

# Smalls Have Their Say

A recent workshop on small-scale fisheries in Europe in the context of the proposed reform of the Common Fisheries Policy stressed the need for fair treatment and access to resources

Seventy-one delegates attended a workshop organized by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) gathered in Brussels, Belgium, on 28 September 2009 to discuss the forthcoming, reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) of the European Union (EU). The participants included fishers, fishers' representatives, EU officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academics.

Brian O'Riordan, Secretary of ICSF's Belgium office, set the scene for the workshop, labelling it a unique event that would discuss EU fishing policy from the viewpoint of small-scale fisheries.

On behalf of the European Commission (EC), Joost Paardekooper, Policy Officer for the CFP Reform, DG Mare, EC, introduced the EC's Green Paper, pointing out that the EU's fish

the idea of a differentiated fisheries management regime that would explicitly cater for the industrial and inshore sectors separately.

Casto Lopez Benitez, Policy Officer for Fleet Matters, DG Mare, also from the EC, presented data describing the EU small-scale fleet as a small part of the total fleet and suggested that overall, the number of boats in the EU has been reducing by two per cent each year. The bulk of this reduction is likely to have come from the over-12 m fleet, as States were not asked to reduce the capacity of the small-scale fleet. The funds for capacity reduction were directed towards larger vessels, which resulted in an increase in the number of inshore vessels. Landings from the small-scale (under 12 m) fleet would appear to be worth more than those from the industrial sector.

Defining what is 'small-scale' at the EU level is problematic, and individual States should be allowed to come up with regional definitions. The difference between industrial and non-industrial sectors should be recognized, so that appropriate management tools can be adapted to protect fishing communities.

Xoán Lopez Alvarez of the Federación Galega de Cofradías de Pescadores (Galician Federation of Fishermen's Cofradías) said that even as small-scale fishers strive to achieve something collectively, they should not stumble at the first hurdle—over the definition of a small-scale fisher.

## Quota process

Jerry Percy of the Welsh Federation of Fishermen's Associations highlighted the problems faced by the English and Welsh small-scale (under 10 m) fleets.

stocks are decreasing so much that it has to source two-thirds of its fish requirements externally. Highlighting the EU's inability to control fishing capacity, he pointed to the bias towards short-term fixes to reduce economic and social impacts on communities.

Central to the CFP, he added, is the idea of a more regional, devolved management, perhaps through regional advisory councils (RACs). In conclusion., Paardekooper reiterated

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Since they were initially excluded from the quota process, they have access to just three per cent of the quota, despite comprising 75 per cent of the fleet by number. Since the authorities do not record their catches, they have no 'track record' and no formal claim to quotas. Small-scale fishers have no mechanism for representation since the authorities prefer to negotiate with producer organizations and fishing industry representatives.

Liberato Fernandez of the Federação das Pescas dos Açores, (Azores Fishing Federation) Azores, pointed to the problems of simply using vessel length to define the small-scale fisheries sector. Some of the boats in the Azores are large because, although they use simple, highly selective gear to fish tuna, they have to go out over 200 miles into the Atlantic.

Antonio Garcia Allut of the Lonxanet Foundation for Sustainable Development, Spain, supported this view, saying that a dimension-based definition will not capture the diversity of artisanal small-scale fisheries, and there is a need to incorporate social and economic attributes, especially considering that the beneficiaries of the sector are primarily communities rather than investors.

Olivier Guyadier of IFREMER (Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer, the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea) pointed out that vessels of different sizes may pursue the same stocks in the same area. Smaller vessels using fixed gear and targeting a larger variety of species tended to be less capital-intensive and less likely to depend upon subsidies to remain viable.

Dolores Bermúdez of the Galician Shellfish Gatherers Association, Areal, Spain, said that shellfish gatherers should be included within the gambit of the CFP, considering that they maintain a viable, sustainable and self-regulating fishery.

Pierre-Philippe Jean of the Federation of Small Islands pointed out that islanders often had no alternative to fishing, other than migration, to make a year-round living. Echoing this concern, John O'Brien, an Irish fisher

from Inis Bo Finne, said his community had first been banned from catching salmon due to pressure from angling organizations and later from catching cod since they were located in a cod recovery zone. They are now restricted to catching crab and lobster.

Arthur Bogason of Iceland's National Association of Small Boat Owners (NASBO) talked of how individual transferrable quotas (ITQs) had affected the Icelandic small-boat fleet. The trawler sector has accumulated 70 per cent of the ITQs, and 1,000 small vessels that had formed part of the ITQ system were scrapped, and their quotas merged with those of the trawlers. NASBO was eventually able to negotiate a separate arrangement. Bogason said that small-scale fishers should be managed separately, to reflect their importance to coastal communities.

Christian Décugis of Saint-Raphaël Prud'hommie and CLPM du Var, France described the *Prud'hommes* system as a grouping of fishers who have traditionally managed their own fishing grounds through arrangements recognized by the government. By putting people at the centre of the system, the *Prud'hommes* remain robust.

Arjan Heinen of the Netherlands Inland Fishers Association pointed to well-organized recreational anglers exploiting the inshore eel fishery.

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Juan Manuel, Patron Mayor, Cofradia de Lira, Galicia, Spain, at the Brussels workshop on 'Common Fisheries Policy Reform in the European Union and Small-scale Fisheries'

## Statement from the Brussels Workshop on Common Fisheries Policy Reform in the European Union and Small-scale Fisheries: Paving the Way to Sustainable Livelihoods and Thriving Fishing Communities

**W**e, participants from seven countries<sup>1</sup>, representing diverse small-scale fishing interests, NGOs, scientists and others, meeting in Brussels on Monday, 28 September 2009 at the workshop on "Common Fisheries Policy Reform in the European Union and Small-scale Fisheries":

**Stating** our commitment to the sustainable use of fish stocks and of the wider aquatic and coastal environment;

**Emphasizing** that small-scale fisheries represent the overwhelming majority of fishing activities in all EU Member States; provide the most employment; are highly adaptable; lend themselves readily to integration into the diversity of regional particularities across Europe; and

**Declaring** that if given fair treatment and due recognition, our sector can be viable, sustainable and with a promising future;

**Call on** the DG Mare of the European Commission, on the European Parliament, on the Council of Ministers, on fishing industry representatives, on trade unions, on NGOs, on scientists, and on national and regional fisheries authorities to:

### Fair treatment and fair access to resources

1. Provide fishers and fishing communities dependent on small-scale, artisanal, inshore, inland, and small-scale fish and shell fish farming activities, fair treatment in the allocation of access rights to resources and support services, with access to information and to the decision-taking processes that affect their lives and livelihoods;
2. Ensure that marginalized groups, including small-island communities dependent on fishing, women in fishing communities and independently organized fishers and fish farmers, are not unfairly discriminated against in the allocation of access rights to resources, and that measures are applied to ensure that their views are taken account of in the policy decision-taking processes on fisheries;

### Apply definitions of small-scale fishing at the most appropriate level

3. Recognize and respect the nature, importance, potential and diversity of small-scale fisheries activities. Defining small-scale fisheries should be done and applied at the most appropriate level, be it regional, national or local. Such definitions should take account of regional particularities and geomorphology, technical aspects (fishing capacity), environmental aspects (selectivity, low discards, low seabed impact, low energy use, etc.), social aspects (decent work, high degree of benefit sharing, and links with local shore-based activities and local employment, and ownership and control of operations);

### Recognize and Valorize small-scale fisheries

4. Ensure that the reformed CFP recognizes and valorizes the contributions to social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability provided by many small-scale fishing activities;

5. Recognize and respect the role of women in fisheries, valorize the contributions they make to the fisheries sector and to the wider community, accord them their proper status as collaborating spouses, as economic actors, and recognize the importance of the social, cultural and economic activities they engage in;

### Secure small-scale fishing and fishing community rights

6. Define and defend the rights of small-scale fishers and their communities in accordance with Article 6.18 of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries<sup>2</sup> and in line with regional specificities and priorities, and incorporate these rights into law on a just basis with the rights of other resource users<sup>3</sup>;
7. Ensure that rights-based policies and rights-based approaches to the management of small-scale fisheries take account of the collective nature, and the livelihood, economic, social and cultural dimensions of their activities;
8. Avoid the use of rights-based fishery management tools that promote individual interests at the expense of collective interests, especially those that incorporate market-based allocation mechanisms. The logic of tools such as individual transferable quotas (ITQs) and the logic of artisanal fishing are not compatible;
9. Rectify past injustices arising through the perverse use of quota allocations at the national level based on fishing track records. Where possible and appropriate, replace such national-level individual track record-based quota systems with alternative community-based measures, specifically where the landings of the small-scale sector have not been fully documented;
10. Ensure that fishing policies, quota and other management systems, and fishing methods do not promote discards of biologically, nutritionally and economically important fish and other aquatic species, whilst reducing by-catch through improved gear selectivity;
11. Indemnify fishing communities and their livelihoods from the destructive impacts of pollution, including oil spills and spills of toxic chemicals into the aquatic environment;

### Apply a differentiated approach to small-scale fisheries

12. Apply a differentiated approach to sector-specific management and regulatory problems. The need for capacity reductions in one sector should not result in the losses of fishing opportunities, employment or other benefits in other more sustainable sectors;
13. Apply the principle of subsidiarity to the management of small-scale fisheries, where management systems incorporate, and are otherwise guided by, local knowledge, experience and proven good practice;
14. Valorize local fisheries, ecological and oceanographic knowledge, and promote collaboration and information

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sharing between fishers and scientists in the process of informing decision-taking processes in fisheries;

15. Based on existing good practices<sup>4</sup>, implement management plans, recovery plans and other regional and local management measures, such as for marine protected areas, in participation with local small-scale fishers, shellfish gatherers and their communities, ensuring that their access rights are protected. Such measures should be responsive to the demands of small-scale fishers, shell fishers and their communities, and should incorporate the monitoring of biological and sociological indicators in their design so that their social and biological effectiveness can be measured over time;
16. Support the establishment and effective functioning of co-management institutions with small-scale fishers and shellfish farmers, and provide the necessary training and support to enable such institutions to take on the necessary responsibilities and powers;
17. Support the derogation to the principle of equal access to a common resource by safeguarding the 12-mile zone (and other areas exploited by small-scale fisheries) for fishery activities that are small in scale, environmentally benign, socially equitable, and which provide important cultural and economic contributions to the local communities;

#### **Develop and apply appropriate measures for sustaining and diversifying livelihoods**

18. Provide access to subsidies and other support measures (credit, training, etc.) on a flexible basis to enable existing small-scale activities and operations to renew their vessels and equipment, and where appropriate, to switch to new technologies that are small in scale, and environmentally, socially and economically sustainable;
19. Take proper account of the inherent vulnerability and resilience of fishing communities in the reform process. Based on detailed impact assessment studies and baseline

community profiles, provide and promote real alternative activities and livelihood diversification schemes, based on local realities and capacities for change and adaptation to changing circumstances;

20. Pay particular attention to the role of women in fishing communities and ensure that alternative livelihood options do not increase their workload and otherwise add to the burdens placed on them; and
21. Given the significant interdependence that exists between community fisheries and maritime policies, (a) ensure that the new framework for integrated maritime policy (IMP) maintains and prioritizes the customary access rights of fishers to fishing areas and resources; and (b) strengthen the role of fishers in defining policies through this new governance framework towards assuring the quality of the marine environment and its biodiversity in coastal areas.

#### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> The 67 participants included small-scale fishing representatives, fishermen, fisherwomen, workers in the fishing sector, NGOs and researchers from Iceland, the Azores, Madeira, and mainland Portugal, Canary Islands, Galicia, Cantabria, Asturias, Basque Country, the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts of France, Ireland, England, Wales, and the Netherlands.

<sup>2</sup> "States should appropriately protect the rights of fishers and fishworkers, particularly those engaged in... small-scale and artisanal fisheries... to preferential access... to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters under national jurisdiction."

<sup>3</sup> Industrial fisheries and other extractive industries, industrial and intensive aquaculture, real estate, construction, production and other industries, tourism, and so on.

<sup>4</sup> Initiatives include the Prud'hommes de Pêche in the French Mediterranean, the marine reserves of Lira and Cedeira in North Spain, the Restinga Marine Reserve (El Hierro (Canary Islands), Mar de las Calmas, Spain), the Iroise National Park in West France, Bay of Biscay selective langoustine/nephrops trawl fishery, the Mid Channel Agreement between France, UK and Belgium, and the Inshore Potting Agreement in Devon.

They should be asked to pay a licence fee which would contribute towards the management of the fishery for all, he added.

Jerry Percy, Chief Executive, of the Welsh Federation of Fishermen's Associations said that the United Kingdom government took quotas back from small-scale fishers due to pressure from representatives of industrial fishers. He added that there is a need to promote environmentally sustainable and locally viable fisheries co-managed by the fishers and advised by decent science.

Paul Joy of the Hastings Fishermen Protection Society and Co-chairman of New Under Ten Fishermen's Association (NUTFA), said that quotas force fishermen to discard fish that they are not allowed to land.

Bastien Malgrange of Pêche et Développement, Lorient, Brittany, France, said that the good practices and positive initiatives of fishers should be highlighted to change the negative perception of them as predators.

He pointed to the example of a profitable clam fishery co-managed by IFREMER scientists and the local community, where the fishermen's

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Katia Frangoudes of AKTEA, the European Network of Women's Organizations in Fisheries and Aquaculture

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licence fees were used to fund patrol vessels.

Marie H el ene Aubert, former Member of the European Parliament, said that prior to the Lisbon Treaty, (an international agreement to change the working of the EU) the EU Parliament had no power over fisheries policy other than to give an opinion to the council of ministers, which could be easily ignored. She highlighted the difficulties that can arise from the various structures that member States have for managing their small-scale fisheries.

Katia Frangoudes of AKTEA, the European Network of Women's Organizations in Fisheries and Aquaculture, berated the EC for neglecting the presence of women in the fishing industry. Women do

not find mention in the Green Paper, which is a clear violation of the wording and spirit of the European Treaty (the Maastricht Treaty, formally the Treaty on European Union, which established the EU).

By sustaining communities, promoting cultural identity and maintaining networks among fishing communities, women form an integral part of the social structure of coastal and fishing communities, she stressed.

Jos e J. Pascual-Fernandez of the Department of Political Sciences, Universidad de La Laguna, said that diversification has been a feature of small-scale fisheries, and many fishers have also been farmers. In the Canary Islands, for instance, fishers have diversified into tourism-related activities. Encouraging such diversification is perhaps one way to reduce technological 'creep' in small-scale fisheries and avoid fishers opting for larger boats with more powerful engines.

Alyne Delaney of Innovative Fisheries Management, Aalborg University, said that a reduction in the numbers of boats will damage the

support infrastructure for the fishing industry and rural coastal communities. She questioned the need to see fisheries management in terms of either fish stocks or people, a biased perspective that is driven by the influence of fisheries biology.

As far as the CFP is concerned, small-scale fishers have until 31 December 2009 to submit their written proposals, comments and views on fishing policy reform.

For their part, the Brussels workshop participants have made an important contribution by drafting a 21-point Declaration (see box) that calls on the EC to:

- provide small-scale fishers with fair treatment and fair access to resources;
- define small-scale fishing at the most appropriate level;
- recognize and valorize small-scale fisheries;
- secure small-scale fishing and fishing community rights;
- apply a differentiated approach to small-scale fisheries; and
- develop and apply appropriate measures for sustaining and diversifying livelihoods. 3

#### For more



[eussf.icsf.net](http://eussf.icsf.net)

#### Small-scale Fisheries and EU CFP Reform

[ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform)

#### Reform of the CFP

[eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0163:FIN:EN:PDF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0163:FIN:EN:PDF)

#### Green Paper on the CFP Reform