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The Baltic Sea assumes increasing significance for the European Union

Geographically speaking, the Baltic Sea includes the Kattegat, but if the area of responsibility of the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission (IBSFC) is taken into account, it ends at the opening of the Belts, the straits separating the Danish islands. Defined in this way, the area covers 370,000 km². Half closed-in, frozen in the north for part of the year, this continental sea is characterized by the low range of tides and circulation currents. As a result, renewal of the waters is very slow. The Baltic Sea is extremely sensitive to pollution from various sources and to over-use of its fishery resources. These problems occurring at regional level have prompted cooperation strategies among coastal states in the field of both fishing, within the IBSFC, and the environment.

The Baltic Sea is assuming increasing significance for the EU. For a long time, it was of secondary importance for the EU, at least in fishing. In Germany, the coastline was limited to the east of one Federal state, Schleswig-Holstein. In Denmark, the other Member State concerned, fishing activities were concentrated in the west, on the shores of the North Sea. Nevertheless, the EU's accession to the IBSFC in 1984 was proof of its interest in the region.

In 1990, the integration of East Germany, with the shores of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, provided a further step. The length of coastline under the jurisdiction of EU Member States practically doubled, though this still accounted for only a small proportion of the shores of the Baltic Sea. The Community continued to show interest in this sea with the signing of fishing agreements with the Baltic States: Estonia and Latvia in 1993 and Lithuania in 1994. A giant step was really taken in 1995, however, with the accession of Finland and Sweden, with almost two-thirds of the area of the Baltic Sea now bordered by Member States.

Its significance can only grow. Poland and Estonia are among the five States involved in the next phase of EU enlargement. With other Baltic States' prospects for integration in the EU and greater cooperation with Russia attention to the Baltic Sea will grow.

The Editor

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Region of the month

Newlyn: between the English Channel and the Celtic Sea



Located at the extreme south-westerly tip of Great Britain, Newlyn is one of the United Kingdom's main ports and the leading port in England in terms of the value of products landed. Fishing is an important sector in Cornwall, a region providing few economic alternatives.

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After the slow death of the mining industry, agriculture remains the only other traditional activity. The only sector experiencing growth is the tourist industry, particularly evident in Penzance, just next to Newlyn.

The fishing industry is centred around fresh products, which, in the land of fish and chips, had long been underdeveloped. The position has since improved and the British market now offers greater possibilities, which a number of fish traders have seized on. A significant proportion of the production is exported, however. Sardines were already exported to Italy a century ago. Nowadays, demersal species are the main catches, particularly flat fish, but shellfish as well. Between 60 to 70% of these are exported to foreign markets, mainly France and Spain, but also Belgium.

The European dimension offers undeniable advantages to Newlyn. This can be seen in the origin of boats, in particular second-hand beam trawlers bought from The Netherlands and Belgium. Nevertheless, a number of Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) regulations regarding access to fishing resources are viewed in these parts as problematic.

For Andrew Wheeler of the Cornish Fish Producers Organisation, the main areas of concern – apart from limitations on fishing days, mentioned in the interview below – involve the limitation of quotas and fleet reduction. The latter has affected netters in particular, with six vessels withdrawn in 1997. Their profitability can cause problems and those who had managed to find an alternative in catching tuna using gill nets have been penalized with measures limiting the use of such gear. The lack of quotas has been

deeply felt, particularly if one considers the proportion allocated to Producers Organizations (POs) representing Dutch and Spanish boats which seldom land their products locally and employ practically no UK nationals. For this reason, the regionalization of fleets' activities is a sensitive issue in these parts; the local PO has wasted no time in discussing this with its counterparts in Brittany and the south-west of Ireland. It is prepared to involve anyone operating in the region in such an initiative.

A number of sections in Pesca provide opportunities regarding communication. According to Alison Elvey, responsible for Pesca in the south-west region, however, the professional world has not been very responsive to this section so far. The interview that follows seems to confirm this.

Questions to Elizabeth STEVENSON, partner of W. STEVENSON and Sons

Pesca Info (P.I.): Your company is one of the major ones in Newlyn. Would you please tell us about your activities?

Elizabeth STEVENSON (E.S.): We are trawler owners and fish merchants. We own 36 vessels, including 24 beam-trawlers and 8 netters, side-trawlers and seiners. Our fleet catches about half of the fish landed in Newlyn, most of which are high-value species. We employ 150 crew and 80 shore staff. We export a substantial proportion of fish, mainly to France and Spain.

P.I.: Do you have any problems in sea-products trade?

E.S.: The high value of sterling is causing problems. But the measures introduced to comply with the

MAGP IV fishing effort reduction on beam trawlers are my major concern at the moment. We are forced to reduce the number of fishing days from our 1997 level by about 20% over the next four years. This kind of reduction cannot be achieved without laying up vessels and laying off crews and staff.

P.I.: Are you interested in any Pesca projects?

E.S.: I refuse to discuss diversification out of fishing or have anything to do with any project that does not benefit our industry. I am only interested in improving and continuing the fishing industry in Newlyn.

Data sheet Newlyn

- *Location:* Cornwall, south-west England, United Kingdom
- *Type of fishing:* beam trawl, otter trawl, gill nets, pots.
- *Fleet:* (March 1996)
31 beam trawlers, 22 netters, 16 otter trawlers, 9 pot vessels.
- *Output:*
 - *species:* demersal fish - megrim (*Lepidorhombus s.p.*), monkfish (*Lophius sp.*), hake (*Merluccius sp.*), sole (*Solea sp.*), ling (*Molva sp.*) – as well as crab and cuttlefish
 - *volume:* 12,270 tonnes (Cornwall: 29,300 tonnes)
 - *value:* £23.4 million, or **ECU 34.6 million** (Cornwall: ECU 48.2 million)
- *Jobs in fishing:* 350
- *Jobs in fish-trade processing:* between 200 and 250 people.

