in each of the Community's maritime countries will inevitably dictate the overall time scale for the feasibility study.

Fishing training on Humberside in a Community context

22. The expertise and practical training facilities in Hull are becoming fairly well known, especially since these have already arranged a number of seminars and courses for European fishermen. These have included:

- two seminars for the EEC's young fishermen in association with the Commission's Directorate-General for Social Affairs;

- fishing technology courses for Norwegian and Irish groups.

These courses combine both the resources of the educational centre with those of the white fish authority.

23. Arrangements have been made to provide two further fishing technology courses this year for Dutch fishermen and discussions are currently being held to organise courses for German, Belgian and Irish groups as well as for UK participants. A third EEC seminar is also planned.

24. Furthermore, agreement has been reached with officials from the Council of Europe to carry out the first or a series of workshops at the College for people involved in the higher educational aspects of European sea fisheries.

25. In a broader context, formal agreement will be reached with the FAO to continue work already started to provide a series of catalogues, training manuals and consultancy services for developing countries.

Fisheries training resources on Humberside

26. The training resources to be found on Humberside are the most comprehensive complex of resources for fisheries training, enabling centres to cover: ship management at sea, fishing gear technology, fish finding with echo sounders, business management and fish processing and freezing.

The resources include:-

A. Division of Fisheries Studies, Hull College of Higher Education

Comprehensive fishing, ship handling and navigation training simulator. The trainer with three 'own ship' positions can be programmed to simulate conditions in a number of sea, coastal or inland water areas.

Ship control, stability and experimental manoeuvring tank 12m x 6m with wave, current and wind generators and towing device, and various ship models including radio controlled manoeuvring models.

Fishing gear construction and technology workshop and rigging rooms.

Marine engineering workshop equipped for fishing vessel engineering and refrigeration.

Seamanship, navigation and chart rooms.

Marine radar and radio navigation laboratories.

Mechanical and electrical engineering laboratories.

Marine electronics laboratories.

Boat building, repair and maintenance workshop.

Dockside boat training site with various boats and launching appliances.

50 ft. twin screw training vessel.

Sailing centre.

B. The White Fish Authority Industrial Training Unit

Housed in a purpose built building with lecture rooms, workshop and a net loft, the Unit contains a flume tank of working size 11x x 5m x 2½m with a range of scale pelagics and demersal model trawls and gear.

C. Grimsby College of Technology

Grimsby has first class fisheries training at the Grimsby College of Technology. Grimsby is the major non-University centre for higher education in food science and technology (including the processing and packaging of fish) and refrigeration engineering. Grimsby is the major centre which has already successfully developed higher level courses in conjunction with the Ministry of Overseas Development;

Grimsby is surrounded by the largest cold store and quick freezing facilities in Europe and the leading companies of the frozen food industry (which are expanding) have their largest capital investment in Grimsby.