



Council of Europe, Report on Fishery Policies

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Tekið af vef Borgarskjalasafnsins

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Einkaskjalasafn nr. 360
Stjórnmaálamaðurinn
Askja 2-36, Örk 1

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

8 May 1969

Doc. 2563

CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

REPORT

on fishery policies in Europe (1)

(Rapporteur: Mr. YVON)

I. DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

presented by the Committee on Agriculture (2)

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its interest in European fishery problems reflected in its Recommendation No. 198 (1959), and subsequent Resolutions No. 200 (1961) and No. 263 (1963);

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1. See Doc. 963, Doc. 1318 and Doc. 1660
 2. Unanimously adopted by the Committee on Agriculture on 2 May 1969.

Members of the Committee: MM. von Vittinghoff-Schell (Chairman), Kirk (Vice-Chairman, Alternate of Lord Hamilton); Akyürek, Clinton (Alternate: O'Connor), Dequac, Dindo, Elvinger, Geelkerken, Griffiths (Alternate: Brewis), Hauret, Mrs. Herklotz, MM. Hilbert, Johnson, Jönsson, Leitner, Lemaire (Alternate: Bourgoin), Oestergaard Kristen, Pace, Pecoraro (Alternate: Prearo), Salari, Sjönell, Undheim, Vontobel, Yvon.

N.B. The names of those who took part in the vote are underlined

Secretary of the Committee: Mr. Hornecker

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2. Reaffirming its support expressed in these texts for the endeavours undertaken by other international organisations to offer solutions to the problems facing European fisheries and to encourage expansion of trade in fishery products;
3. Noting with satisfaction that the enquiry on European fishery policies carried out by the Committee on Agriculture by means of a questionnaire addressed to member governments had met with full and informative replies;
4. Thanking member governments for their valuable co-operation in this matter;
5. Noting that the present report by the Committee, on the basis of the replies received to its questionnaire, deals mainly with social aspects of the fishing industry, and that a more general report on fishery policies in Europe will follow in due course;
6. Deploring the depletion of certain fish stocks recorded by FAO, ICES (1), ICNAF (2) and NEAFC (3) in their scientific investigations, and the consequent threat to the future of the fishing industry in Europe;
7. Having regard to the conclusions reached by FAO that this depletion is due largely to insufficient scientific knowledge of techniques of finding and catching fish prevalent among a large number of European fishermen, leading to wasteful over-fishing, particularly of young fish;
8. Noting that improved training facilities for fishermen would not only benefit the future of European fisheries, but facilitate the implementation of FAO development projects at present impeded through lack of available fishing technologists as well as facilities for training students from less-developed countries themselves;
9. Deploring the indiscriminate fishing practices and disregard of regulations laid down in international conventions and recommendations with regard both to fishing techniques and their application, and to the delimitation of fishing grounds, particularly in coastal waters where certain areas are reserved as fish breeding grounds;
10. Having regard to the exceptional conditions endured by fishermen in the exercise of their profession, which, on average, are far more exacting than working conditions obtaining in shore-based industries;

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- (1) International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
 - (2) International Commission for the North-West Atlantic Fisheries
 - (3) North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

11. Noting with satisfaction the special provisions made by certain governments in the form of preferential pension schemes and guaranteed minimum wages, to compensate for these conditions;

12. Stressing its concern at the high accident rate recorded in the fishing industry, and welcoming the "Draft Code of Safety for fishermen and fishing vessels" devised by ILO, FAO and IMCO;

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite member governments:

- (i) to improve facilities for vocational training for fishermen and encourage scientific research, in order to prevent wasteful fishing on the part of European fishing fleets;
- (ii) in so doing, to bear in mind the needs of the developing countries for training facilities in Europe on the one hand, and the necessity for a sufficient number of European fishing technologists to implement development projects (e.g. through FAO) in those countries, on the other;
- (iii) to enforce respect of existing international conventions regulating fishing practices and fishing grounds, and, if need be, to complement these conventions by stricter regulations;
- (iv) to provide compensation for the exceptional nature of working conditions in the fishing profession in the form of
 - (a) a sufficient guaranteed minimum wage in cases where this system of payment is applied;
 - (b) a stand-by emergency intervention for fishermen working under the share system;
 - (c) special pension schemes permitting retirement at an earlier age than that at which pension rights are normally acquired;
- (v) to ensure widespread and effective application of the "Code of Safety for fishermen and fishing vessels" drafted by ILO, FAO and IMCO as a minimum requirement for European fishing fleets.

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II. EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

by Mr. Yvon

A. Introduction

1. Over the past ten years the Committee on Agriculture has been responsible for three reports on European fisheries. The first, presented to the Assembly in 1959 by Mr. De Kinder, expressed support for the work of OEEC in this sector, and recommended certain lines to be followed in its future activities. These recommendations prompted a detailed and positive reply to the Assembly by this organisation in the following year.

2. A subsequent report by Miss Thorsteinsdottir in 1961 reviewed the developments in production marketing and consumption of fishery products as well as the precarious position of major fish exporting countries, and drew up a list of general targets to be attained within the fishing industries of Europe.

3. In 1963 the Assembly reaffirmed its support for initiatives to promote a better co-ordination of European fisheries policies by endorsing a report presented by Mr. Yvon, which conveyed the Committee's explicit approval of the steps taken by the Government of the United Kingdom to organise in that same year a conference of Western European countries on a number of common fishery problems.

4. Later, in 1966, a Sub-Committee on Fisheries of the Committee on Agriculture was created to follow closely major developments in the fishing industries of Europe. In order to accomplish this mission, the Sub-Committee decided to undertake a survey of European fishery policies, and devised a questionnaire, designed to determine general trends in production, marketing and consumption, and above all, to gather more specific information on social aspects of the fishing industry. The reference years of this questionnaire, which was sent in March 1968 to governments of Council of Europe member states, were 1966 and 1967.

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5. Thanks to the full and detailed replies received, it has been possible to compile the following report which lays particular emphasis on social aspects of the fishing industry, a subject which has so far received little attention from the international organisations concerned with fishery problems. A second report on fishery policies in general will be presented in the near future.

6. Brief reference is made in Section I of the present report to the technical and economic work being done in this field by FAO, OECD and EFTA. A short account is also given of the steps being taken by EEC towards a common fisheries policy, which constitutes the most important single development in European fisheries of the present time. It is the intention of the Committee to make this latter development a major item of discussion in its next report (see above).

7. An attempt is then made to indicate the most significant developments in recent catch and trade figures for fishery products, on the basis of replies to the questionnaire, complemented where necessary by statistics provided by FAO and OECD. The aim of this section is to assess the relative importance of the fishing industry in the various European countries.

8. The third and most important part of this document deals with specific social aspects of the fishing industry, on which little work has so far been done. In conclusion, a number of problems are enumerated to which the attention of member governments could usefully be drawn.

B. Activities of international organisations
in the fisheries sector

(1) United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

9. The activities of FAO in the field of fisheries have been intensified in recent years as a result of a sharpened interest in fishery problems manifested by a number of its member countries. This increased interest has emerged with the growth of the fishing industry, hastened by the prospect of world famine, on the one hand, and with the fear of the consequences of over-fishing on the other.

10. In general, FAO has a two-fold objective. First, it seeks to promote scientific research and investigation in areas of vital importance for the future of fishing in Europe and throughout the world. These areas of study include marine and fresh-water pollution, assessment of fish stocks, fish culture and disease, combined biological and economic studies on management of marine resources, etc.

11. Secondly, it endeavours to promote a number of development projects in selected areas. Unfortunately its activities in this direction are severely limited through lack of training opportunities in Europe in fishing technology. Not only does this deficiency impede the training of students from the developing countries themselves, but it also has grave implications for the future of European fishing industries. Indeed, a lack of basic scientific knowledge of the techniques of finding and catching fish is leading to dangerous over-fishing by European fishing fleets.

12. The implementation of development projects is further impeded by a lack of "exportable surplus" of fishery experts and contract facilities in European countries, without which chances of success are seriously compromised.

13. Finally, mention should be made of FAO's policy of close co-operation with other international organisations concerned with fishery problems, especially those of the UN family (ECE, IAEA and WHO). In addition, FAO lends technical assistance

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to specialist agencies such as the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organisation (IMCO) and the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC). With special reference to mediterranean fisheries, FAO set up, under its own auspices, the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean (GFCM); it also collaborates with the International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean (ICSEM). In this way, and by means of bibliographic services and publication of statistics, FAO is making a valuable contribution to international co-operation and exchange of information on fishery problems.

(2) The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

14. This intergovernmental organisation, established in 1902, counts among its 17 members eleven Council of Europe member states. Its main objective is to encourage all research connected with exploration of the sea and to co-ordinate the activities of the participating governments. To achieve this objective, it maintains close co-operation with a number of international organisations, in particular with FAO, the International Commission for North-West Atlantic Fisheries, and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, and makes joint publication of statistics, biological reviews, reports of meetings and research projects on various species of fish, fishing practices, etc. It thus provides valuable statistical and publication services from which much useful guidance may be obtained, especially as regards fish stocks and their exploitation.

(3) North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)

15. Established in 1959, this Commission seeks to conserve fish stocks and ensure rational exploitation of the north-east atlantic fisheries. Together with FAO and ICES, it effects a number of specific scientific studies and compiles reports and statistics for use by its 14 member governments.

(4) International Commission for the North-West Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF)

16. The principle objectives of this Commission, established in 1950 and composed of 13 member governments, consist in investigating, protecting and conserving the fisheries of the north-west Atlantic Ocean, in order to make possible the

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the maintenance of a maximum sustained catch from those fisheries. In close co-operation with FAO and ICES, it effects research work, compiles and analyses results, collects and publishes fisheries statistics and makes proposals for regulating the fisheries.

(5) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

17. Reference to the main publications of OECD in the past decade indicates the principal studies carried out by this organisation in the fisheries sector. Based on the method of confrontation, similar to that employed with regard to agricultural policies, OECD published in 1960 a study entitled "Fishery policies in Western Europe and North America" which dealt with the period up to 1957-58.

18. More specific aspects of fishery policies were examined in the following years: "Financial support to the fishing industry" in 1965 and "Price systems in the fishing industries" in 1966.

19. A new general policy confrontation has recently been effected and the results are to be published shortly. Besides providing a review of the changes in the fishing industries between 1957 and 1966, this latest study of national fisheries policies deals with production and markets; and also makes a comparison of fisheries with other sectors. Under the first heading (production), a general review is made of fishing fleets, catches, and national policies and financial aid. Under the heading "markets", such items as price systems, consumption, supply and demand, and international trade are analysed. The main interest of this study lies in the fact that it concentrates on the changes which occurred after 1957-58, a time when profound reappraisal was called for in fishing industries generally.

20. Mention should also be made of the 1967 "Review of fisheries in OECD member countries", giving individual accounts of prevailing situations in each country, with particular reference to production, marketing and to government action. A similar review for 1968 is to be published in the near future.

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21. The organisation's future projects also include a study of the problem of government aid to the fishing industry, which varies considerably from one country to another. This study is intended to follow up the 1965 report mentioned above, and will aim to offer solutions which will take account of both economic and human factors.

(6) European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

22. In the terms of the association's Convention, the objective pursued by EFTA with regard to trade in fish and other marine products is "to facilitate an expansion of trade in fish and other marine products which will provide reasonable reciprocity to member states whose economies depend to a great extent on exports of those products." As in the agricultural sector, this goal is to be achieved "having regard to the national policies of member states and the special conditions prevailing in the fishing industry." (1)

23. By virtue of special provisions, fish in fresh, chilled, frozen, salted, dried or smoked form, as well as crustaceans and molluscs - listed in Annex E to the Convention - are excluded from most of the other provisions of the Convention. At the same time, a number of fishery products such as fish in processed or semi-processed form do not appear or have been deleted from the Annex E list and are therefore subject to the general rules laid down by the Convention, i.e. to "free trade area treatment".

24. An examination of the arrangements relating to trade in fishery products was started in 1961 but subsequently suspended because of the broader negotiations on the enlargement of the European Economic Community. After the breakdown of these negotiations in 1963, the special Western European Fisheries Conference, convened in London in late 1963 - early 1964 (see Introduction), offered another opportunity of approaching the problems of the fisheries sector on a wider European basis. Although this Conference adopted a series of resolutions on fishery policies, conservation of fish stocks, etc., the overall outcome did not meet with the expectations of many countries.

(1) EFTA Convention, Article 27.

25. It was not before the end of 1966 that the EFTA Council decided to set up its own working party for the purpose of exploring the possibilities of liberalising EFTA trade in the fishery products listed in Annex E to the Convention. The results have so far been negative, due mainly to the fact that without an overall harmonisation of fishery policies (subsidies, landing rights, etc.), a mere relaxation of trade restrictions would only be likely to create problems in other fields.

26. Nevertheless, in July 1968, the EFTA Council decided to carry out a general review of the relevant provisions of the Convention and of the possibilities of freer trade in the fishing products concerned. The possibility of an agreement therefore remains open.

(7) European Economic Community

27. Quite apart from the technical and economic work of FAO and OECD in the fisheries sector, the elaboration of a common fisheries policy within the European Economic Community represents a development of major importance, likely to have far-reaching effects on fishing industries both within and outside the Community over the coming years. Proposals for regulations have been presented by the Commission of the European Communities to the Council of Ministers, who are expected to reach a decision before 1 January 1970.

28. These proposals, covering the essential aspects of the fishing industry, are all directed towards a common goal, that of achieving a fundamental improvement in the structure of the fishing industry and ensuring its harmonious and balanced development within the general economic activity.

29. The common structural and production policy to be followed will entail the co-ordination of national structural policies and the elimination of discriminating measures with regard to access to in-shore fishing grounds hitherto reserved for the citizens of each member state, to fishing harbours and to facilities for landing and selling catches. It will also require a uniform approach to problems of fishing limits and rights on the open sea, and the conservation or improvement of marine resources.

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30. In addition, producers' associations will be developed and their effectiveness increased through co-ordination of their general operational principles within a rational framework. National arrangements liable to distort competition on the unified market will be harmonised. Finally, provision is made for the improvement of occupational training.

31. A single market for fishery products will be established through the integration of national markets. In addition, measures will be taken to ensure a balance of supply and demand (by means of restriction of landings, if need be) and to stabilise prices at a level corresponding to the justified claims of persons employed in the fisheries sector. Current distortions in conditions of competition due, for example, to divergent national promotional measures will be eliminated.

32. Similar arrangements to those already defined by the Council in the fruit and vegetables sector will be applied with regard to quality standards to ensure free circulation of all products and development consumption.

33. Likewise, guide prices, especially for basic products (including cod, herring and sardine) will be fixed and Community intervention will take place at the level of the stipulated minimum intervention price. Such intervention, at the cost of the Community, will be accompanied by measures to control landings so as to prevent large quantities of produce being placed on markets which are already saturated.

34. In its provisions for trade with non-member countries the regulations propose the application of the common customs tariff and the removal of all quantitative restrictions, except in cases implying risks of market disturbances within the Community countries.

35. As regards social policy, specific measures are proposed to cover stability of employment, working and living conditions at sea, and social assistance and welfare.

C. Recent trends in European fisheries

(1) General background

36. Total world catch of fish has increased steadily since the second world war. With about 21 million tons it regained the pre-war level in 1950, reached 40 million tons in 1960 and about 60 million tons in 1967 (latest figure available). Between 1950 and 1967, Europe's share in the total catch fell from 29.3% to 19.5% (1), reflecting the successful fishing efforts by a number of developing countries, in particular in South America. (2)

37. Significant developments are to be noted also as regards the disposal of the catch. Between 1950 and 1967 the quantity of fish destined to industrial use (reduction) increased about ten fold. Thus, in 1967, more than one-third of the total catch was used for these purposes, as compared to about 10% in 1950. During the same period, the fresh fish market doubled, the quantity of frozen fish increased almost seven fold, cured fish increased by 46% and canned fish by about 160%.

38. Moreover, since 1950 international trade (by quantity) in fishery commodities has increased faster than the volume of the catch. In 1967 about 42% of the catch volume entered international trade (figure for 152 countries accounting for nearly 90% of the world catch).

39. Although the share of Europe in the total world catch has fallen, the absolute catch figures - except for a stagnation between 1957 and 1960 - show a steadily increasing trend. In fact, the European catch increased from 6.2 million tons in 1950 to 8.1 million tons in 1960, and further to 11.8 million tons in 1967, i.e. by 90% between 1950 and 1967. Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Iceland, France and Germany account for the bulk of the European catch. Their catches in 1967 ranged from well above 3 million tons (Norway) to nearly 0.7 million tons (Germany).

(1) Figures excluding the USSR.

(2) See Table I, page 15.

40. However, the relation between volume and value of the catch (1) varies greatly from country to country according to principal species landed. France, for example, which ranks fifth in decreasing order of catch volumes (0.7 million tons) appears to be first as regards catch value (\$ 265 million), whereas Norway, first in volume with 3 million tons, ranks third (\$ 160 million) among the Western European countries listed according to catch value. Differences in composition by species of the landings (e.g. the high proportion of molluscs in catches by the French fishing fleet) account largely for these discrepancies.

41. The utilisation of the catch also varies greatly from one country to another. As mentioned earlier, an increasing percentage of the world fish catch is being used for industrial purposes (reduction). The same applies to the Western European countries - in particular to the major net exporting countries. Thus, in 1967, 76% of the Norwegian, 67% of the Danish and 53% of the Icelandic catch were used for industrial purposes. At the same time, the proportion of the catch absorbed by the fresh fish market varied from 55% to 80%. In the Netherlands it amounted to 56%, in Ireland to 62%, in the United Kingdom to 69%, in Belgium to 70% and in Italy to 79%. (2). (Approximately 50% of the German catch is used, in roughly equal proportions, for freezing and canning).

42. Between 1958 and 1967, the value of imports and exports of fishery products of Western European countries increased rapidly, more rapidly in fact than the volume of catches. During this time total imports increased by about 100%, and total exports by 50%. In the main, imports by the net importing countries (France, Germany, Italy, etc.) showed a higher increase (except in the United Kingdom) than exports by the net exporting countries within the region, with the exception of Denmark and the Netherlands. (3)

43. It should be added, in conclusion, that the various facts and figures given in this brief description are only intended to give an overall view of the economic problems facing a small fraction of the total active population in our member countries. As related to their national economies, fishing plays a major role only for the smaller countries, Iceland being in a particular position in this respect.

(1) See Table II, page 16.

(2) Countries listed for which figures are available.

(3) See Table III, page 17.

44. Similarly, the proportion of the active fishing population as related to the total active population is more important in the smaller countries, ranging from 1% in Denmark to 3% in Norway and 6% in Iceland. Furthermore, Greece and Turkey have a comparatively important fishing population, accounting for about 1% and 1.4% respectively of their total active population.

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Table I

Development of world catch and its distribution
(million metric tons (live-weight) and percentages)

	<u>1938</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1967</u>
Total world catch million metric tons live-weight	21.0	21.1	40.0	60.5
<u>Percentage</u> distribution:				
<u>For human consumption</u>	<u>87.1</u>	<u>85.8</u>	<u>78.5</u>	<u>64.8</u>
Marketing fresh	52.9	45.0	41.8	30.9
Freezing	5.2	8.8	12.1
Curing	27.1	26.1	18.7	13.2
Canning	7.1	9.5	9.2	8.6
<u>Other purposes</u>	<u>12.9</u>	<u>14.2</u>	<u>21.5</u>	<u>35.2</u>
Reduction	8.1	9.5	19.0	33.6
Miscellaneous	4.8	4.7	2.5	1.6
<u>Per cent of world catch</u>				
Europe (except USSR)	27.0	29.3	20.2	19.5

Table IITotal catches by countries, 1967

	<u>Volume</u>	<u>Value</u>
	Thousand metric tons landed weight	million £
Belgium	56.7	16.8
Denmark	1,049.7	91.3
Faroe Islands	106.9
France	658.7	265.4
Fed. Rep. of Germany	495.9	92.8
Greece (1966)	124.9
Iceland	836.3
Ireland (1)	48.9	8.3
Italy	329.7	166.6
Netherlands (2)	273.3	61.9
Norway	3,010.5	161.5
Sweden	330.4	44.1
United Kingdom (3)	928.6	174.7
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Total above	8,250.5	(1,083.4)

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- (1) Including catch landed by foreign craft in Irish ports.
- (2) Excluding catch landed by Dutch craft in foreign ports, including catch landed by foreign craft in Dutch ports.
- (3) Excluding catch landed by British craft in foreign ports and excluding catch landed by foreign craft in British ports.

Source: FAO

Table III

Trade in fishing products (million US \$)
(including oils, fats and meals of aquatic
animal origin)

	<u>Imports</u>		<u>Exports</u>	
	<u>1958</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1967</u>
Austria	9.8	21.3	0.2	0.4
BIEU	34.6	64.9	6.1	13.0
Denmark	13.0	35.1	54.4	122.9
Faeroe Islands	-	...	13.3	22.6
France	53.2	150.1	16.7	26.8
Fed. Rep. of Germany	81.6	178.3	18.5	41.1
Greece	8.0	14.7	0.4	1.5
Iceland	-	-	60.5	86.3
Ireland	2.5	5.9	3.9	6.3
Italy	55.7	119.6	1.6	4.5
Malta	0.8	1.1	-	-
Netherlands	34.0	67.0	35.4	75.2
Norway	5.4	10.8	148.6	240.4
Sweden	29.0	66.3	14.0	24.4
Switzerland	11.9	31.9	0.4	0.7
United Kingdom	188.5	290.1	19.6	29.8
	5,280.0	(1,057.1)	393.6	685.9

Source: FAO

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(2) Structure of the fishing fleets

45. It is interesting to note that, of the countries listed in Table IV below, Denmark, Ireland and Norway have comparatively large numbers of smaller crafts, whereas total tonnage of boats above 50 tons account for only 15%, 18% and 42% of their respective fleets. In contrast, this category accounts for 71% of the French fishing fleet, 82% of the Belgian and Dutch fleets, 85% of the British fleet and 90% of the German and Icelandic fleets.

46. The distribution of tonnage within the fishing fleets is of particular significance when considering the question of fishermen's wages (see subsequent chapter). Most of the smaller craft are skipper-owned, often family affairs, and the proceeds from the catch are divided fairly equally among the crew. The larger vessels, on the other hand, engaged in middle and distant-water fishing, are usually owned by companies, the crews being paid for the most part on the basis of a minimum wage.

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47. Aware of the need for closer examination of the policy implications of the information contained in Sections B and C of the present report, your Rapporteur wishes to recall the intention of the Committee to deal more fully with general policy issues in a forthcoming report to the Assembly. Reference to the aims of the Committee in this connection is made in Section A, "Introduction".

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Table IV

Country		Tonnage classes (CRT) 1965							Total
		0-25	26-50	51-150	151-500	501-900	901-1,800	1,801-3,000	
Belgium	I	82	100	170	26	4	1	-	383
	II	1,552	3,878	14,901	5,570	2,517	1,398	-	29,816
Denmark	I	7,011	963	165	2	-	-	-	8,141
	II	45,149	36,257	14,223	336	-	-	-	95,965
Fed. Rep. of Germany	I	2,444	35	190	63	108	39	8	2,887
	II	16,943	1,488	19,657	17,591	69,920	43,274	18,951	187,824
France (a)	I	12,038	848	396	486	27	26	2	13,823
	II	49,665	31,197	33,830	107,583	16,779	36,443	5,293	280,790
Iceland	I	327	117	266	105	36	3	-	854
	II	3,383	4,335	21,257	23,457	24,599	2,956	-	80,442
Ireland	I	411	150	26	-	-	-	-	587
	II	2,940	4,721	1,709	-	-	-	-	9,370
Netherlands	I	79	307	282	126	8	-	-	802
	II	1,532	12,781	25,813	33,156	4,589	-	-	77,871
Norway	I	36,988	1,215	643	299	19	3	-	39,167
	II	157,012	46,190	58,852	77,977	11,690	3,060	-	354,781
United Kingdom	I	6,745	607	230	348	173	9	3	8,115
	II	21,176	24,052	19,304	97,377	118,572	12,281	8,319	301,081

N.B. I - Number of vessels
 II - Total gross tonnage

(a) 1964 figures

D. Social aspects of the fishing industry

(1) Labour force

48. Recent developments within the labour force of the catching fleets are generally characterised by a decline in numbers, accompanied by a tendency towards an older average age among fishermen which is causing concern in a large number of countries. In Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and in France, respective drops of 41%, 29%, 20% and 15% were recorded over the period 1956-66, and these are only a few examples.

49. It should be noted, however, that parallel with this trend there was an overall increase in per capital production. An outstanding example is to be found in statistics for the Swedish fishing fleets. Here, a drop from 18,091 fishermen in 1956 to a mere 13,173 in 1966 (27% decline), was accompanied by an increase in production over the same period from 197.4 to 318.4 thousand tons (62% rise).

50. The reasons for the decline in numbers of fishermen can be ascribed to two main causes. Firstly, modernisation of the fishing fleets, new fishing techniques and greater efficiency have called for structural changes in the fleets. These changes have often resulted in a reduction in the actual number of vessels, or replacement by more modern boats requiring smaller crews. Such measures inevitably gave rise to a degree of redundancy.

51. In Sweden, for example, the number of decked vessels with motors was cut from 3,301 in 1956 to 2,337 in 1966. Similarly, large steam trawlers and coastal vessels in the Belgian fleet have been substantially reduced in number over recent years. Comparable reductions have been made in the number of herring drifters operating in the fishing fleet of the Netherlands.

52. The second major cause lies in the difficulty of recruitment. In addition to the unstable prospect offered by the fishing industry described in a preceding paragraph the hard and irregular working conditions, the dangerous

nature of the profession and prolonged absence from home and family have contributed to a general reluctance to enter the fishing industry manifested by young men seeking employment. This reluctance has been accentuated by discouragement on the part of wives or mothers, indirectly concerned by the demanding conditions which go to make up a fisherman's life. As a result, prospective fishermen have been opting in ever increasing numbers for the more attractive working conditions offered by shore industries.

53. Measures taken by governments to stabilise the situation vary from one country to another, according to the actual labour force requirements within their fishing fleets as well as to the need of maintaining the level of population of remote coastal agglomerations. In some cases recruitment needs of the merchant navy may prompt government action with regard to the labour force of the fishing fleet.

54. In Belgium and in Ireland, energetic recruitment campaigns are implemented in the form of vocational training schemes, designed to prepare suitable new entrants as fishermen and to train a number of selected fishermen as future skippers. As an additional measure the Belgian Government offers premiums of 50 Belgian francs per day of voyage to boys between 15 and 18 years and 25 Belgian francs to the vessel-owner.

55. Some efforts to improve the social and working conditions of fishermen as well as their educational level are also deployed by the Governments of the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom, though much remains to be done in this field.

56. It should be noted in this context that representatives of FAO have expressed concern on several occasions at the lack of sufficient training facilities within the advanced European countries. This deficiency has serious consequences not only for recruitment, but above all, for the future of fishing itself. It has been stressed that a lack of basic scientific knowledge among fishermen is leading to much wasteful fishing and harmful depletion of vital fish stocks.

57. Awareness of these implications is growing in certain countries and has prompted certain measures on the part of the French Government in particular. Not only have specialist colleges been created to train both merchant seamen and fishermen, but specific precautions have been taken to safeguard fish stocks in certain delimited coastal waters.

58. In the majority of cases, however, there is little evidence of awareness of the danger of the present situation, even less of positive precautionary measures to protect the future of the fishing industry.

(2) Wages

59. No precise idea can be formed of average wages per hour, week or month earned by fishermen in Europe in view of the various systems by which they are paid.

60. In a large number of cases, fishermen receive a percentage of the value of the catch. This percentage, which varies according to the number of participating fishermen and the fishing technique employed, is paid after each voyage, any deficit being carried over and deducted from the total to be shared after the subsequent trip.

61. Taking as an example a Danish deep-sea fishing vessel with a master and crew of two, 28 to 30% of the gross value of the catch is allotted to the crew, 15 to 16% to the master and the remaining 54 to 57% is set aside for operating costs and interest on invested capital.

62. The share system is particularly appropriate in cases such as Ireland, where the fishing fleet is composed largely of small family-owned vessels. It is also widely applied in Norway, where the government guarantees a stand-by subsidy in cases of emergency.

63. On the other hand, many fishermen are paid on the basis of a guaranteed minimum wage to which may be added a share of the profits. This system of payment is practised widely in France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and elsewhere, often alongside the percentage system. In France and in the Netherlands, however, statistics indicate that over the year the minimum wage system is less remunerative. In 1966 which was a good year for the fishing industry, a Dutch deckhand working on wage conditions earned between Dfl. 15,000 and Dfl. 20,000, compared to Dfl. 17,000 to Dfl. 30,000 earned under the share system.

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64. Besides actual earnings fishermen may receive a certain amount of payment in kind. Thus French fishermen engaged in inshore and middle-water fishing are entitled to 2 kilos of fish for each day at sea, or the cash equivalent; salt-cod fishermen receive a 90-kilo cask of salt-cod or its value in money at the end of each voyage. Certain fishermen are also entitled, in the same way as merchant seamen, to a food allowance, usually substituted by an agreed daily cash equivalent.

65. Owing to the lack of precise information on fishermen's earnings, comparisons with average incomes in other occupations can only be approximate. Certain general trends are, however, apparent, which are worthy of note.

66. Only in Belgium and in Iceland are fishermen's incomes appreciably higher than those earned in other occupations. In 1965, for example, the average Belgian fisherman's income was estimated at 138,500 Belgian francs net, representing 20% more than that of the average worker earning 126,000 Belgian francs for 49 weeks of 45 working hours.

67. On the whole fishermen's wages compare reasonably well with those earned in other professions. Thus fishermen in Ireland, Norway and in the United Kingdom earn on average roughly the same as their industrial counterparts, and a little more than farm operators. Qualified deckhands in the United Kingdom, for example, receive a minimum wage of £20.6.10 1/2 per week, compared to £21.17.6 average weekly earnings in manufacturing industries. Since this is a minimum wage, actual average earnings are somewhat higher.

68. In comparisons of this kind, account must be taken of the conditions of work in the fishing industry which are far more arduous than those normally endured in other occupations.

(3) Pensions

69. In spite of the dangerous and exacting nature of their work, no special state coverage against accident or invalidity, nor advantageous pension conditions are provided for fishermen in the majority of countries. In Belgium, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom, they are covered by national pension schemes from which they may benefit in the same way as any other category of workers.

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70. Exceptions to this general rule are to be found in a number of countries, notably in France where special coverage is afforded to fishermen and their families against accident and invalidity. In addition, all fishermen classed as seamen may retire at the ages of 50 and 55. This represents an appreciable advantage over workers in other sectors who become pensionable only at the ages of 60 and 65, and is designed to compensate for the particularly hard conditions endured at sea.

71. The only other country in which fishermen enjoy pension rights earlier than the rest of the population is Norway, where a special scheme provides a pension between the ages of 65 and 70, when they acquire the basic pension under the national pension scheme. Families of fishermen also benefit from special insurance coverage.

72. Additional coverage mainly designed for deep-sea fishermen, most vulnerable to accident, is provided through special insurance schemes in Iceland, Italy and in the Netherlands. As previously indicated, however, such special provisions are the exception rather than the rule.

(4) Security

73. Despite efforts to improve the security and safety of working conditions for fishermen, statistical evidence suggests that fishing continues to be one of the most dangerous occupations, with a higher mortality rate than among the majority of shore-based industries. Even in Norway, where comparatively strict control is enforced to ensure that no ship leaves port without being properly equipped and fully seaworthy, an average of 0.56 per thousand fishermen died annually between 1955 and 1960 (mainly by drowning), as compared to 0.27 per thousand industrial workers.

74. Elsewhere the rate is appreciably higher. In the Federal Republic of Germany 2.92 per thousand deaths occurred in 1965. This rate dropped to 1.85 per thousand in the following year, but remained twice as high as the corresponding rate in commercial navigation.

75. This is due not only to the peculiar nature of the working conditions prevailing in the fishing industry, which involve the handling and manipulation of powerful machinery and complex and heavy fishing gear on rolling and pitching vessels, but also

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to the irregular hours of work during fishing operations and the inherent danger of work at sea. In addition, the growing mechanisation and modernisation of the fishing fleets have contributed to increasing the range of occupational hazards of fishing and resulted in a tendency to fish further afield in rougher waters in order to obtain remunerative catches.

76. In an attempt to offset these dangers, a substantial body of regulations have now been introduced in most European countries.

77. In France and in Iceland, statutory provisions are based on various relevant provisions of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea of 1960, from which fishing vessels are expressly excluded.

78. Other countries, including Belgium, the Netherlands, Malta and Ireland apply special regulations valid only for fishing vessels.

79. A full-scale enquiry has been undertaken in the United Kingdom on the problem of fishermen's security at sea following the tragic loss in 1968 of three vessels. Strict regulations are to be introduced on the basis of the findings of the committee of enquiry.

80. In the case of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Professional Maritime Association, in conjunction with Lloyds are responsible for the construction and condition of sea-going vessels.

81. In other instances, particularly in Scandinavia, the provision of adequate life-saving appliances and lifeboats on fishing vessels before they leave port is ensured by ships' inspectors.

82. In Italy, on the other hand, there are no regulations governing safety on board fishing vessels.

83. Even in cases where national rules and regulations are by comparison most comprehensive and detailed, they are frequently incomplete in the sense that they do not cover the entire range of major risks involved, and in some cases are drafted in extremely summary form as compared to the rules and regulations applicable to shore industries. Finally, the solutions which have been sought in the various countries for dealing with the risk problems often vary a great deal, and few national safety rules and regulations, if any, are identical.

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84. Although uniformity is not in itself necessarily desirable, it is clear that all of the countries concerned could benefit from a closer comparison of occupation safety rules relating to fishing vessels.

85. Since 1962 the International Labour Office, together with FAO and IMCO have been making a thorough study of the question of safety on board fishing vessels, and have established a "Draft Code of Safety for fishermen and fishing vessels" designed to deal with the navigational, operational and occupational aspects of safety of fishing vessels. A widespread application of this Code could undoubtedly serve to improve the present situation, although the final solution to the problem lies in appropriate legislative measures on the part of governments, possibly along similar lines to those laid down by the 1960 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea.

(5) Trade Unions

86. Trade unionism among fishermen varies considerably from one country to another both in form and in extent.

87. In countries such as Ireland, Malta and Denmark, where almost all boats are skipper-owned and crews remunerated on a share basis, trade unionism among fishermen is practically non-existent. In the case of Denmark, however, nearly all fishermen belong either to the Danish Fisheries Organisation or to the Danish Deep-Sea Fisheries Association, two professional organisations which attend jointly to the interests of fishermen vis-à-vis the public authorities.

88. Where fishermen's trade unions do exist, they are often affiliated to larger trade unions. Examples are to be found in Belgium, where the majority of fishermen are trade union members and in the Federal Republic of Germany. Here approximately 80% of fishermen in the deep-sea and herring industries belong to specialised sections of the German Employees (patent-holders only) and of the Union for Public Services, Transport and Traffic (all grades).

89. Similarly, in the United Kingdom the majority of deckhands of the deep-sea trawlers belong to the Transport and General Workers' Union, the largest of the general unions.

90. In France, officers, petty officers and deckhands may belong to a number of federations affiliated to CFTC, CGT or FO, the principal trade unions.

91. Separate trade unions, comparable in every way to other national trade unions, exist in a number of countries including Italy, Greece, Turkey and Iceland. The most notable example is to be found in Norway, where approximately 30,000 fishermen belong to the Norwegian Fishermen's Union and approximately 6,500 to the Norwegian Sailors' Union, representing nearly 100% of the full-time fishermen and 70-75% of all fishermen. It should be noted that this union includes both working fishermen and owners of fishing vessels.

92. In spite of a high percentage of nominal membership however, the nature of their profession, entailing frequent and prolonged absence from home, detracts considerably from the effectiveness of trade union movements among fishermen. It is therefore essential that their interest be safeguarded by appropriate state legislation.

E. Conclusions

(1) Future of the fishing industry

(a) Vocational training

93. FAO, which has carried out extensive research into the distribution and state of fish stocks, ascribes the cause of their alleged depletion to a lack of scientific knowledge of the techniques of finding and catching fish prevalent among a large number of European fishermen. As a result, there is a tendency to compensate in quantity what catches might sometimes lack in quality, often to the detriment of existing stocks.

94. To protect the future of the fishing industry in Europe, it is therefore essential that all fishermen, not only a privileged few, receive improved vocational training for which the appropriate facilities should be provided.

95. On a wider scale, these new opportunities for training would facilitate the implementation of FAO development projects in less-developed areas. At present its activities in this connection are severely limited through insufficient availability of European fishery experts to take a leading part in such projects, and through lack of training facilities for students from the developing countries themselves. In view of the growing food demand caused by the "population explosion" on the one hand, and of the potential protein resources of the sea on the other, it is vital that solutions be found rapidly to problems such as these.

(b) Regulation of fishing practices

96. Besides improved vocational training, there is urgent need for strict regulation of fishing practices in order to protect fish stocks and thus the future of European fisheries, possibly in the form of enforcement of existing, or the establishment of complementary international conventions, open for signature to all countries concerned. In rough outline, the regulations should cover:

- fishing techniques and their application (prohibition of use of trawler nets in certain areas, specification of permitted meshes, etc.);
- protection of certain grounds to allow the vital replenishment of fish stocks (strict application of scientifically established delimitations of areas reserved for breeding, respect of coastal waters, etc.).

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97. To ensure maximum effectiveness of these regulations, agreement should be reached on the policing of these waters. Any infringements should be severely penalised.

(2) Fishermen's wages and pension rights

98. In view of the particularly hard conditions endured by fishermen in the course of their work, which, on average, are far more arduous than those in shore-based industries, some compensation should be provided in the form of:

- a sufficient guaranteed minimum wage in cases where this system of payment is applied, and the establishment of provisions ensuring an appropriate minimum income to those fishermen working under the share system;
- special pension schemes permitting retirement at an earlier age than that at which a pension is normally acquired, such as are already applied in France, and, to a lesser extent in Norway.

(3) Security

99. A "Draft Code of Safety for fishermen and fishing vessels" is in the process of completion by the International Labour Office, FAO and IMCO. To ensure the maximum effectiveness of this Code, designed to diminish the high rate of risk in the fishing profession, widespread and active support is called for on the part of the Council of Europe member governments.