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## No. 1

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Newsflash

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## Over to you now!

Dear readers,

Today sees the opening of a discussion, one which promises to be both long-lasting and passionate and, I hope, fruitful. It involves each one of us, men and women, from the fishing industry. The discussion is called PESCA Info.

This new publication owes its name to the PESCA programme, launched by the European Union in 1994 to encourage the economic development of the continents coastal regions. As the millennium draws nearer, these regions may well end up hit by the crisis currently affecting the European fishing industry. The factors at the root of this deep and difficult crisis are well known, among them the scarcity of fish and the globalization of markets. Nor will the regions be left unscathed, with negative repercussions on both an economic and social level.

There is, however, no viable alternative at this stage, since the industry will undergo restructuring in any event, with either a concerted framework through a strategic alliance involving everyone - Brussels, the industry, EU Member States - or under pressure from market forces.

The PESCA programme is an essential element of such an alliance, aiming as it does to exploit the potential of our coastal regions by calling on everyone from the different regions and nations to get involved. The programme should be made all the more effective with the publication of a monthly newsletter dealing with life in the industry in regions dependent upon fishing, as well as setting out the activities and viewpoints of those in the industry from all over Europe.

PESCA Info will be more than just a simple news bulletin on activities in Brussels; it will represent a real means of discussion between you and us, a showcase for Europes coastal regions, a monthly forum for airing your suggestions and your comments.

Welcome to PESCA Info, dear readers, and now its over to you!

**EMMA BONINO**

European Commissioner for Fisheries, Consumer Policy, and Humanitarian Affairs

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## Region of the month

### Pays Bigouden - Innovate, and carry on fishing for a living.

At the tip of Brittany, along a 15-km stretch of coast exposed to south-westerly winds, four ports cling on to fishing as a way of life. They may be rivals who are proud of their unique identity, but they are also aware of sharing a common destiny.

Turning their backs on a land they consider barren, they still look resolutely towards the open sea. Strong-willed and equipped with a fighting spirit, they have not forgotten that it was fishing that rescued their fathers from poverty. Their means of earning a living became a source of pride when they were awarded the title of Frances leading maritime region for the value of fish landed. Around here, they have never shied away from forging ahead, innovating, or investing; even too much so, it could be said.

The area was badly affected by the recession of the early nineties, which in its wake brought closures and a concentration on semi-industrial shipping at the expense of the artisan. This phenomenon has been felt throughout the fishing industry.

Anxiety still reigns. What will become of the small vessels which, in an area used to intensive fishing, could scarcely be put to any alternative use? How can the young set up on their own? What will be the outcome of the changes in the fishing industry, where many jobs are already in danger from restructuring?

In Bigouden, however, they haven't given up yet, and fishing lives on. Even before the recession, they were taking care of their image, launching a film festival on fishing and thinking of more ways to attract tourists brought there initially by the daily spectacle of fleet of inshore vessels landing. In the meantime, they have built a terrace on the roof of the fish market in Le Guilvinec, completely renovated and brought up to standard. Visitors can now watch the unloading, in the required safety conditions, and without disturbing the work of the fishermen.

Looking towards the open sea is just like opening up, like getting in touch with new ideas. As for those forced to abandon the industry, let's hope that they can carry on making a living from the sea. There is already a group of professionals who have been involved for some years now in farming edible seaweed, hopeful of expanding.

#### Data sheet

##### Bigouden, coastal port of Le Guilvinec:

- *Location:* Brittany, France
- *Ports:* Le Guilvinec, Loctudy, Saint-Guénole and Lesconil
- *Type of fishing:* fresh, mostly traditional
- *Catches:*
  - haul: **38 000 tonnes** (or 12% of the total haul unloaded in France)
  - value: almost 640 million FFR or approximately **100 million ecus**
  - species: mostly monkfish (*Lophius* sp.) and langoustine (*Nephrops* sp), followed by cod (*Gadus*)

morhua), whiting (*Merlangus* sp.), hake (*Merluccius* sp.) and sardine (*Lepidorhombus* sp.).

- *Techniques:*
  - inshore fishing: trawl net, straight net, pot, line
  - coastal and deep-sea fishing: trawl net
- *Fleet and fishing grounds:*
  - 261 inshore vessels (off the coast)
  - 35 coastal fishing trawlers (Gulf of Gascony)
  - 111 deep-sea trawlers from 16 to 25 m long (Gulf of Gascony, The Celtic Sea or south coast of Ireland)
- *Fish Markets:* 4 computerized fish markets

## **Questions put to René-Pierre CHEVER, Secretary of the Local Fisheries Committee of port of Le Guilvinec**

*P.I.:* The local committee is conducting a 1% campaign in connection with fishing agreements. Could you tell us about this?

*R.-P. Chever:* We would like 1% of the total amount of the fishing agreements concluded with the EU to be given over to the development of human resources in fishing. In other words, we want this money to be spent on establishing contacts between fishermen, to be set up on their own initiative.

*P.I.:* This request appears to go along with the type of project supported by the PESCA initiative. What is your view of this initiative?

*R.P. Chever:* On the European level, I would probably give it full marks. On the national level, however, I would tend to be more critical. Lets not forget that, in France, parts of the sum committed within the framework of this programme have been diverted from their initial objective, being used instead to finance general operations, which fall under the domain of the FIFG, rather than local professional initiatives. In addition, having to come up with 50% of the funds for a project is a serious drawback. In my view, our problems are down to a lack of support at the French level. If I had any request for the Commission, I would ask them to provide us with better support to enable our projects to succeed.

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## Common Fisheries Policy

### **PESCA: A Community initiative to serve coastal regions**

Everyone in the fishing industry has heard of the FIFG (Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance), which, alongside the ERDF, the ESF, and the EAGGF, forms one of the large European structural funds. The FIFG has two main aims: adapting fishing levels to resources, and the modernization of facilities. There was, however, an absence of Community action aimed at the economic development of areas dependent on fishing.

The PESCA initiative, launched in 1994 with an overall budget of almost 300 million ecus for the period 1994-99, was set up to provide this additional amount to complement the funds available. Chiefly, it aims to aid the fishing industry to survive the changes it is undergoing. In particular, it helps the industry bear the social and economic repercussions through aid for retraining and for the diversification of firms in the industry, and by contributing to job creation and maintenance in coastal regions. PESCA applies in practically all coastal areas where fishing is a significant industry. It is a financial instrument likely to affect all the economic sectors capable of contributing to the development of coastal regions.

#### **A wide range of possibilities**

The PESCA initiative allows for highly varied operations, with a bias towards immaterial activities, including:

1. Diversification of activities in eligible areas
2. Services to firms
3. Job maintenance or creation
4. Financial engineering
5. Concrete projects on a national or transnational level
6. Productive investment

#### **PESCA: how it works**

Both public and private organizations are beneficiaries of the PESCA initiative, including regional or local authorities, chambers of commerce, small and medium-sized enterprises, fishermens co-operatives, and training centres.

The rate of Community joint-financing varies according to the type of project and the region in question, i.e., whether or not it is covered by objective 1 of the structural fund, or intended for late-developing regions.

These rates are set along the following lines:

1) Investment in firms:

- objective-1 regions: up to 50% of the total project cost
- other regions: up to 30% of the total project cost

2) Other projects:

- objective-1 regions: up to 75% of the total project cost
- other regions: up to 50% of the total project cost

### **What is the current situation like?**

From the outset, the PESCA Community initiative has aroused considerable interest in the fishing industry, where it has been seen as a way of developing a number of relatively specialized projects which did not fit into more established frameworks. Better information has led to the development of a number of innovative micro-projects, some with a transnational dimension.





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## **PESCA on the spot**

### **Reorganization at Bremerhaven fishing port: research and development, leisure and communication**

In the German town of Bremerhaven, a programme involving the large-scale reorganization of the harbour basin has been carried out. The project involved the integration of different elements of the fishing industry in a complex housing sea-related activities, including research institutes (quality control of seafood, food product technology and engineering, fisheries), a shopping centre combining shops and restaurants, and cultural and tourist activities (marine aquarium, maritime cinema and museums, former fishing vessels and traditional sailing boats, etc.).

The programme has stimulated growth in the fishing industry in Bremerhaven, which has steadily become one of the biggest markets for sea products in the EU. More recently, a complex has been built to cater for the marketing, processing and treatment of the fish and shellfish unloaded, including catches from local fishing vessels and the transshipment of products from other ports. The industry has undergone more than just a change-over from its traditional activities; while the original programme for promotion of sea products has been under way, the industry has diversified with the creation of new jobs. PESCA did not play a major part in this project, which was launched prior to its inception. It was made possible with funds from elsewhere, including EAGGF, within which it is classed as an objective-2 region, FIG and national aid.

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## Interview of the month

### Interview with Tom HASSETT, Secretary of the South and West Irish Fish Producers Organization Ltd

October 1996

*Editor's note: intended as a medium for freely voiced opinions, the PESCA bulletin reflects the views held by professionals. Articles express the opinions of the authors alone. Latin names are used to identify fish species to improve recognition in various languages.*

*P.I (Pesca Info) :* Could you briefly inform us about the fisheries of South and West Ireland ?

*T.H (Tom Hasset) :* The bulk of the fleet fish for whitefish, demersal mainly by trawling, but also with gill net. A portion of the fleet fish for herring in the Celtic Sea, for about 4 months of the year. The herring stock has been successfully managed from year to year on a local basis.. The average age of the polyvalent sector is 31 years.

*P.I :* Tell me about your organisation.

*T.H :* The Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation Limited commenced operations on 1st January 1995 and had a successful first year. There are over 70 members in the P.O. and a further 30 odd in the sister Fishermens Organisation.

*P.I :* What do you think of the PESCA programme ?

*TH :* I am not satisfied with the PESCA offer. We are Europe's most peripheral coastal region, with no other resource. I think that offering tiny sums of money to people who have no other resource, to entice them to give up their birthright and only means of livelihood and at the same time allowing our « partners » to take away £2 billions Irish pounds worth of fish per annum from our waters, is a nonsense. We need funds to modernise our fleet - not to wipe it out !

*P.I .* More precisely what request can you propose ?

*TH :* We will be shortly developing a quality control system, with PESCA aid through a series of quality code of practice to improve the quality of our catches and thus increase the value. We would also like to examine the feasibility and economics of smaller, locally based fishermen controlled fish meal/oil plants because waste, offal and withdrawn fish have to be transported long distance to fish meal plants. More generally, we think that the fishing industry within Ireland suffers from the same marketing problems as for example Madeira and the Azores, and needs support to remain competitive, when compared to fishery products from mainland Europe. Finally we need research into better marketing for white fish, alternative to the long hauls.







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Newsflash...

## **EUROPA server and home-page for the General Fisheries Directorate**

A great deal of information regarding the European Union, Community policies, and the General Directorates of the Commission is available on EUROPA, the WWW server of the European Commission.

The General Fisheries Directorate (DG XIV) has its own home-page on this server, where various items can be found on the Common Fisheries Policy, the organization of DG XIV, a list of its publications, press releases, invitations to tender, information sheets on various topics, in addition to this news bulletin.

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

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