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Training: the key to the future

Training is one of the keystones to a successful career in any industry. The fishing industry is no exception. Young people have to be trained in the industry, fishermen have to be trained in modern fishing methods and product handling, while those leaving the industry have to be retrained into other activities. Those who work in the industry have to be alerted to new issues involved, and even training instructors have to be trained. These are all prerequisites for the fishing industry to run smoothly and efficiently.

However, we cannot overlook the fact that in times of economic crisis, as currently experienced in the fishing industry, training is not always high on the list of priorities. At a time when fishing capacities are being reduced, there are fewer recruits. With their accounts heading towards the red, fishermen are less likely to leave their vessels docked while they follow training courses.

The Commission is aware of requirements in this regard and the importance of training and has set about promoting training with a view to breathing life back into the industry. Two concrete examples include the MAREDUNET project for the electronic networking of schools, set out on page 3 of this newsletter, and the first inter-regional conference set up within the framework of PESCA transnational measures, held in Glyngore, Denmark on 16 and 17 December, 1996, with the issue of vocational training as its theme.

The conference brought together seamen, members of the Institutions, and training experts from coastal regions in Denmark (Viborg), Italy (Calabria) and the United Kingdom (Grampians, Shetlands). The conference highlighted well-known differences in the level of training available to seamen; these differences frequently reflect the range of regional development in the industry. The talks also led to the identification of fields of co-operation in training, involving such issues as safety at sea or product development.

The Editor





Region of the month

The fishing port of Vigo: a giant in peril...

Sheltered by the southernmost point of the *Rías Bajas*, to the south of the Cabo Finisterre, Vigo (population 350,000) has had to brave the misfortunes which have beset the Spanish deep-sea fishing fleet. The city's economy is undergoing a significant transition in an industry which has ensured its growth for over a century.

Vigo, Europe's leading fishing port, lies in Galicia, a region housing almost 60% of the Spanish fishing fleet. This region has a greater number of freezer trawlers than any other Member State.

At Vigo, fresh fish from the coastal fleet goes to market at El Berbés, the busiest fish market in the whole of Galicia. The fresh-fish industry is regularly under threat from reduced quotas brought on by the depletion of resources. In addition, it is faced with stagnant fishing prices associated with competition from abroad.

Despite the significant role coastal fishing plays in Vigo's economy, accounting for 60% of fish landed, it owes its place as Europe's leading fishing port to the deep-sea industrial sector, in the shape of fleets of oceanic freezer trawlers. The fleet combines traditional trawlers (for hake and cod) and factory motherships, in addition to tuna purse seiners or longliners.

The industry was dealt its biggest blow in recent years with the departure of over a hundred trawlers under joint ventures to fish in waters under Argentinean jurisdiction. The harbour supply industry suffered heavily. This was more of a blow than the sudden reduction in the Spanish quota of black halibut, which was badly received following the heavy investment in highly sophisticated technology for deep-sea trawling.

While the situation is on the whole bleak, the willingness among locals to seize challenges from other, more positive aspects should not be overlooked. For instance, the continued landing at Vigo of catches from joint-venture companies fishing in Argentina has enabled the processing industry to survive. In addition, deep-sea industrial ship-owners are constantly looking for new fishing grounds. Finally, fresh-fish fleets are no longer losing their vessels and are even renewing their fleet with improved technology.

Data sheet

Vigo

- *Location*: Galicia, Spain
- *Type of fishing*: practically all techniques are involved
- *Catches* (1995):
 - *haul*: **151,127 tonnes** (93,832 tonnes of fresh fish and 57,295 tonnes of frozen fish)
 - *value*: **245 million Ecus** (approx. 39,315 million pesetas)
- *species*:
 - fresh: hake (*Merluccius sp.*), cod (*Gadus sp.*), sole (*Solea sp.*), octopus (*Octopus sp.*), burbot (*Lophius sp.*), sardine (*Sardina sp.*), scad (*Trachurus sp.*), swordfish (*Xiphias sp.*), etc.
 - frozen: hake (*Merluccius sp.*), swordfish (*Xiphias sp.*), tuna (*Thunnus sp.*), squid (*Illex & loligo*)

sp.), halibut (*Hippoglossus sp.*), cuttlefish (*Sepia sp.*)

- *Number of fishermen (1995)* : 6,500
- *Processing*: for the whole of Galicia:
 - no of processing plants: 71
 - jobs: 18,300

Questions put to José Ramon Fuertes Gamundi, Director of the shipowners' co-operative of the port of Vigo

P-I. (Pesca Info): How would you describe the current state of the fishing fleet in Galicia, and how do you see it developing?

J.G. (José Gamundi): The Galician fleet has undergone significant restructuring to such an extent that its capacity has fallen below the objectives laid down in the Community's MAGPs. Nevertheless, I believe that its capacity now matches resources, and that its future depends on an ability to become more competitive.

P-I: What measures has the industry taken to overcome the current decline of the fishing fleet, caused by the lack of fishing grounds and scarcity of resources?

J.G.: All fleets must adhere to the MAGPs. Spanish fleets fishing in Community waters have adopted plans for restructuring on a voluntary basis, with a view to increased profitability. With regard to foreign fishing grounds, the industry is going to great lengths to find alternative fishing areas, with appropriate changes in the fleet. Moreover, we hope to see the continuation and expansion of the Community's policy of establishing fishing agreements with third countries, seeking ways to keep the Community flag flying at sea.

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Common Fisheries Policy

Fishing Agreements

Among its activities in the fishing industry on an international level, the EU has assumed responsibility for fishing agreements with third countries. Agreements of this type have become essential for the fishing activities of a number of European deep-sea fleets.

Two main types of agreement

Reciprocal agreements (fish for fish) grant vessels from the EU and third countries reciprocal rights of access to fishing resources. Their main aim is to ensure EU fishing fleets continue operating in the extensive fishing grounds of the north-eastern Atlantic. The agreements chiefly involve Norway, Iceland, Faeroe Islands and the Baltic States.

Agreements which involve **financial compensation** (fish for Ecus) are by nature commercial, however they also cater for the financing of scientific programmes as well as grants for studying and training. The bulk of agreements between the EU and **ACP** (African, Caribbean and Pacific) **countries** come under this category.

These so-called first generation agreements are, however, subject to amendment. Two of the agreements, by far the most significant in terms of financial compensation, offer new types of co-operation, taking into account the specific situation of the partner state, and are based even more on a long-term partnership.

In addition to financial compensation, the agreement recently drawn up with Morocco includes a section devoted to the long-term development of the country's fishing industry.

In the case of the agreement with Argentina, access to fishing resources in this country's waters is based on the setting-up of joint-venture companies or temporary consortia.

What does the future hold?

There are various factors which may affect the progress of these fishing agreements. The new international judicial framework of the international fishing industry will affect the future of these agreements, which have to provide for responsible fishing methods. This change in context may lead to reduced fishing capacities for Community fleets. The Commission recommends maintaining, in general, a partnership approach, which governs the second generation model.

Limits to the budget available must also be taken into consideration. While having hardly any effect on agreements providing for the exchange of quotas, or even the combined management of supplies, they may lead to the abandoning of a number of less frequently used agreements, to concentrate instead on agreements which are of more interest to the industry. Concerns about limiting costs may also result in the Commission requesting shipowners, or even Member States, to take on a greater share.





PESCA on the spot

MAREDUNET: training on the Net

A transnational project involving training in fishing and aquaculture has been launched with part-financing from PESCA. The project is called MAREDUNET and brings together training organizations in France, Italy, Belgium and The Netherlands. The ambitious aims of the project include the promotion of training in the Member States, the provision of extra teaching aids to teachers as well as stimulating the exchange of ideas between the different European and non-European training organizations.

The project will achieve its objectives by making full use of the resources provided by the Internet worldwide network to allow schools to go on-line. The schools will be laid out and, accessible to Internet surfers, and will enable the user to find the training course that suits them. The pages will be laid out in English and in the language of the countries taking part.

The link-up is also aimed at training instructors. The MAREDUNET project plans to set up discussion forums for all involved to take part in. For instance, training instructors preparing a class can put any technical queries to the forum and download the latest available information, or even audio-visual aids, already prepared by others.

MAREDUNET should become operational during 1997. Any enquiries can be made by e-mail to: agema@magic.fr, or by fax to: 33-1-4449 8481.

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Interview of the month

Interview with Emilio Mastracchio, Director at DG XIV of the European Commission

P.I. (Pesca Info): The Commission is organizing partnership meetings between Moroccan and European fishing firms on 26 and 27 May next. What will they involve?

E.M. (Emilio Mastracchio): With these meetings, we aim to bring together private-sector firms from the EU and Morocco involved in the fishing industry, from shipbuilding to product marketing. We are convinced that there is a real requirement for this on both sides of the Mediterranean, and we hope to act as a catalyst by getting firms to enter into talks with one another and form partnerships.

P.I.: Why did you choose to promote co-operation between the European private sector and Morocco?

E.M.: It is well known that Morocco and the European Union have maintained age-old bilateral relations in a number of areas, particularly fishing. Since 1994, both sides have been committed to a process of economic, commercial and technological co-operation, which applies to the whole industry. The partnership meetings are in line with this process, and aim to steadily create an EU and Moroccan economic area and integrate their economies further.

P.I.: How will you set about doing this in concrete terms?

E.M.: Firstly, a total of 100 requests for co-operation on the Moroccan side have been selected. Roughly 50% of these projects involve the processing industry, but there have also been requests for partnerships in shipbuilding and the equipment of ships as well as the fitting-out of fishing vessels and export-marketing. These requests have been regrouped and itemized in a catalogue published in English, French and Spanish and widely distributed by national councillors, who are in charge of promoting the catalogue as well as canvassing for potential partners for the projects. Lastly, individual meetings will be held in Casablanca during the two-day conference involving representatives from European firms which may be interested in the Moroccan projects selected and their promoters.

P.-I.: What support can the Community provide to firms?

E.M.: If two partners decide to work jointly, they can call upon one of the Community's existing instruments for the development of industrial partner relations, such as ECIP, Med Invest, or through the European Investment Bank. The national councillors are well acquainted with the operation of these instruments, and they will also be involved in explaining to the partners how they can benefit from them.

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- DG XIV's video-documentary entitled "The EU Fishing Industry - A future today for tomorrow" published in January 1997
- DG XIV will be staffing an information stand entitled "Seafood '97" at the Palais du Heysel in Brussels from 15-17 April 1997.
- As part of the International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea, the European Commission will be taking part in the Intermediate Ministerial Meeting on Integrated Fisheries and Environmental Issues, in Bergen, Norway on 13 and 14 March 1997.

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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