



NEWSLETTER

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NO. 4: WE ARE NOT JUST WASTING FISH | 60-SECOND BRIEFING: SUBSIDIES
INTERVIEW: CHRISTIAN VERSCHUEREN | WHAT'S NEW?

Entering a new era for fishing



Tony Long,
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If the current financial and economic crises are teaching us anything, then it must be that the profligate, high consumption lifestyles pushed relentlessly by the media and mass advertising for the past three or four decades are over. More modest expectations that fit with the reality of the natural resources we depend on will become the new norm. Efficiency of resource use and elimination of wastes will be the key words. Producing more with less and conserving scarce resources rather than exploiting them will be the new sources of innovation and jobs.

“Resource efficiency is not just a luxury – it’s an absolute necessity.”

The fisheries sector fits into this same pattern; for years scarce financial resources have been used to support out-dated, unsustainable fishing practices. Instead of reducing overcapacity, millions of euros have been spent on modernising or building bigger, (cont'd page 2)

WE ARE NOT JUST WASTING FISH

The high profile campaigns may have focused on fish discards, but millions of Euros are also being wasted on harmful subsidies

Healthy fish stocks can deliver huge benefits to society: they are a potential source of jobs, profits and food. But only if they are well managed. Currently, this is not the case in Europe. There has been a failure to link the responsible and sustainable management of natural resources with the efficient use of financial resources. As a result, fish stocks are delivering much less than they could. Discards are the high profile example of waste in the marine world, but waste in other areas is just as concerning. Millions of Euros in taxpayers' money are being wasted on a mismanaged subsidy system which has continued to fuel, rather than halt, overfishing.

WWF is urging MEPs to see the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) as an opportunity to show the world how to manage its most precious resources more sustainably and cut the most wasteful management practices. “The next CFP needs to put in place a more decentralised means of managing fish stocks, one which engages all stakeholders to make sure that the right to fish is linked to the responsibility of fishing in a sustainable way,” said Roberto Ferrigno, WWF CFP project director. “This is the only way to stop wasting our natural and financial resources and save our seas and our fisheries from collapse.”

WHY WE NEED TO WASTE LESS

Resources

The waste: Up to 60% of all fish caught by European boats are thrown overboard due to quota restrictions, or because of fishing techniques which either catch juvenile fish, or protected/inedible species unintentionally (by-catch). This waste of marine life is environmentally devastating but also adds up to billions of ‘sunken Euros’ lost for future fisheries. (cont'd page 2)

(cont'd from page 1) faster boats to catch fewer and fewer fish. The result is the depletion of our seas, an unprofitable fishing sector and an old and overweight fishing fleet.

Indeed, the problem with Europe's fisheries policy is not just one of financial resource misuse – it is also inextricably linked with a long-term disregard for natural resources. European fish stocks are already under huge pressure due to over-fishing and poor regulations. Today, 63% of assessed stocks in the northeast Atlantic and 82% in the Mediterranean are overfished.

It is absolutely imperative that the current once-in-a-decade reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and its funds are used to stop the depletion of both financial and natural resources. CFP reform can show Europe, and indeed the world, that we can manage natural and economic resources responsibly and sustainably.

In its 2020 strategy, the Commission has recognised that building a more resource-efficient Europe is "crucial to the EU's economic and ecological security". Fine words will not make a difference. New legislation, policies and new financial instruments will.

"A robust reform of the CFP can deliver environmental, economic and social sustainability – but things have to change."

The transformation of the fisheries sector will not be easy or painless. The natural, social and economic interests involved must be brought into a new balance that guarantees the survival of the fisheries and their habitats on which fishing communities ultimately depend for their livelihoods.

Now the European Parliament has been given the power and the opportunity to direct us towards a healthy and profitable industry, for the next few years and well into the future. We trust, as MEPs, you will take it.

Tony Long
WWF Brussels



■ By-catch can be reduced by up to 80%.

The solution: If fishers adopt more selective fishing gear and practices, by-catch and discards can be minimised or even eliminated within a short timeframe. Multi-annual plans (MAPs) should also be adopted for all EU fisheries by 2015, co-managed by stakeholders including fishers. These plans need to include strategies to tackle both unwanted catches and discards by 2018 as a key goal.

Did you know? In the UK 'Project 50%' has led to a 52% average reduction of discards in participating vessels thanks to changes to traditional gear. Fewer discards, fuel savings and more marketable fish are convincing fishers of the benefits.

Money

The waste: The EU is one of the world's top three subsidisers of the fisheries sector. In 2009, € 3.3 billion was spent on direct and indirect EU fisheries subsidies (see figure p.3). But

over two thirds of these subsidies can be considered harmful for the environment.

The solution: WWF urges that subsidies should only be granted for activities that provide sustainable solutions. This means reducing the oversized EU fleet and helping fishing communities in the transition towards sustainable fishing and diversifying their income-generating activities.

Did you know? In economic terms, in 2004, more than 75% of the fish stocks were "underperforming", at an estimated annual loss of about € 38 billion to the global economy. By improving governance of marine fisheries, society could capture a substantial part of this € 38 billion annual economic loss (World Bank).

Jobs

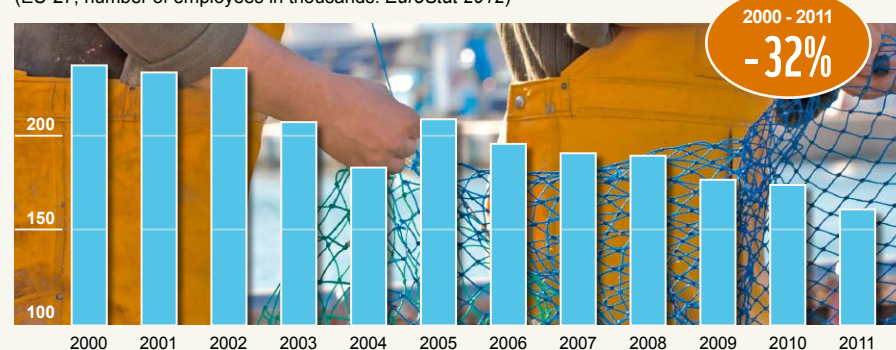
The waste: European fishers have profit margins of about 3–6%; in New Zealand the margins are closer to 40%. Within Europe, job losses are expected to continue at 1–2% a year if the CFP isn't radically reformed.

The solution: Only by rebuilding fish stocks and managing them sustainably at or above levels able to produce their maximum sustainable yield, can a more stable and profitable fishing sector be created.

Did you know? Since the year 2000, one third of the jobs in the EU catching sector and aquaculture were lost due to a combination of reduced catches, ageing and the failure to recruit younger fishers to join the fishing workforce.

Number of Employees in the EU Fishing sector

(EU-27, number of employees in thousands. EuroStat 2012)



60-SECOND BRIEFING: SUBSIDIES



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■ **Big boats. An even bigger waste of money.** This vessel has netted a staggering € 6.2 m in building subsidies and another € 132,000 in modernisation subsidies.

The issue

Europe's fishing grounds were once amongst the most productive in the world. But 30 years of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) have resulted in serious depletion of fish populations, ecosystem degradation, and damage to species, habitats and sites. In fact, widespread overcapacity in the EU fishing fleet has resulted in three out of four fish stocks being fished above the maximum sustainable yield (the largest yield or catch that can be taken from a fish stock each year without deteriorating the productivity of the stock). The European Commission has acknowledged that subsidies have contributed to this imbalance through artificially maintaining an oversized fleet.

The pressure

The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) in 2007-2013 was intended to move subsidies away from increasing capacity and towards sustainability. How? By funding the reduction of fleet size and more environmentally-friendly activities, for instance. The reality is very different. The EFF suffers from multiple and systemic problems with vague rules, weak safeguards, delays in implementation and limited controls on state aid and non-reporting by Member States. This has resulted in limited funds being spent on capacity reduction, rebuilding fish stocks and

restoring ecosystems. As confirmed by the European Court of Auditors in their report in December 2011, more funds have been diverted into maintaining or increasing unsustainable practices, such as the increase in fishing capacity.

The latest

The European Commission has proposed to replace the EFF with a new funding framework for 2014 - 2020 called the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). This is a € 6.5 billion fund which the Commission says is designed to "foster jobs and growth in the sector". The proposals include: funding for vessel and gear modernisation, aquaculture development, the promotion of local jobs and income diversification and support for the implementation of marine spatial planning.

The solutions

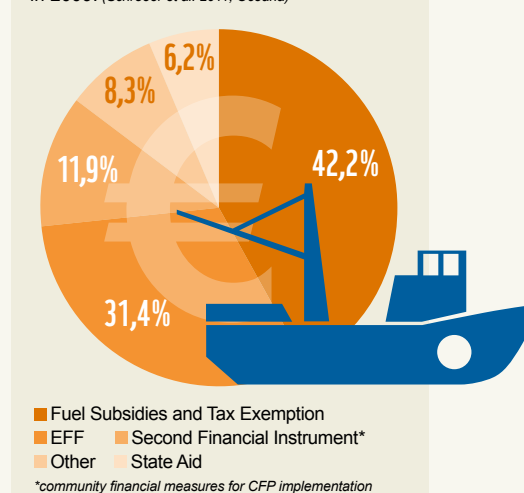
So, is the EMFF a good solution? Well, it has its strengths and weaknesses. The plan to end subsidies for boat building and engine replacement is very much welcomed. However, the idea of funding fleet and gear modernisation and investing in aquaculture expansion is a concern if there are no strict environmental safeguards in place. Given that the European fleet is running well over capacity, any support should not drive further over-

fishing. Instead, more funds should be provided to restore fish stocks, reduce by-catch and discards, increase traceability and maintain healthy marine ecosystems.

The new EMFF should also be subject to bold improvements in planning, management, control and transparency. In order to promote coherence, avoid waste and have any real impact, changes introduced in the new fund need to be reflected in other EU fisheries subsidies rules such as state aids and fisheries partnership agreements.

Total EU fisheries subsidies in 2009

Percentage distribution in direct and indirect subsidies paid to the fisheries sector (EU-27) in 2009. (Schroeder et al. 2011, Oceana)



INTERVIEW: CHRISTIAN VERSCHUEREN

EuroCommerce represents the retail, wholesale and international trade sectors in Europe. Here, its director-general explains why a robust reform of the CFP is so important to retailers.



“Our consumers are asking more and more questions about where their food comes from, and retailers have a role to play.”

The reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has long interested environmentalists and fishers, but how do retailers feel about it?

It's a huge opportunity to make our European policy work much more effectively, not just for the benefit of the supply chain [from fishers to consumers] but for the marine environment too. I don't think WWF's Tony Long is exaggerating when he refers to this as “an opportunity of a lifetime”.

How is EuroCommerce involved in CFP reform?

We're part of a powerful Alliance for CFP reform, which represents business sectors along with WWF. I want us to be more active and more visible in this whole process. However, retailers can only do so much. That's why, as a collective, the Alliance has a bigger impact, highlighting the environmental and business objectives in favour of robust reform.

Does a robust reform of the CFP make business sense?

Of course. It's a complicated supply chain that we're in, so it's important that every link is involved in this process. Companies have already made a lot of progress, setting targets for certified sustainable sourcing for example. EuroCommerce wants to strengthen these individual initiatives by lending the support of the entire European sector. Reform can help to secure a long-term supply of sustainable seafood so we can move forward together. That's what consumers want.

Indeed. According to a WWF poll, 88 % of Europeans think that fish products on sale within the EU should come from sources that are not over-fished. Does that surprise you?

Not really. Our consumers are asking more and more questions about where their food comes from, and retailers have a role to play. But we have to be careful that we don't get carried away.

What do you mean?

There are proposals for additional labelling requirements as part of CFP reform, to include things like ‘catch/harvest dates’, for instance. While we support better information for consumers, we're not sure this kind of information will add any value. It will also be expensive to introduce and add cost to fish products. We'd rather see ‘smart spending’ – an efficient use of financial resources to rebuild and maintain fish stocks for a long-term supply of sustainable seafood to the benefit of all.

More information about The Alliance for Common Fisheries Policy Reform at <http://www.wwf.eu/fisheries/industry/>



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.wwf.eu

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WHAT'S NEW

Trial cuts discards

Making fishers more accountable for catches can dramatically reduce the levels of discards, according to trials in several EU countries. In 2011, the ‘Catch Quota’ trials in the North Sea tested the idea of remote electronic monitoring and CCTV aboard vessels to verify catches and document discard levels.



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The result was a reduction in cod and sole discards to 0.2 % – from 38 % and 28 % respectively in 2010. Overall catches of under-sized fish were also “very low”, the report concluded. WWF said the results were “extremely encouraging” and showed how available technology can provide better control of actual catches and that accountability can encourage fishermen to operate more selectively. Full report at: www.marinemanagement.org.uk/news/news/120410.htm

GLOBE arranged CFP reform debate in Berlin

On April 24 the ‘Global Legislators Organisation for a Balanced Environment’ (GLOBE) arranged a CFP reform debate in Berlin. In the Bundestag, representatives of all parties along with the ministry, WWF, other NGOs and fishing associations discussed the German position in the negotiations. In June 2011, a GLOBE conference held in London drafted a declaration on CFP which you can find here: <http://bit.ly/Kwou9A>.

To support this declaration please contact GLOBE's executive secretary for Europe, Mr. Rafael Jiménez-Aybar via Email rafael.aybar@globe-europe.eu