



# pesca *info*



European Commission Delegation  
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No. 13/EN

## "The fisheries policy can be effective only with the participation of the whole sector"

*Notice to readers:* As this year begins, we have asked Mrs Emma Bonino, European Commissioner for Fisheries, to make a concise assessment of the past year and talk to us about the main dossiers concerning the Fisheries Policy in 1998. Owing to the importance of this interview, it will appear in the columns reserved for the editorial and the "Common Fisheries Policy" and "Interview of the month" headings.

### The Editor

***P.I. (Pesca Info):*** Commissioner, just over a year ago, by issuing the first edition of Pesca Info, you advocated a strategic alliance between the European Institutions, fishing experts and the Member States to carry out the necessary restructuring of the fisheries sector within a concerted framework. In your opinion, has progress been made in this direction over the past 12 months?

Little by little, the messages that the Commission incessantly repeated over recent years - for instance, that "too much fishing kills fishing" or that you must "not only stop fishing too much but also too small" - are starting to be heard. It is encouraging to see how this has been the case at the last Council of Ministers, where certain Member States requested, as a precautionary measure, a reduction in Commission proposals or, further, that more and more representatives wished to see a tightening of the controls to provide better adherence to the established rules.

1997 was an important year for the common fisheries policy. Major progress, even if insufficient, was made in essential dossiers such as the technical measures aiming at protecting juveniles and reducing discards, restructuring fishing fleets with the adoption of multiannual guidance programmes for the period 1997-2001 or, further, the introduction of new TACs and the adoption of new scales of assessment for TACs not allocated to date.

*(The interview is continued on page 3)*

## Contents

- Special edition containing an interview with Mrs Emma Bonino, European Commissioner
- Region of the month: Sassnitz, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany)
- PESCA on the spot: network of fishing communities in Sweden
- Newsflash

### ***Region of the month***

## Sassnitz, fishing and tourism for Rostock's successor



Sassnitz is on the east coast of the Island of Rügen in the direction of the Danish Island of Bornholm, south-west of the Baltic Sea. Subsequent to the collapse of fishing in Rostock, this port is today the leading landing centre of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Land.

*(continued on page 2)*



This region's coast corresponds to that of former East Germany. Its integration into the market economy has been a veritable trauma for the fishing world. At the end of the 1960s, Rostock had accommodated trawlers from Sassnitz and had become the ex-Democratic Republic's leading fishing port; while still accommodating 45 large industrial deep-sea fishing trawlers in 1989, in 1992 there were only six and only one at the end of 1997. In the same lapse of time, manpower in industrial fishing went from 8,000 sailors to 150! In Rostock, today, the quays are being redeveloped and the warehouses renovated, but the large trawlers to be seen there have Russian colours and are registered in Kaliningrad!

Sassnitz has rediscovered its role of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Land's leading port. However, it now accommodates only approximately 10, 20- to 30-m and approximately 20, 10- to 20-m vessels. Non-industrial fishing has not been any more spared by the crisis: its manpower went from 1,900 fishermen in 1991 to 650 today. However, craftsmen, living in the country and owning their own houses, suffered less than the industrial fishing crews, city dwellers and tenants. They found it easier to adapt to this coast's new key activity: tourism.

In fact, Berlin and Hamburg are less than 300 km away and the tourist trade is in full expansion. Housing estates and hotels are being built along the entire coast and each port has its fleet of boats for excursions. Tourism is thus apparent even at the heart of Sassnitz's fishing port in the form of a museum with boats which are afloat, but above all by way of the fleet of vessels reconverted to

leisure activities: sea fishing and discovery activities. It is an impressive sight: from the long pier which protects the docks, one quay accommodates more than approximately 10 over-12-m boats for this purpose. While being a minority activity in other European fishing ports here it takes on remarkable proportions!

Nevertheless, renovation works are visible. Fishing activities remain in existence, especially with respect to cod (*Gadus morhua*) - whereby catches are less restricted by quotas than natural conditions (ice, salinity variations) - and flounder (*Platichthys flesus*), flat fish that can withstand heavy desalination. On the other hand, very few herring are to be found here, whereas they are the main species caught in the Land. The factors limiting the catches of these two species are mainly price, which is often too low. Fishery products are generally exported; herring to Denmark, cod and flounder to The Netherlands.

#### **Questions put to N. Kahlfuss of the Producer Organization of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern**

*Pesca-Info (P.I.): What are the interactions with the other Baltic Sea countries?*

*N. Kahlfuss (N.K.):* Many of our boats fish east of the Island of Bornholm, but have never encountered problems with the Danes. There are more problems when the latter approach our coasts, as the situation is more complex in the zone between 3 and 12 nautical miles. We have no interactions with our Polish neighbours in the absence of a specific arrangement. On the other hand, there is a fisheries agreement with the Baltic States

and some of our boats have caught cod there.

*P.I.:* *The tourist trade appears to be important. Does it provide outlets for local fishing?*

*N.K.:* Certainly, but there are sea-fishing prohibitions for fishermen involved in small-scale fishing, precisely in the summer months. The regulation should be adapted more to different cases; it should not be the same for small and large vessels.

#### **Data sheet Sassnitz**

- *Location:* Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany)
- *Type of fishing:* trawler, gill nets
- *Fleet:* 9 vessels over 20 m (out of 13 in the Land), 20 between 10 and 20 m (out of 110), 39 less than 10 m.
- *Fishing zones:* large vessels: Baltic Sea and occasionally the North Sea, medium-sized vessels: coastal waters of the Baltic, small vessels: coastal waters and lagoons.
- *Production:*
  - *volume:* 4,200 tonnes for Sassnitz in 1996, including 3,150 for cod, 2,800 t in 1997 (15,000-20,000 t in 1995-1996 for the whole of the Land)
  - *value:* 5,5 million DM in 1996, 4,6 million in 1997 (i.e. ECU 2,8 and 2,3 million, respectively) for Sassnitz. Between 20 and 22 million DM in 1995-1996, for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (between ECU 10 and 11 million)
- *Number of fishermen:* 150 for Sassnitz, 650 for the Land
- *Number of processing firms:* 1 large canning factory and a filleting-factory project in Sassnitz.



(Continuation of the interview  
with Mrs Emma Bonino)

**P.L.: Initiatives aiming at a real consultation of the whole of the sector were announced by the Commission for 1998, can you elaborate on this?**

I do not think there can be effective association without dialogue. To make proposals which reflect both the needs of the sector and common interest, the Commission must start by tuning in to those concerned.

Thus, in 1998, this procedure will, among others, result in two initiatives which will provide for consultation, not only of the entire fishing world but also of other actors.

The first of these initiatives concerns the future of the fishery-product market. The Commission has prepared a communication<sup>1</sup> on this topic, which takes up the main challenges which the fishery-

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<sup>1</sup> "The future for the market in fisheries products in the European Union - responsibility, partnership, competitiveness" (COM (97) 719 final). This communication is available in all of the official EU languages and can be obtained by mail or fax from the Pesca Info address on the last page of this bulletin, or by consulting DG XIV's web site at the following address:

<http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg14/dg14.html>

Pesca Info will return to this communication in its next edition.

product market must face. In particular, it will detail the changes required both in Community action and in the behaviour of the economic operators to adapt to the market at world level. The objectives to be achieved are summarized in this communication by three keywords: responsibility, partnership and competitiveness.

To meet increasing demands for responsible fishing and trade for fishery products, the European Union is required to provide pragmatic and effective solutions.

The second initiative aims at opening up in-depth considerations with a view to the possible revision of certain aspects of the common fisheries policy after 2002. Therefore, this will be the ideal opportunity to launch direct consultation of the entire fisheries sector, and other officials involved, on various aspects of this common policy, to be able to take account of opinions expressed when drafting the report, which will serve as a basis for the Council to decide on possible modifications.

A questionnaire is currently being prepared which will be mainly distributed to actors in the fishing industry, as well as other groups involved, such as consumer associations or environmental protection organizations. I also wanted direct consultations to be arranged subsequently.

(The interview is continued on page 4)



## **PESCA on the spot**

### **Network of fishing communities in Bohuslän (Sweden)**

Seven fishing communities from Bohuslän on the west coast of Sweden (cf. report on Smögen, Pesca Info No 9), have grouped together within the framework of a Pesca project (Fiskekommunerna). This procedure aims at setting up a communications network - among these communities and externally - enabling the exploitation of their resources to be coordinated and perspectives as diverse as quality improvement, seafood-product marketing or education to be considered.

This project commenced on 1 August 1997 and shall be completed three years thereafter at the end of July 2000. It will cost ECU 91,300 per annum, of which ECU 45,700 is financed by Pesca and the remainder by local and regional governments.

The Project Manager, Cathrine Larsson - based in Uddevalla (not far from Smögen) - would like to get in touch with regions interested in the Pesca programme, in order to expand the network to include other European partners.

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*(Continuation of the interview with Mrs Emma Bonino)*

**P.I.: Other major commitments are in preparation such as the structural-fund reform and preparation for enlargement. Does the Commission intend making proposals in these areas in 1998?**

The Commission is, in fact, preparing the next period of structural-fund programming, which should commence in the year 2000. The discussion was initiated last summer with the presentation by the Commission of the reflection paper "Agenda 2000", in which it indicated its guidelines for continuing the economic and social cohesion effort in a widened Union.

Therefore, the first half of this year will focus on the drawing up of new base regulations and application procedures for each structural fund (cf. Pesca Info No 10 Editor's note). Thus, it will be our task to determine the financial and technical means likely to best meet requirements of areas dependent on fishing without going back on the necessary restructuring of the sector and other elements of our policy. Likewise the social dimension shall be taken into account, for instance, with respect to working hours.

**P.I.: The crisis in the fisheries sector is also being felt at international level. What role can the European Union play in helping to face this in the interest of all parties?**

The problems affecting fisheries - depletion of resources and over-fishing - are not limited to one region of the world only, but concern the entire planet. Therefore, it is at

international level that these problems must be faced if we want to find effective, lasting and fair solutions.

The Union's recent membership in the ICCAT (International Commission for Conservation of Atlantic Tuna), together with new regional initiatives in the Mediterranean, South Atlantic or the Indian Ocean will allow us to develop more responsible fishing and avoid all the perverse effects of certain balances of power.

The Union also intends to strengthen its action on a bilateral level to guarantee fishing opportunities to deep-sea fishermen in fishing zones under the sovereignty of other coastal states. These initiatives shall not only strengthen, but also use other Community external policies as a base especially in commercial matters, development or protection of the environment.

The Council of Ministers recently confirmed the fundamental role of fisheries agreements as much from social as from economic points of view especially at regional level in the zones dependent on fishing. At the same time, the diversity of interest and situations of our partners has made it a requirement for us to adapt our agreements on a case-by-case basis. An in-depth analysis of these fisheries agreements has been started by the Commission and will continue throughout the whole of this year, and I am sure that, here too, this will result in a broad and interesting discussion. Whilst awaiting the results of this analysis the Commission will attempt to explore new channels which will aim, in particular, at a larger integration of the entire fisheries and food-sector industries.

### **Newsflash**

**"European Seafood" in April 1998.**

The next "European Seafood" exhibition will take place at the Parc des Expositions in Brussels from 20 to 30 April 1998.

**Marsource seminar in Le Guilvinec, France, on 24th and 25th February 1998**

Marsource, a project managed by the European Commission, aims to promote and develop new information technologies throughout the fishing industry.

This seminar will focus on the issues at stake in the maritime information society and on the means necessary to master these new technologies in order to improve both transparency and the competitiveness of the sector.

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

**Pesca info** is published by **INFOPARTNERS S.A.** on behalf of the European Commission, DG XIV. **PESCA Info** is published 10 times a year in all Community languages.

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*The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the European Commission.*

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