



European
Commission



No **57** August 2012

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN EUROPE

- ✧ **Fisheries: Europe's first social agreement**
- ✧ European Maritime Day: Gothenburg explores blue growth
 - ✧ Marine knowledge: taking the next step
 - ✧ TACs & quotas 2013: focus on MSY
- ✧ Seafood: the market for fish, molluscs and crustaceans

Shows and exhibitions

**Aqua 2012, Prague (Czech Republic),
1-5 September 2012**

Website: <http://www.was.org>
 E-mail: ae2006@aquaculture.cc
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**Conxemar, Vigo (Spain),
2-4 October 2012**

Website: <http://www.conxemar.com>
 E-mail: conxemar@conxemar.com
 Tel.: +34 986 433 351

Conferences and meetings

**NAFO, annual meeting, St Petersburg (Russia),
17-21 September 2012**

Website: <http://www.nafo.int>
 E-mail: info@nafo.int
 Tel.: +1 902 468 55 90

**CCAMLR, Commission meeting, Hobart (Australia),
23 October – 1 November 2012**

Website: <http://www.ccamlr.org>
 E-mail: ccamlr@ccamlr.org
 Tel.: +61 3 6210 11 11

Institutional agenda

European Parliament Committee on Fisheries

Website: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>
 E-mail: ip-PECH@europarl.europa.eu
 Tel.: +32 2 284 49 09 (Brussels)
 or +33 3 88 17 67 69 (Strasbourg)
 • 6 September 2012, Brussels (Belgium)
 • 19 September 2012, Brussels (Belgium)
 • 8-9 October 2012, Brussels (Belgium)

Agriculture and Fisheries Council of the European Union

Website: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu>
 • 24-25 September 2012, Brussels (Belgium)
 • 22-23 October 2012, Luxembourg (Luxembourg)

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Note to readers

We welcome your comments or suggestions at the following address:
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Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe.
 E-mail: fisheries-magazine@ec.europa.eu

- Website of Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
 > http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/damanaki/index_en.htm
- Application: the European Maritime Atlas > http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeatlas/index_en.htm
- Fisheries site > http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/index_en.htm
- Maritime Affairs site > http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/index_en.htm

Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe is a magazine published by the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission. It is distributed free on request (see subscription coupon on page 12). *Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe* is published five times a year and it is also available on the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries DG website: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/magazine/index_en.htm

Editor: European Commission, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Director-General.

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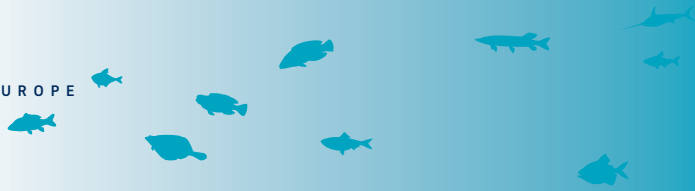
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A halt to social dumping on a global level

Gothenburg was the venue for working groups and more on European Maritime Day⁽¹⁾. It was in this large port city, on 21 May, that employers and workers signed the first European social agreement for the fisheries sector. Its aim is to establish minimum standards for working conditions on board fishing vessels, which could evolve into European legislation⁽²⁾.

This is unquestionably a first, but the event needs to be placed in its larger context.

Firstly, this important agreement draws on an equally important convention adopted in the International Labour Organisation (ILO). This Work in Fishing Convention was adopted in 2007 by 180 countries across the planet after years of negotiation by governments, trade union federations and employers' associations. Fishing has long been one of the most globalised sectors. The convention's signatories sought to prevent social dumping and insecurity in one of the world's most dangerous occupations.

The European fisheries social partners worked out an agreement at European Union level for two reasons: to maintain minimum requirements for working conditions on board European-flagged fishing vessels and to send a signal to the world's other fishing countries and the global fishing industry that the ILO Convention, which has yet to be ratified, must not become a dead letter.

It should be noted that the Work in Fishing Convention is itself a sector-specific adaptation of another much wider agreement: the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention, also signed in the ILO. This agreement aims to ensure decent working conditions for all seafarers and to establish fair competition conditions for ship and vessel owners. It was transposed into European Union legislation by a directive in February 2009 after a social agreement was signed by the European Community Shipowners' Association (employers) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (workers).

The fisheries social agreement signed in Gothenburg is expected to take this same route, culminating with transposition into European law.

In this context, it is easy to understand the impact of the comments made by Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner in charge of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. She gave three reasons why this agreement is crucial.

'The first reason is because we need to continue drawing young workers into fishing and ensure that they will have decent working conditions. The second is that this type of agreement gives visibility to European social dialogue and underlines its importance. And the third is that it is good to show that, despite the crisis, the European Union is intent on improving working conditions.'

The Editor

(1) See below pp. 8-9.

(2) Details on the agreement on pp. 4-5.

Towards improved social legislation for fisheries

Sea fishing is one of the world's most dangerous occupations, but it does not have to be that way. Good working conditions on board fishing vessels can prevent accidents and health problems. In 2007, the governments and social partners from 180 countries adopted a convention to set standards in this area. This convention is to be transposed into European legislation soon, through an agreement concluded recently by European employers and workers.

On 21 May, in Gothenburg, Sweden, Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, participated in the signing ceremony for an agreement between employers and workers on working conditions in the fisheries sector⁽¹⁾. All stakeholders were present: the Commission, which guarantees the European orthodoxy of the agreement, and the European social partners from the fisheries sector who negotiated it: Europêche and Cogeca, representing vessel owners and fishing cooperatives in the European Union (EU), on the one hand, and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), representing trade unions in the fishing sector, on the other.

From the convention to the agreement

Two acts preceded signature of the agreement

Act one took place in June 2007, with the signature of an extremely important text for the sector: the Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188) of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). This convention was concluded after years of global-level negotiations by governments, employers and workers. Its objective: to set new international standards on working conditions in fishing. Fishing is a particularly dangerous and demanding occupation. The risk of an accident is 2.5 times greater than the average for other occupations. So it was time to update the existing standards that dated back to 1959 and 1966.

Act two: *'In 2009, due to the sector's economic hardships, the dangerous nature of the work and the activity's image problem, we the European social partners decided to conclude an agreement to implement certain articles of the ILO convention'*, explains Guy Vermaeve, Secretary General of Europêche.

Europêche, Cogeca and the ETF therefore began negotiating an adaptation of Convention 188 to the European Union context. These discussions took place in the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries and lasted around a year and a half⁽²⁾. They concluded with the agreement signed on 21 May 2012.

Who is concerned?

The agreement of 21 May concerns the entire sea fishing sector. Its measures apply to all vessels involved in commercial fishing activity, with no size or capacity limits. They also aim to protect all fishermen: 'every person employed or engaged in any capacity or carrying out an occupation on board any fishing vessel'. The social partners made a point of extending legal protection to self-employed fishermen, although European legislation in principle protects only employees. This was essential because of the high level of self-employment in fisheries.

But in addition to their determination to secure better working conditions in European fisheries, the social partners also pursued another objective: *'We told ourselves that our agreement would help speed up ratification of the ILO convention'*, notes Guy Vermaeve.

Indeed, the 2007 ILO convention is not in force yet. It has to be ratified by 10 ILO member countries, among them eight coastal States, to enter into force. For now, only two countries have ratified it: Argentina and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Two possibilities: ratification and transposition

There is another way to make the new ILO standards applicable, however, at least for European operators. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union⁽³⁾ establishes a specific mechanism for all social matters: if the social partners conclude an agreement, that agreement may, at the request of the partners, be transposed into European legislation by means of a Council decision.

It is this mechanism that Europêche, Cogeca and the ETF have triggered: they will ask the European Commission to present a proposal to the Council to transform their 21 May agreement into a European directive. In this way, the ILO Convention will become part of European law without all the Member States having to ratify it.

Although the agreement is an adaptation of the convention, there are differences all the same. Certain of the convention's provisions do not fall within Europe's remit and are therefore not included in the agreement. Everything related to social security, for example, comes within

(1) Agreement between the European Union sea fisheries social partners of 21 May 2012 on implementation of the 2007 Work in Fishing Convention of the International Labour Organisation.

(2) The sectoral social dialogue committees are advisory bodies to the European Commission. They were set up in 1998 to encourage dialogue between the social partners at European level. There are 40 such committees in all.

(3) Articles 154 and 155.



© Lionel Flaeyel

The Work in Fishing Convention of the International Labour Organisation aims to set new international standards on working conditions in the fishing industry.

the national sphere and cannot form part of European rules. Conversely, the agreement incorporates elements of European legislation that are not found in the convention, including provisions on working time and safety on board vessels. Since the agreement will become part of European legislation, the social partners made sure that all its provisions are compatible with existing EU law. That is why the Commission was closely involved in the negotiations and drafting.

'We also had to ensure that there was no regression compared with the Convention', adds Guy Vermaeve. 'We cannot sign an agreement that sets standards below those found in the Convention. So it is more or less the same content, but with variations. Since certain provisions cannot be implemented by means of European legislation, ratification is still necessary.'

Speeding up international ratification

What is more, only ratification will give the convention its full international scope. Transposition of the European agreement will be valid only for the 27 Member States. Once the convention is ratified, however, its provisions will apply globally... and for all vessels. A European state will thus be entitled to inspect an Asian or African vessel that enters one of its ports to check whether the convention's provisions are being applied correctly, even if the flag state has not ratified it.

The ILO convention is one more tool in the fight against illegal fishing, because fraudsters are reluctant to take on the costs involved in bringing their equipment up to standards. This is one of the reasons why the Commission attaches particular importance to this matter. With her personal participation in the signature of this agreement, Maria Damanaki demonstrated Europe's determination to implement the ILO Work in Fishing Convention and intended this as a signal to the rest of the world to speed up its ratification.

Broad content

The content of the Agreement of 21 May is very broad. It does not set a minimum wage (a national competence), but obliges vessel owners to conclude a contract with each fisherman whose services it uses. This contract must state, among other things, how the fisherman will be paid. For sharesmen, the contract must state the sharing method to be applied. The agreement also covers terms of hiring, such as minimum age (16), medical exam, payment of salary, etc. It also sets standards for working conditions: working hours and rest periods, food on board, accident prevention, health-care on board, communication with family, etc.

The Commission's motivation is not limited to the international sphere, however. The common fisheries policy also concerns the well-being of people who work on fishing vessels. In its integrated maritime policy, the European Union has made clear its determination to make maritime occupations more attractive. The provisions of the ILO convention and of the European social partners' agreement are the best way to do so in the fisheries sector.

Ratification of the convention by another eight States can logically be expected for the end of this year, which means entry into force by the end of 2013 is possible. Transposition of the agreement of 21 May into a directive can ideally be expected within the same time period.

Seafood Exposition: a launching pad



Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, visited Seafood and took part in a round table discussion on reform of the common fisheries policy.

The European Seafood Exposition was held in Brussels from 24 to 26 April. Seafood is one of the world's largest international fisheries and aquaculture marketplaces, with 1669 exhibitors from 79 countries. From every corner of the globe, those with something to sell come to meet those interested in buying, from basic surimi to the most refined caviar, and always in large quantities.

Seafood is the place to be for those who want to showcase their product(s) on the global fish and seafood market. The Brussels-Expo aisles are crowded not only with regular attendees, but also with entrepreneurs discovering the fair for the first time, if only to test the market's reaction to what they have to offer.

Innovation

One of the major trends of this year's event was caviar. It was available in a variety of forms from a number of countries and is now also supplied by aquaculture. A Spanish operator sells caviar from Adriatic sturgeon (*Acipenser naccarii*), the Mediterranean species, whose females are mature only from age 16 (compared with age 7 for Siberian sturgeon). A breeder developed this stock a number of years ago, first in Andalusia and then in Navarra. He removes the roe based on the long-standing Andalusian traditions of 'Guadalquivir caviar', which died out in the 1960s due to the scarcity of Adriatic sturgeon. These traditions were nevertheless brought back to life using Iranian methods for preparation and conservation to end up with a product that corresponds to the tastes of the international market.

Maria Damanaki: 'The broad principles'

Like every year, the European Commission was on hand for Seafood with a stand providing information to visitors on European policies and rules. Experts were available to explain conditions for the import of seafood products and to inform the visitors about potential public aid for different aspects of their development. Maria Damanaki, Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, also visited Seafood to take part in a round table on CFP reform with members of the Alliance for Common Fisheries Policy Reform. The Alliance brings together European federations of processors and distributors, the WWF and Euro-Toques, the association of Euro-Toques. Its aim is to support the development of sustainable fishing in Europe. 'Everyone supports the broad principles of the common fisheries policy reform', she explained.

This year's event also saw the participation of an aquaculture company from Alaska. What is special about this firm is not only that it was set up by indigenous communities in the context of land restitution, but also that it farms... cupped oysters. These have adapted well to the harsh climate of northern latitudes and grow at a rate similar to what is seen in Europe. The only difference is that the cold makes reproduction impossible. There is consequently no danger of their proliferating in the wild, which is why authorisations were granted for the activity. So spat born elsewhere are farmed in this corner of Alaska, where they take on the local flavour.

A French exhibitor displayed his innovative approach to frozen products. Born into a family of shellfish farmers, he developed a high-pressure technology used for the cold shelling of molluscs and crustaceans followed by extremely rapid freezing. It is not his process that is for sale, but the products he is developing: lobsters, cockles, clams and knife clams. This developer provides his target public, restaurant owners, with ready-to-use products whose flesh and taste remain perfectly intact.

Examples like these are found in every aisle at Seafood. They show the global importance of fishery and aquaculture gastronomy and trade, as well as innovation in products and processes, which never fail to give operators an opportunity on a market always on the lookout for something new.

Seabass

Dicentrarchus labrax



Biology

European seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) is common all over the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the North Eastern Atlantic from Norway to Senegal. It inhabits coastal waters to a depth of 100 m (normally in the winter), as well as brackish waters in estuarine areas and coastal lagoons (in the summer). Occasionally it can be found in rivers. Young fish are gregarious, especially during the seasonal migrations, and form schools. Adults are less gregarious. Seabass is a voracious predator, feeding on crustaceans, molluscs and fish. In the Mediterranean, they reach sexual maturity at three years in males and at four years in females; in the Atlantic at four years and seven years respectively.

Farming

Seabass, like gilthead seabream, have long been reared by traditional extensive methods, where fish are allowed to enter lagoons. The entrance is then closed off, trapping them inside, as in the 'vallicultura' in Italy and the 'esteros' in southern Spain. The trapped seabass feeds naturally until it is harvested. However, in the 1960s, Mediterranean scientists started to develop intensive rearing methods based on complex hatchery techniques. At the end of the 70's these techniques were well developed in most Mediterranean countries.

The operation of a hatchery is quite technical and requires highly trained staff. Hatcheries are often independent and sell young fish to fattening farms.

The reproduction of seabass is fully controlled in the facility. The fertilised eggs are collected on the surface of the spawning tank and placed in incubator tanks, where they hatch. The larvae are then transferred to rearing tanks. Once the larvae have absorbed their yolk sac they are given a very specific diet, based first on micro-algae and zooplankton, then, as they grow, on artemia (a small crustacean). This live food is always produced in the hatchery. After one or two months, the larvae are transferred to the weaning unit where they become accustomed to an artificial diet. Then the fry are transferred to the juvenile unit, where they feed on pellets. After two months they can be moved to the grow-out farm.

In most cases the fish are cultivated in floating cages (i.e. in the Mediterranean and the Canary Islands). Other farms raise sea bass in land-based tanks, generally using a recirculation system that controls the water temperature. A few farms still use traditional extensive and semi-intensive methods.

Farmed seabass are generally harvested when they weigh 300 g to 500 g, which takes from a year and a half to two years, depending on water temperature.

Production and trade

Aquaculture is the major production method for seabass, but fishing still accounts for more than 10% of the total seabass production worldwide. The EU is the largest producer of seabass with a share of 80%, far above the second producer (Egypt). Within the EU, Greece is the first producer, followed by Spain. There are very few exports outside the EU, while imports from third countries are significant, coming mainly from Turkey. Italy, Greece and the Netherlands are the main importers of seabass from Turkey. As far as Italy is concerned, these imports supply local demand, but Greece and the Netherlands tend to re-export seabass to other EU countries. Indeed, intra-EU trade is very important, Greece being the major exporter and Italy the major importer, followed by the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Portugal.



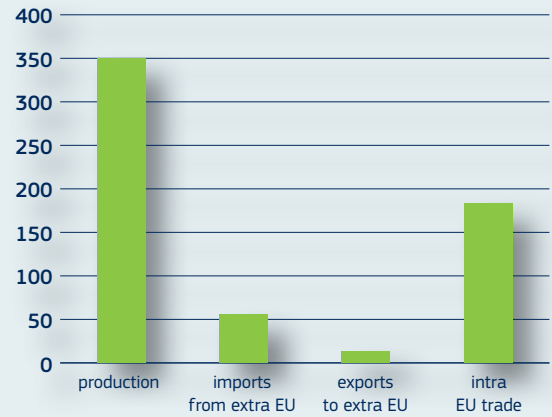
Presentation on the market

Seabass, like seabream, is nearly always presented as a whole-portion-sized fish in the chilled section of sales outlets.

Nutritional value per 100 g (portion size – average)

Calories: 123 kcal
Protein: 21 g
Selenium: 8 µg
Vitamin D: 2.3 µg
EPA: 438 mg
DHA: 579 mg

EU seabass supply and trade* (2009) (MEUR)



* from fishery and aquaculture.

Source: Eurostat.

Filet of seabass in a potato crust

Ingredients (serves 4)

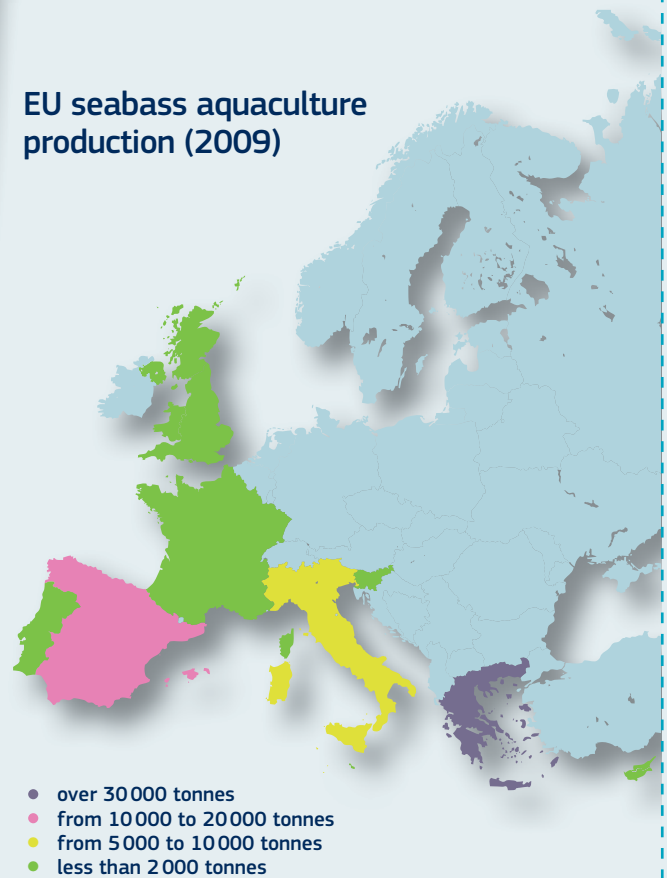
- 600 g seabass fillets
- 1 large floury potato
- 1 egg
- 1 onion
- 2 garlic cloves
- Aromatic herbs (chervil, parsley, dill or tarragon)
- 50 g butter
- 50 ml olive oil
- Flour
- Salt and pepper

Method

1. Finely chop the onion.
2. Lightly fry the onions in olive oil, add the finely chopped herbs and garlic. Remove from heat, and leave to cool.
3. Peel and grate the potato.
4. Mix the ingredients with the egg, season with salt and pepper.
5. Season the fillets and dip them in the flour.
6. Coat the fillets in the potato mix.
7. Fry on both sides in butter and olive oil until golden brown. Transfer to the oven and bake at 175°C for about 7 minutes.

Recipe courtesy of chef Philippe Votquenne (Euro-Toques Belgium)

EU seabass aquaculture production (2009)



Source: Eurostat.

Trout

Oncorhynchus mykiss



Biology

The rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), named after the many rainbow-coloured spots on its skin, is one of the main species bred in freshwater. Native to the Pacific coast of the United States, it was brought to Europe at the end of the 19th century and today it is farmed in nearly all European countries.

The rainbow trout is a hardy fish. It tolerates a wide range of environments and handling. It can occupy many different habitats, moving from freshwater to saltwater and back, or staying permanently in lakes. The optimum water temperature for breeding is below 21°C. Growth and maturation are influenced by water temperature and food. Under normal conditions, trout usually mature at 3-4 years. They are carnivorous and need a diet rich in protein. In the right environment, a trout can grow to 350 g in 10 to 12 months and to 3 kg in two years.

Farming

Trout larvae are reared in round tanks made of fibreglass or concrete, which maintain a regular current and a uniform distribution of the larvae.

The larvae hatch with a yolk sac that contains the food they need for their initial development. Once the sac has been absorbed, the fry swim up to the surface to look for food and begin to regulate their buoyancy. They are fed small flakes (proprietary feed) containing protein, vitamins and oils. Hand feeding is preferred in the first stages of rearing to avoid overfeeding. The fry are then fed small pellets until they reach a weight of 50 g and are 8 to 10 cm long.

At this point, the young fish are transported to grow-out units, either floating cages in lakes or, most often, tanks located beside a river. These tanks, which are generally rectangular in shape and made of concrete, operate on two techniques: flow-through, an open system where river water flows through the units via a raceway; or recirculation, a closed system that consists of circulating water in the tanks and recycling it or a system with partial recirculation. The advantage of recirculation is that the water temperature can be controlled all year long, so that effluents to the environment are very limited.

Trout are also grown in floating cages at sea, in the low-saline waters of the Baltic and in the protected waters of the Scandinavian fjords, and off the west coasts of Scotland and Ireland. In seawater, trout are fed a diet similar to salmon, which accounts for their pink-coloured meat.

When the fish have reached commercial weight, the trout are collected with a net or are pumped on to land.

Production and trade

In 2009, the main producers worldwide were the EU, Chile, Norway, Turkey and Iran. Today, nearly all rainbow trout on the EU market come from aquaculture. Most of the EU supply of trout is locally produced. The main EU producer countries are Italy, France, Denmark, Germany and Spain. Imports come mainly from Turkey (fresh-water portion-size trout) and Norway (large marine-water trout for fillets), and the main importers are Germany and Sweden. The EU mainly exports trout to Russia and Switzerland, especially from Denmark. Trade within the EU is substantial, equal to half the total value of the EU supply. Among the Member States, Poland, Denmark and Sweden are the main exporters; Germany and Finland are the main importers.

Presentation on the market

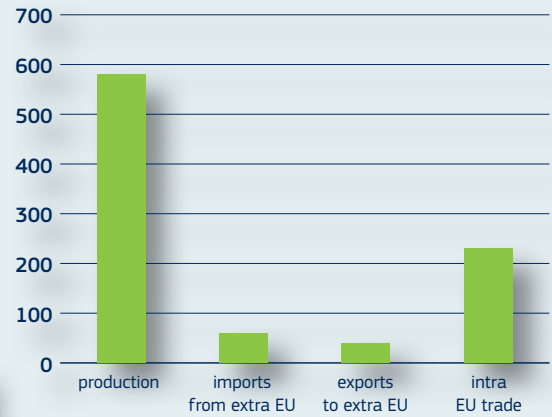
Rainbow trout can be found on European markets all year round. For weights of up to 400 g, they are available with white or pink flesh, whole or filleted, fresh or smoked. If they are reared for longer until they reach a weight of 1.5 kg, rainbow trout are sold, like salmon, fresh (filleted or as fish steaks) or smoked (sliced). In the latter case, they are mostly cold-smoked but also hot-smoked, particularly for portion-size freshwater trout. Salted trout eggs are also consumed, especially in northern Europe.



Nutritional value per 100 g (portion size – average)

Calories: 107 Kcal
Protein: 20 g
Selenium: 10 µg
Vitamin D: 7 µg
EPA: 219 mg
DHA: 496 mg

EU trout supply and trade* (2009) (MEUR)



* from fishery and aquaculture.

Source: Eurostat.

Trout en papillote with vegetables

Ingredients (serves 4)

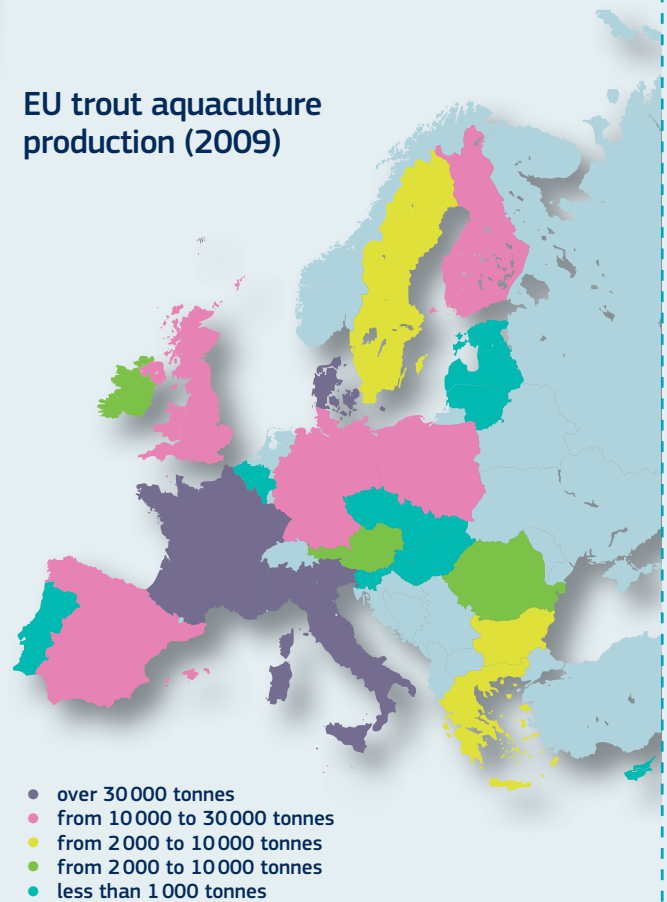
- 4 x 200 g trout
- 4 small carrots
- 2 red onions
- Bunch of chives
- 2 shallots
- 1 lemon (unwaxed)
- ½ bunch of flat leaf parsley
- ½ glass of dry white wine
- 80 g butter
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper

Method

1. Stuff the trout with parsley, a small quantity of chopped shallots and the grated lemon zest.
2. Chop the carrots into thin strips and steam for 3 minutes.
3. Finely chop the shallots, parsley and chives. Slice the onion into rings. Peel the lemon, taking care to remove the pith, and cut into 8 segments.
4. Lightly brush the centre of 4 large sheets of greaseproof paper with oil and spread ¾ of the ingredients over the sheets.
5. Lay the trout on the sheets. Place 3 knobs of butter on each fish and season with salt and pepper. Cover the fish with the remaining herbs and the lemon segments (2 per papillote). Pour the white wine over the fish. Carefully close the edges of the greaseproof paper to form the papillotes.
6. Bake in an oven at 200°C for 12 minutes. Turn off the oven and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Serve the fish in the papillotes.

Recipe courtesy of chef David Monier (Euro-Toques Belgium)

EU trout aquaculture production (2009)



Source: Eurostat.

EMFF and 2020 targets

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will form part of a Common Strategic Framework. The aim is to ensure more consistent use of Structural Funds with a view to achieving the Europe 2020 strategy. From now on, funding must be used to invest sustainably in the economy of beneficiary sectors and territories.

Implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) is set to begin in 2014 for a seven-year period. Since the fund was described in an earlier issue of *Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe*⁽¹⁾, the focus here will be the general context.

The European Commission wishes to ensure greater consistency in the use of the different Structural Funds and related funds, namely the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the EMFF. Until now, these five funds pursued their own objectives and were managed independently. They now all form part of what is known as the Common Strategic Framework proposed by the Commission on 14 March⁽²⁾.

This means that the programming period (2014-2020) will be identical for these funds and that they will have to contribute to an overarching strategy focused on the objectives set by the European Union in its Europe 2020 strategy: building a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy that can deliver high levels of employment, growth and social cohesion.

Tight timeframe

From the legislative point of view, there will be a general regulation covering all the funds and specific regulations detailing the particular features of each fund. Simplification will be obvious because, as a result of this framework, the five funds will contribute to the same objectives and will operate under the same calendar and implementing and monitoring arrangements. These regulations are currently being examined by the European Parliament and the Member States. They are expected to be adopted in 2013.

To access these funds, each Member State will have to conclude a partnership contract with the Commission setting out how it plans to implement the five funds to achieve the 2020 objectives. The partnership contracts should be concluded for the start of the 2014-2020 programming period.

At the same time, for each fund, the Commission will discuss with the Member State one or more operational programmes (OP) consistent with the partnership contract. The chief aim of the OPs is to apportion the Member State's budget among the different priorities of the fund concerned. In practice, for each Member State, the OP for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will dictate the breakdown of its share of the budget among the following six priorities:

- increasing employment and territorial cohesion;
- fostering innovative, competitive and knowledge based fisheries;
- fostering innovative, competitive and knowledge based aquaculture;
- promoting sustainable and resource efficient fisheries;
- promoting sustainable and resource efficient aquaculture;
- fostering implementation of the CFP.

Territorial approach

The general regulation proposes a number of mechanisms to encourage an integrated approach to programming, thus allowing better coordination and synergies between the different funds.

Take the example of 'community-led local development' (referred to as Axis 4 under the European Fisheries Fund). Starting in 2014, the ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EMFF will apply the same method and common rules for these local initiatives, which are now highly encouraged because they foster an integrated approach to territorial development and involve local communities in their implementation.

Thanks to this common approach, a partnership of local players will be able to put together a development strategy that can combine interventions from several funds.

This will make it possible to organise larger-scale projects and to compensate for the limits of a particular fund. A fishing community, for example, will be able to use ESF or ERDF funds for certain aspects of their project that concern professional reorientation or a port infrastructure.

The aim of this strategy is to make the most of investment opportunities that can contribute to real economic development.

(1) See *Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe*, No 55, March 2012, pp 4-7.

(2) See SWD 61/2012 - Commission staff working document entitled *Elements for a common strategic framework 2014 to 2020*.

European Maritime Days: Gothenburg explores blue growth

Gothenburg, Sweden's largest port city, hosted the conference and related events for European Maritime Day 2012 last May. The aim of these annual meetings of European maritime economy stakeholders is to provide input for the European Union's integrated maritime policy. This year's theme was blue growth, or how to ensure sustainable development of exploitation of the seas and oceans.

Since 2008, on European Maritime Day – 20 May –, a European city on the sea teams up with the European Commission to invite Europe's maritime community to debate the Union's integrated maritime policy (IMP). This year, the event was held in Gothenburg, the capital of the Swedish county of Västra Götaland and the largest Scandinavian port, a city whose destiny has long been tied to the sea⁽¹⁾.

The former port district is located on the northern shore of the Göta river estuary that divides the city in two before flowing into the Kattegat a few kilometres downstream. The former docks, landing wharves and dry-dock facilities that line this bank of the river were restored and rehabilitated in the 1990s. The area now comprises housing, strolling areas, cultural and educational facilities, etc. It is home to *Lindholmen Science Park*, a technological development cluster that brings together universities and high-tech industries.

It is also home to the *Eriksbergshallen*, former port warehouses that have been transformed into cultural and conference centres. This complex was the gathering place for the 1400 participants in European Maritime Day, who came from 50-odd countries and represented a range of maritime sectors: ports, energy, fishing, transport, clusters, environment, trade unions, universities, administrations (local, regional, national and European), international institutions, etc.

The value of these days is first and foremost to serve as a yearly gathering for those who wish to do their share in building a European maritime economy: participants are able to collect information, share good ideas, describe their experiences and learn about what is being done in other places in Europe in the maritime sphere.

'The theme of this year's edition of European Maritime Day is "Sustainable Growth from Oceans, Seas and Coasts" – in short, Blue Growth', explained in her opening remarks Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. 'For now, let me remind you of the dual purpose of Blue Growth: creating new jobs in the maritime economy and letting the maritime economy grow, but sustainably and inclusively.'

Discussion of this vast subject touched on various aspects related to progress needed in the European maritime economy: the regional approach, renewable marine energy, innovation, development of horizontal tools, protection of ecosystems, etc. These were developed in around 30 workshops, some held in parallel, on 20 and 21 May.

Sustainable management: Europe's priority

Europe needs growth. The marine world, still largely under-exploited and especially badly exploited, offers abundant economic development opportunities. *'The sea can be used for more than carrying boats'*, commented Catharina Elmsäter-Svärd, Sweden's Minister for Infrastructure. *'That's the key to blue growth.'*

This was also the starting point of the brainstorming carried out during these two days. In the four years since the integrated maritime policy (IMP) was put in place, maritime players have had time to assess the different projects launched and observe the first concrete results of various political and economic initiatives. They are no longer at the discovery stage but have moved onto that of decision-making and building on successful experiences. The pilot projects for cross-border cooperation in maritime surveillance, for example, have demonstrated their effectiveness and the time has come to go even further.

This emerged clearly during the two-day event: economic players are eager to exploit the resources and services the marine world has to offer. There was considerable discussion about renewable marine energy, but other activities were also discussed, such as mineral extraction (especially zinc), the development of maritime recreational activities and research on pharmaceutical products extracted from marine resources.

In the light of these prospects, the need to organise the management of maritime development emerges. *'Sustainable management of oceans must be our priority'*, pointed out Swedish Environment Minister Lena Ek. Without management, a heavy burden will be placed on marine ecosystems... and on the maritime economy itself. To achieve its growth targets, maritime Europe cannot afford to take the risk of managing this development improperly. Maritime spatial planning was consequently the key focus of numerous discussions during the two-day event (see box).

(1) See *Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe*, No 55, March 2012, p. 11.



Sustainable growth, the theme of European Maritime Days 2012, gave participants the chance to explore different aspects of the progress of the European maritime economy.

Public funds

Another opportunity to deliver blue growth lies in the use of public funds to launch economic projects or develop infrastructures that will help private initiatives develop fully. It is therefore time for maritime players to think about how European funds can help promote sustainable exploitation of the seas and oceans.

'The European Union has entered into the phase of negotiating the budget and priorities of the next financial programming period, 2014-2020', explained Lowri Evans, Director-General at the European Commission's DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. 'We shouldn't take the risk of missing out on maritime economy opportunities during this period. We have heard your calls today for support for emerging activities, development of effective clusters and the launch of a dynamic innovation policy. We share these priorities... But the Commission decides nothing alone. It is up to each of you – the industry, NGOs and universities – to talk to your national and regional representatives and your governments.'

In Gothenburg, economic and business circles made it clear that they are ready to extend maritime development areas and explore new ones. Decisions will therefore have to be taken to facilitate such development and keep it within sustainable limits.

The fifth European Maritime Days will be held next year in Valletta, Malta.

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/maritimeday/index_en.htm

The need for maritime spatial planning

This was probably the highlight of the 2012 European Maritime day: there is hardly any conference where maritime spatial planning is not discussed or even demanded by the different players. It is the development of offshore wind farms that has brought to light the need for such planning. The renewable energy sector is planning investments of more than EUR 10 billion by 2020. Such amounts can be committed only in a permanent framework, at least one that remains stable for the duration of the financial amortisation of the infrastructure.

Only a maritime spatial plan can guarantee such a framework as well as the peaceful coexistence of wind farms with other maritime activities entitled to development space. These include aquaculture, which also needs to expand. Maritime spatial planning already exists in a fragmented manner in Europe and initiatives are growing in the Member States. The Swedish environment minister announced that Sweden would be developing spatial planning for all marine waters under its jurisdiction, based on ecosystem management and cooperation with neighbouring states.

Indeed, the seas and oceans are by definition transnational areas and Member States need guidelines drawn up at European Union level. Maria Damanaki took advantage of her presence in Gothenburg to announce that she intends to present a legislative initiative on maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management by the end of 2012.

Marine Knowledge 2020: next step?

In June, the European Commission published a Green Paper on its 'Marine Knowledge 2020' strategy. Like all green papers, its objective is to get stakeholders to react and express their views or make suggestions for a policy. In this case, the goal is chiefly to learn whether stakeholders in the maritime economy are willing to expand databases by making the information they collect more available.

First, though, a reminder of what the 'Marine Knowledge' strategy is all about. The seas present tremendous opportunities for economic development. But for blue growth to develop its full potential, companies, scientists and public authorities must have full knowledge of the marine environment. In other words, they must be able to count on reliable and exploitable data. Examples of such data include: the composition of marine sediments, the seabed structure, the salinity or acidity of water and how it is evolving, the presence of a given fish stock, level of biodiversity, etc. Although a great deal of data and information are available on the seas, they are scattered among a number of companies and institutions.

A researcher who wishes to assemble all existing data on a given subject being studied first has to contact several different data holders and then – assuming that they hand over the data readily – make sure that data from different sources are compatible with each other. The purpose of the 'Marine Knowledge' strategy is to resolve all these problems: to make data available and interoperable.

Initially, the Commission therefore worked to set up a common collection framework and a single portal for access to existing data: EMODnet⁽¹⁾. The prototype of this portal is now complete and operational for a number of European seas. The Commission is moving into the second phase of its strategy: to extend EMODnet to all European seas and, above all, based on the data assembled, to develop full digital mapping of European seas. For any point on the marine map, users would be able to access a full set of data such as depth, nature of sediments, seabed composition, temperature, salinity, pollution and biodiversity.

This mapping is set to materialise in 2014. The resolution would be fairly low to start, with a precision of 250 metres. Observation technology would allow much greater precision, however. This is precisely the purpose of the new Green Paper: to get input on how to develop high resolution mapping and more generally how to take a more robust step to improve marine knowledge.



The 'Marine Knowledge 2020' Green Paper aims to open the debate on how to advance towards a third phase of the strategy, namely to offer full mapping in high-resolution of the seas and oceans surrounding the European Union by 2020.

Crucial questions

The goal is to open the debate on how to advance towards a third phase of the strategy, namely to offer full mapping in high-resolution by 2020. The Commission identifies a number of challenges that still have to be met to achieve this goal, the main one being to involve private companies, which turn out to be the principal holders of marine data. At this stage, they have not yet been involved in taking forward EMODnet or the strategy.

Accordingly, in this Green Paper, the Commission raises a number of questions on interoperability, the relevance of EMODnet themes, the multiple authorisations needed to use data, the new types of data that need to be collected in the future and so on.

Stakeholders will also be asked to give their views on how to help the data assembly process move forward. For now, this is a project driven by the public authority. It has to evolve into an on-going and integrated process, however, because the marine economy is evolving, driven by the spectacular development of offshore wind farms. To enable it to keep up the pace of its development, data accessibility needs to be improved without delay.

(1) European marine observation and data network (réseau européen d'observations et de données marines).

TACs 2013: the situation is looking up



The Commission presents its working method for drawing up proposals for fishing opportunities for 2013, which will be in keeping with past years.

In 2013, the European Commission intends to continue its drive to achieve maximum sustainable yield in European fisheries. It announces this intention in its spring communication, which presents its working method for drawing up TACs and quotas for next year. Stakeholders – as well as all citizens who may feel concerned – are invited to give their views on the Commission's approach.

Every spring, the Commission takes stock of fish resources and presents its method for drawing up proposals for total allowable catches (TACs) for the following year. The year 2013 will be in keeping with past years. In 2011, European fisheries began their shift to maximum sustainable yield (MSY). TACs for stocks not yet exploited on this principle are being decreased successively over a four-year period, so as to ensure MSY fishing by 2015.

Reducing the impact of fishing on a stock, however, does not necessarily mean reducing TACs. When a stock is expanding, TACs can be increased without jeopardizing achievement of sustainable yield objectives.

The situation is improving significantly. In 10 years on the Atlantic shoreline, the share of stocks within safe biological limits has risen from 29% to 56%. Of the 38 stocks for which precise data is available, 22, i.e. over half, are fished at MSY level. Last year, 63% of stocks were overexploited. Progress in the Mediterranean has been less pronounced: only 13 of the 103 stocks assessed are fished at maximum sustainable yield.

Another remarkable finding – which doubtless has contributed to the improved state of stocks – is that the proportion of stocks with TACs above the level of sustainable catches declined sharply this year: 11% compared with 23% in 2011 and... 46% in 2003. This is an effect of the general use of multiannual plans and greater use of scientific advice in policy decisions.

Data: status quo

Unfortunately, scientists have not observed any improvement in data provision by Member States. This includes catch statistics, specific surveys, sampling, etc. This lack of data keeps scientists from assessing stocks accurately, which is essential for calculating MSY. The problem was raised last year and the Commission asked Member States to improve the way they organise data collection and transmission to scientific institutions, particularly since they receive European aid for this purpose.

This year, of the 92 stocks fished in European waters of the North-East Atlantic, scientists have adequate data to calculate fishing mortality that will deliver MSY for only 38. In the Mediterranean, scientists will be able to calculate MSY mortality for 65 of 103 stocks.

However, this year, scientists are going to use new methods to carry out their assessments and new advisory procedures that require less precise data. The aim is to increase the proportion of stocks for which assessments can be used to calculate MSY. These assessments are expected for June.

Relying on the basic principle that similar measures must be applied to all stocks in comparable conditions, the Commission's working method for setting TACs is as follows.

- For stocks managed under a multi-annual plan, the TAC will be set in accordance with the plan.
- For stocks already exploited at MSY level, the fishing rate will remain at the current proportion.
- For over-exploited stocks not yet under a multi-annual plan, there will be an additional reduction in the TAC.

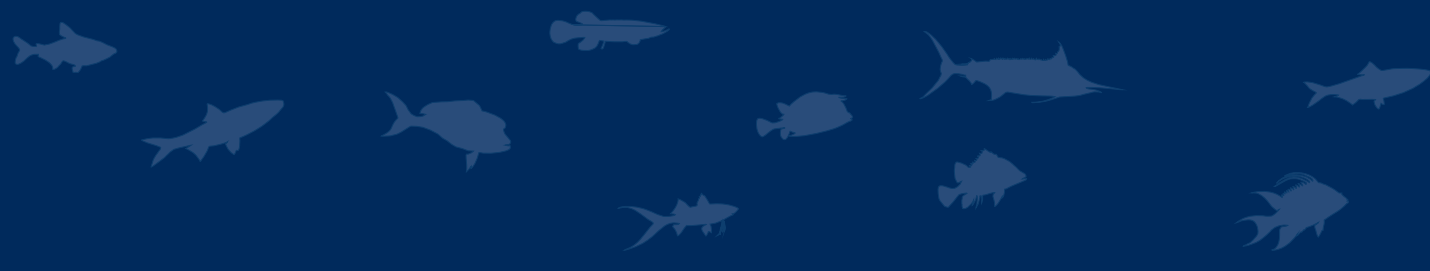
This is valid for stocks assessed scientifically. For the others, the Commission will draw up its proposal on the basis of partial assessments where these exist and in keeping with the precautionary principle.

Conference on maritime spatial planning

A major conference on maritime spatial planning, on 26 March in Brussels, brought together representatives of governments and the different stakeholders concerned by the development of this key tool for the integrated maritime policy. The conference reviewed progress on maritime spatial planning in Europe and worldwide with a view to launching debate on how this planning must evolve in European waters in coming years. European maritime sectors increasingly need a framework in order to step up their future development in maritime and coastal areas, and the Commission wished to launch the discussion on this subject with all the players concerned. *'With your help, I hope that we will be able to announce a proposal on the best way to further develop MSP in the course of this year'*, Maria Damanaki, Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, told participants. *'The main aim of this initiative will be to ensure that planning is ensured at Member State level, that there is a common framework on how this is done and that there is fully functioning cross-border cooperation between States on planning issues.'*

Focus on the future of European aquaculture

On 11 May, in Salzburg, Austria, the European Commission and the Austrian government hosted a high level conference on the future of European aquaculture, chiefly freshwater aquaculture. European aquaculture stakeholders came together to discuss barriers to the sector's development and to extend the discussion process to areas where the Commission, Member States and stakeholders should team up to encourage its development. The problem is that although European aquaculture meets high quality standards, the sector has been stagnating for over 10 years. The conference therefore gathered the views of all stakeholders on what can be done to jumpstart the development of a sector with significant growth potential. Among other subjects, participants discussed the need to speed up licensing procedures and reduce red tape in order to make the sector more competitive.



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