

An overview of the German high seas fishermen

A commitment to sustainability





„For us, sustainability means managing fish stocks responsibly, securing jobs and providing new opportunities for the future.“

Dr. Uwe Richter, Chairman of the German High Seas Fishing Association DHV





Picture: BMEL/photothek.net/Thomas Köhler

Sustainability – a top priority

Distinguished readers,

After a long and winding road we have finally succeeded: since 2014, the principle of sustainability has become the top priority in the fisheries sector due to the fundamental reorganisation of the Common Fisheries Policy. I am pleased and thankful that the German high seas fishermen have committed themselves to this challenging task.

The Association of the German High Seas Fishermen (DHV) is well equipped for this new framework. It has one of the most modern fleets in Europe and only catches fish designated for human consumption. Only recently, a new ship was put into operation which sets the highest on board standards in energy efficiency, quality of fish processing and social standards. Two additional trawlers are already at the planning stage. At the same time, the association respects the need to strike a balance between fishing quotas and fishing capacities. It also participates in projects on fully documented fishing.

For the German government, it is decisive that fish stocks across the world, and not only in EU-waters, are managed sustainably. We are therefore committed to establishing the strict rules of the Common Fisheries Policy also within fisheries agreements between the EU and third countries. The agreements with Norway and Greenland, where German fishing fleets mainly fish for cod, saithe, redfish and Greenland haddock, remain of primary importance.

It is good news that by now, more than half of all fish stocks in the North Sea and the North-East Atlantic are managed sustainably. Nonetheless, we need to keep our next milestone in mind: restoring all fish stocks to sustainable levels by 2020. This is our common task and responsibility. And for this goal, we all need to work as one: politicians, fishing industry, scientists, administration and civil society.

Christian Schmidt, MP (CSU)
Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture

A commitment to sustainability



The EU's Common Fisheries Policy is committed to achieving ecologic, economic and social sustainability. This includes: the **responsible management of fish stocks** through the implementation of long-term management plans, the use of selective fishing technology and support for sustainable fishing practices in fishing agreements with non-EU countries; **economic sustainability** through the management of fish stocks allowing for a consistent level of income for fishermen; and **social sustainability** through the self-organisation of the fisheries sector and prospects for the fishermen's profession in Germany.

The DHV in portrait

The Association of the German High Seas Fishermen (DHV) was founded on 1 May 1918 and represents companies of the German high seas fisheries in and outside of Europe. The Association stands for sustainable, transparent and regulated fishing, alongside scientifically sound fisheries management.

For additional information on the Associations historical development please see the link below:
<http://bit.ly/1hvAoIt>



Global engagement for sustainable fishing



Picture: Pelagic AC

International cooperation

The DHV is involved in developing long-term management plans for all fishing areas of the German high seas fleet through its participation in several international committees.

Intelligent fishing gear technology

The DHV is investing in modern and more selective fishing gear, alongside better sonar and 3D imaging technologies. This ensures current and future sustainability by catching the right type of fish, at the right size, and with minimum by-catch.



Picture: Doggerbank Seefischerei



Picture: Doggerbank Seefischerei

Accompanying research

To provide and improve current data for the EU's fisheries management, the DHV supports the work of fishery biologists on board.



Picture: Private

Martin Pastors

Chief Science Officer at the Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association (PFA)

What does your job as Chief Science Officer in the fishing industry entail?

The challenge of a scientist working for the industry is to ensure that a fisherman's knowledge is translated into a form in which it can be used for enhanced understanding of the developments in marine ecosystems. Most of the data collection is already taking place on board of the vessels, Quality Managers are taking samples of all of the batches of fish that are produced and Skippers are keeping logbooks of their catches and catch locations. My job is to translate that information into efficient and usable systems.

How does this information contribute to sustainable fisheries management?

The management of fish stocks is largely based on the advice produced by scientific bodies like ICES and STECF. It is interesting to note that, commercially, very important stocks such as mackerel have a relatively weak information base. The fisheries, on the other hand, are very effective in finding the mackerel and they are also measuring much of the mackerel they catch. So we should really be using that capacity to provide us with indications on stock developments.

Some NGOs argue against consuming certain fish species in general. Where do you stand on this?

Fisheries will always have an impact on the ecosystem they are operating in. Our mission should focus on ensuring that this impact is as little as possible, whilst still respecting the economics of the fishing operations and the requirements of food security on our planet with an expanding world population. I do not believe that there is an absolute measure of sustainability that you can simply use to decide what is good and what is not. Fisheries should therefore strive to invest in innovative gears and fishing methods, and develop and implement best practices wherever possible.

Scientific advice on fishing quotas can vary strongly. Why does it sometimes seem like fish stocks change within a short period of time?

In the past 30-40 years, the way we measure fish stocks in Europe has become increasingly detached from fishing practices. Recommendations for fishing quotas mostly rely on samples of catches rather than on the day-to-day experiences of fishermen at sea. Relatively small sample sizes compared to the

overall population size and different scientific methods can reinforce the impression of rapid changes in stock status – even if the fisherman at sea will not notice any difference.

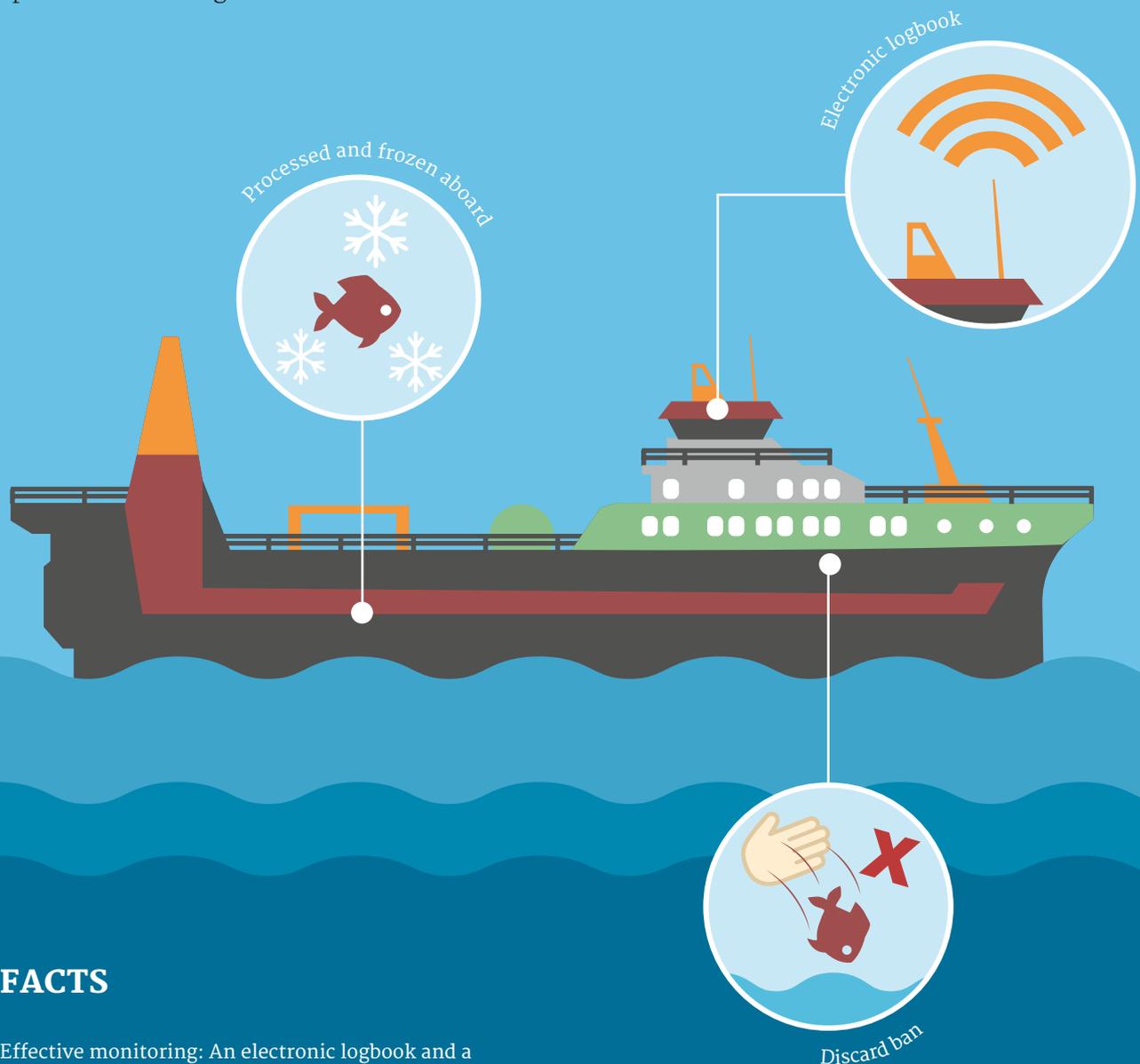
I think that a more robust way of handling this information base would be to think about stock development much more in relative terms than in absolute terms. Our collective scientific understanding of the marine system is still in its infancy. So rather than reacting to every new perception on stock status, we should think about changes relatively, rather than absolutely – however, I do not see this materializing in the very near future.

Are you currently working on new projects to improve the fisheries management?

We are carrying out many projects already. Our top priorities are to begin contributing to detailed catch compositions of fishing vessels, using acoustic data from fishing vessels. We are also striving to make further improvements to selectivity in fisheries management; both by gear innovations and improved species recognition on the acoustic instruments.

Aboard a trawler

Overall, the German fishing fleet consists of eight trawlers. Fishermen can spend up to three months at sea. The main fishing areas are the North-East Atlantic (the waters of Norway, Spitsbergen, Greenland and Iceland), the North Sea and the areas off the West African coast and the South Pacific. All fish are caught in accordance with catch quotas imposed by the EU for certain fish species and fishing areas.



FACTS

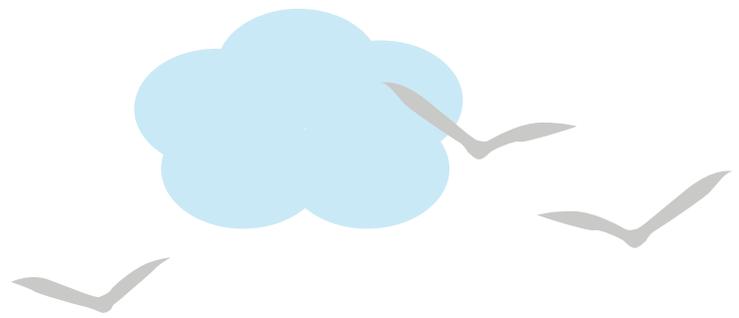
- **Effective monitoring:** An electronic logbook and a tracking system are providing real time information to officials about the trawler's current location and the amount of captured fish.
- **Quality and freshness:** An onboard processing and freezing system ensure fish quality and freshness.
- **Discard ban:** 100% of the captured fish is landed.

A modern fleet

During the past years, the German high seas fishing industry has carried out large-scale modernisation work; one example of this is the replacement of cooling systems on board. In May 2015, the association celebrated the first christening of a German freezer-trawler since 1996 on the island of Rügen. Between now and 2017, two more new trawlers will be put into service. They will both replace older ships.

The trawlers are generally designed to catch a specific species of fish. These species are either pelagic or demersal. Pelagic fish swim in the mid-water column, so the nets used to catch them do not touch the seabed. For demersal fisheries, nets float closer to the seabed.

You can find all technical details about the trawlers on the DHV's homepage:
<http://bit.ly/1Mjxn9k>



Did you know?

Are large ships more harmful to the environment?

The size of a trawler provides no indication of its impact on the environment. Processing and wrapping machines, cooling facilities and accommodation use almost 80% of the space aboard. Furthermore, EU regulations on fishing quotas apply for both small and large ships. These quotas have been designed to achieve sustainable fishing and cannot be exceeded. Alongside this, the CO₂ emissions of larger trawlers are relatively low compared to smaller ships because they generally spend more time at sea and travel less.



-  Cod East and West Coast of Greenland
-  Greenland Hailbut East and West Coast of Greenland
-  Redfish East Coast of Greenland



-  Redfish South Coast of Iceland

-  Cod Flemish Cap (Canada)
-  Redfish Flemish Cap (Canada)



At home on all seas



| | | | |
|--|---------------|------------------------|--|
| | Cod..... | Bear Island (Svalbard) | |
| | Haddock | Bear Island (Svalbard) | |
| | Pollock | Bear Island (Svalbard) | |

| | | | |
|--|---------------|----------------------|--|
| | Cod..... | Norwegian Coast 62°N | |
| | Haddock | Norwegian Coast 62°N | |
| | Pollock | Norwegian Coast 62°N | |

| | | | |
|--|--------------|-----------------|--|
| | Herring..... | Norwegian Coast | |
|--|--------------|-----------------|--|

| | | | |
|--|----------------|-----------|---|
| | Mackerel | North Sea | * |
| | Herring | North Sea | |

| | | | |
|--|---------------|-----------------|--|
| | Herring | English Channel | |
|--|---------------|-----------------|--|

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| | Blue Whiting | Western waters of the British Isles | * |
| | Mackerel | Western waters of the British Isles | * |

* In certification



The MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) is an independent, international non-profit organisation. The Council has developed an independent third-party certification programme for sustainable fisheries that do not overfish, maintain healthy fish stocks, have a low impact on marine life and are well managed.

Enjoy **responsibility**

The ocean is an important source of food for many people across the world. Together with European policy-makers and fishermen from all around Europe, the Association of the German High Seas Fishermen (DHV) has already made great progress towards the sustainable management of fish stocks by developing long-term management plans. These plans include defined fishing quotas, the use of selective fishing gear, ensuring gapless control mechanisms are in place and the introduction of a discard ban. The goal of the Common Fisheries Policy is to ensure that all fish stocks are managed sustainably to 2020 in line with the concept of “maximum sustainable yield”.

MSC – Marine Stewardship Council

The DHV also meets the increased expectations of consumers regarding sustainable fishing practices. Easily recognisable quality and sustainability labels, such as the MSC label, enjoy widespread acceptance among consumers. The German fishing industry therefore aims to increase its percentage of MSC certified fish. At this moment in time, approximately 45% of the trawlers’ landings are MSC certified already.



Small CO₂-footprint

Compared to other animal protein productions such as beef, pork poultry and farmed fish, wild-caught fish has a significantly lower carbon footprint because it does not need to be artificially fed, nor does it require the use of often scarce water supplies.



Source: RIVM (The data is based on information from the PFA)



Picture: Pelagic AC

Responsibility for Africa

The Fisheries Partnership Agreements between the EU and Morocco, and the EU and Mauritania, are creating a legal framework for the activities of German fishing vessels off the West African coast. In return for fishing rights, the EU provides support for scientific research, combating illegal fishing activities and fostering the development of the local fishing industry and its control mechanisms. The agreements only allow EU vessels to fish for surplus stocks that cannot be fished by local fisheries, as they do not have the necessary capacity.



Picture: Private

Vivien Kudelka

Fisheries expert at MSC

What requirements do fisheries need to fulfil in order to obtain MSC certification?

In order to achieve MSC certification fisheries need to undergo a complex assessment by third party accredited certifiers. The MSC standard for sustainable fisheries has three core principles: safeguarding sustainable fish stocks, minimising environmental impact and ensuring effective fisheries management for future sustainability.

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) advocates that, until 2020, all fish stocks will be managed according to the principle of “maximum sustainable yield”. What role will the MSC then play for European fisheries?

The MSC acts as a global organization beyond European borders. In addition to evaluating the health of the fish stocks, the MSC standard also aims to set incentives to minimise environmental impact and increase transparency and efficiency of management practices in fisheries. The MSC aims to contribute to the health of the world’s oceans by safeguarding stable fish stocks, minimising unwanted catches, maintain the function of the ecosystem the fishery operates in and strengthen fishery’s enforcement as well as robust scientific information basis for management decisions. MSC certified fisheries work hard to fulfill certification conditions set to further increase sustainability to bring about changes on the water. The annual Global Impacts report provides up to date results to demonstrate how fisheries achieve the MSC’s objectives.

Certain regions show only a very small share of MSC certified fisheries. How can the MSC contribute to strengthening the principle of sustainable fisheries in these regions?

To facilitate access to the program for fisheries from developing world countries and small scale fisheries around the world, the MSC has developed a tool to assess data poor fisheries, the Risk Based Framework (RBF), provides a Benchmarking and Monitoring Tool (BMT) for fisheries in improvement projects and continuously reviews the standard in order to reduce certification costs. We thus react to an increasing number of fisheries becoming interested in making the necessary changes and improvements to become sustainable and access new markets. In July 2015, the MSC introduced the Global Fisheries Sustainability Fund which supports MSC research projects in developing countries. Presently, 9% of all fisheries that participate in the MSC program are from developing countries.

How do you respond to the criticism that the MSC’s sustainability criteria are not strict enough?

MSC certification requirements for fisheries have to be effective and achievable at the same time. While weak requirements would not bring about change, setting the bar too high for only a very small minority of fisheries to meet would not achieve any improvements. Therefore standard setting and fisheries assessments find a middle way by high consultation effort and transparency. The MSC is driven by diverging stakeholder groups made up out of industry participants, scientists and environmentalists. We always need to find a strong solution which takes into account all different objectives.

The Association of the German High Seas Fishermen

Since 1993, the DHV has been a member of the German Fishing Association, an umbrella organisation which coordinates the activities of high seas fishermen as well as the coastal fisheries and sport fishermen.

The Board



Dr Uwe Richter (Chairman)

Since 2009, Uwe Richter is the chairman of the DHV and the Managing Director of Doggerbank Seefischerei GmbH, its subsidiary Ocean Food GmbH & Co. KG and the Euro Baltic Fischverarbeitings GmbH. He has a doctorate in fishing technology.

Haraldur Grétarsson (Vice Chairman)

Originally from Iceland, Grétarsson also graduated in fishing technology. In 2001, he took over the management of Deutsche Fischfang-Union GmbH & Co. KG (DFFU) and of the company's associated businesses.



Dr. Peter Breckling (Managing Director)

Since 2003, Peter Breckling has been the Secretary General of the German Fisheries Association in Hamburg and the Managing Director of the Association of the German High Seas Fishermen (DHV). He has a doctorate in biology.



Members and Locations

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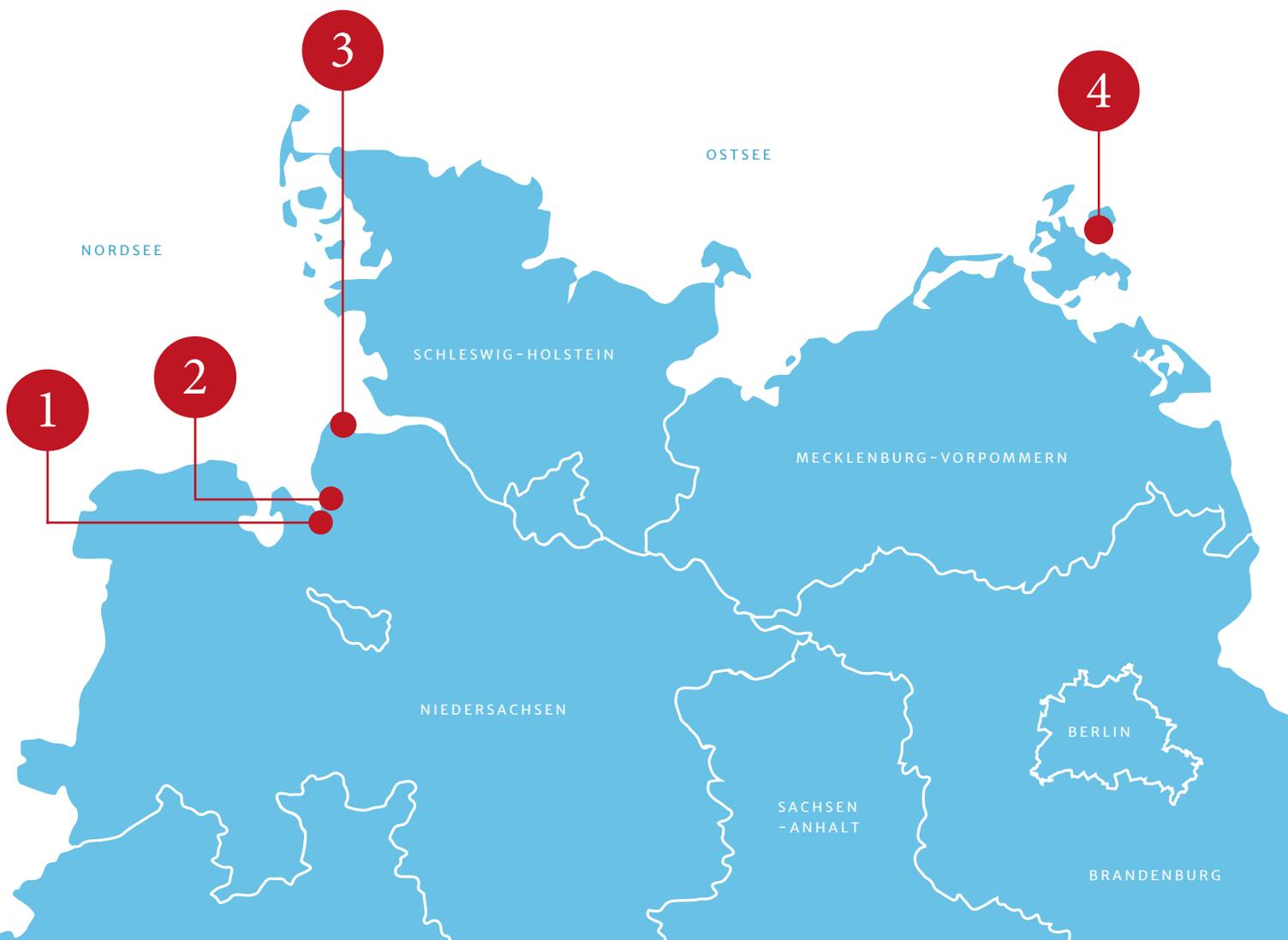
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Picture: DHV

„The German high seas fishermen have one of the most modern and sustainable fleets in Europe.“

In the past decade, the share of sustainable fish stocks in the North-East Atlantic and its bordering seas has increased from six to sixty percent. How?

At the core of our success lies our joint attempt to preserve God's creation. This involves providing healthy nutrition for the growing global population, preserving natural resources of the maritime ecosystem and securing the fishermen's profession. The Common EU Fisheries Policy was introduced in 1983 and last updated in 2014. The policy's outcome includes healthier stocks through long-term management plans and research-based fishing quotas. Our guiding principle is the "maximum sustainable yield": the optimal catch that may be taken from a fishing stock year after year without endangering its capacity to regenerate for the future. This is how fishing becomes sustainable.

Where do the German high seas fishermen stand in comparison to its European counterparts?

Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal have the biggest fleets in Europe; Germany ranks at the lower-middle end. Despite the expansion of the EU, there were approximately 19,000 fewer fishing vessels in 2014 compared to 1995. The German fleet maintains a balance between its capacity and catch possibilities. It is one of the most modern and sustainable fleets in Europe.

How does the EU combat illegal fishing activities?

Since 2010, we have EU regulation which aims to place embargoes on imports, blacklists and severe penalties for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities. Piracy is increasingly monitored from outer space – soon by up to ten European Galileo satellites. Lastly, the EU supports its partner countries, such as Morocco and Mauritania, in their fight against illegal fisheries.

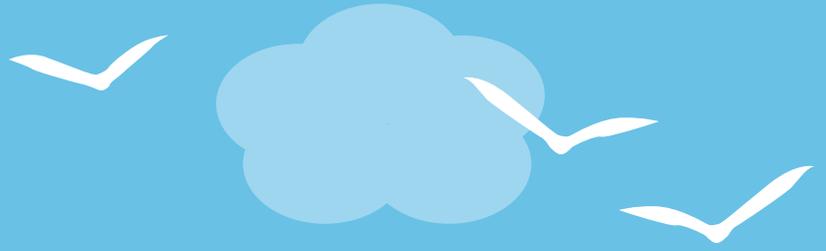
Fisheries partnership agreements with African countries are being criticised...

And wrongfully so! In fact, we see positive implications for the sustainability of the African fishing industry. All European fishing vessels outside European waters need to follow the same control and transparency regulations as in Europe; we are also obliged to provide development assistance. Moreover, the money the EU pays for its access privileges is used to support sustainable fishing, and to promote the development of projects and build fisheries management in these countries.

MEP Werner Kuhn, CDU

Vice-Chair of the Fisheries Committee in the European Parliament





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