



Report from the final meeting of the:

**EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Priority Area on Maritime Safety and Security
"PA Safe" Flagship Project to lay the groundwork for developing a plan to reduce
the number of accidents in fisheries**

Tuesday 25th March 2014

At the Hotel Park Inn, Engvej 171, 2300 Copenhagen S

Chairing the meeting, Henrik Loveby, President of the Swedish Fishermen's Federation, welcomed the participants and invited them to present themselves by a tour de table.

He explained that his organisation represented commercial fishermen out at sea, as well as inshore and on lakes. Concern for the health and safety of their members was the reason why his organisation had engaged in this project.

Bjarke Wiehe Bøtcher, speaking on behalf of the Danish and Finnish Priority Area coordinators PA Safe, gave a power point presentation. He explained the aims and implementation of the EU's macro-regional strategies, one of which was the Baltic Sea Regional Strategy which was the backdrop for the current project. Interest in the Baltic fisheries sector was explained by the fact that there was a suspicion that fisheries was perhaps not the safest sector, but today the situation was slightly better, even if comparable statistics are not available. In connection with their evaluation of this project, the question they had addressed was: had the project carried out the tasks set? The BSRAC had been modest in choosing its title "to develop a plan". The assessment by the project coordinators was that much of the work intended had been carried out by the project which had been run by a small team. It was quite impressive what could be achieved in one year. The project had provided a solid overview of the current situation and the accidents that happen in the sector. Elements of a plan are now emerging. It was up to the stakeholders and the maritime authorities to propose which issues to work with in a further project. The conditions were favourable for beginning new projects in the project planning period 2014 – 2020. Should there be a decision to go further with the work, there will be a seminar in the autumn 2014 on project funding under the Baltic Sea Strategy, so the timing of this project was good. Those involved were encouraged to come up with ideas.

Jacek Paszkowski from the Swedish Institute said that he had been kept informed on the progress made by the project. He said a few words about the funding opportunities available from the Swedish Institute and the type of projects that can be carried out. The

Swedish Institute was not just funding projects, but also keeping ahead of developments and having a dialogue with stakeholders in order to accommodate the ideas of stakeholders into projects, and thereby operate as a flexible funding organisation. There were two types of funding. Firstly, a seed money facility, involving a minimum of two countries including Sweden, whereby activities developed from a small idea. The maximum amount of funding is 50.000 Euros and the maximum length one year. Secondly, there were thematic partnerships of up to three years and with funding of 3 million SEK with the emphasis on cross-sector cooperation. A project call under the thematic partnerships will be made at the end of 2014. NGOs, local municipalities and government agencies can be involved in such partnerships. Private companies can send in an application, providing they can demonstrate the added value of the partnership for the region.

The current project had been an excellent example of cooperation under the EU Baltic Sea Strategy with support from the Swedish Institute and with the Danish Maritime Authority as coordinating body under the Baltic Sea Strategy.

Those interested in applying for funding were encouraged to go carefully into the details before applying to the Swedish Institute.

Henrik Loveby presented the focus of today's meeting, which was discussion and priority setting. He referred to a briefing note sent in advance of the meeting for reflection and preparation.

Sally Clink and Karsten Korsgaard reminded the meeting of the process involved in developing and carrying out the project. It had been innovative to carry out such a series of visits around the Baltic and taking in every Baltic Sea State. In each Baltic Sea State they had been warmly welcomed and there had been interest from all involved to come with input. There had been open and genuine exchanges of information. The report writing had been done in collaboration with the hosts of each country: drafts written after each visit and sent back for comments before finalising. The briefing note for today's meeting contained a summary of the key ideas and recommendations made from each visit.

The chairman then led the discussions through the points highlighted in the briefing note.

1. General state of health of the sector

The focus here was on how to strengthen and brand the image of the sector, without turning it into a public relations campaign. The challenges of recruiting workers to the fisheries sector were similar in other maritime sectors, so it was suggested that fisheries and maritime authorities could work together on this. A good fisherman needs to be more than a good seaman, for example in terms of catching and handling fish. These skills also have to be learnt. So what was missing here was reference to and relation with other sectors of the sea.

Attracting youngsters to the sector was also closely related to the fishing communities and the need for some developments in the community as part of the project in order to drive recruitment. There have been some positive developments in the fleet and the focus of efforts could be on showing a positive picture, whereby it is becoming possible to combine work with family life. Statistics on unemployment in the sector would be useful as well as more precise figures on the age of fishermen: was it an ageing sector?

There was also appreciation of the challenges in the Baltic of diminishing fishing opportunities, as well as the pressures from the environmental lobby and the social media in creating negative impacts and images.

The International Maritime Organisation and International Labour Organisation have as their focus the merchant marine and can generate energy around that from top down paying attention to the merchant marine and not the fishery. It could be that the international conventions are behind some unjustified treatment of the fisheries sector. The role of the fisheries sector in the maritime sector needed to be considered: is it merely a supplier of manpower or does it have its own place?

Also on the EU policy side, reference was made to the EU's Strategy on Blue Growth. The fisheries sector needs to make its influence felt in this overarching strategy.

In conclusion, it was important to tell the positive story from the sector. Fishermen themselves need to be positive about their profession. They also need to react to the public debate on fisheries and to state the facts and to emphasise the strengths of this sector. It was agreed that these were fundamental issues and there was a need to come up with some pro-active input. This in turn would enhance the health and safety aspects of the sector.

2. Reporting of accidents and culture of safety

It was agreed that the information on accident statistics gathered from the desk study prior to this project is quite pioneering and it was necessary to refer to it and develop it.

It was also agreed that it could be useful to have more common procedures for the collection and reporting of accidents.

Accident reporting is very important, although it needs to take place in a no-blame culture. Within the systems that apply for accident reporting it must be necessary to be able to report accidents, incidents and near-misses in a confidential way. It was also important to use the accident reports in learning situations so students can learn from the different experiences.

The project can also give recommendations to other actors. There are benefits of looking into accident investigation. It was agreed to point out best practices in this area and to highlight the pioneer comparisons that were made earlier on in the project. Denmark and Latvia gave examples from their use of accident reports. It was also noted that a Commission proposal and procedure on how to deal with reporting could be appreciated.

It was also agreed that the focus should also be on prevention – not only in fisheries: it was fundamental to have a prevention culture on occupational health, as well as on accidents. In order to improve working conditions, it was essential look at the culture of prevention within the industry.

It was also pointed out that small land based enterprises have similar problems to the fishery. The use of intermediaries was advocated in order to translate the importance of legislation into simple and understandable concepts.

3. Education and training: international requirements, refresher courses, shared information, teacher trainer exchanges

The chairman pointed out that all of these points were highlighted during the visits carried out in the Baltic Sea States.

There was broad agreement on the importance of a basic education, with a shared standard across the Baltic Sea. This meant sending a strong signal with respect to ratifying the STCW (F) Convention which guarantees the same basic and minimum rules and requirements for all. There was a call in unison to go to administrations and governments to call for them to ratify the STCW (F) Convention. This was because the Convention provides a common standard of training and improves job opportunities for fishers in the countries that have ratified it.

There was common agreement on the need for refresher courses and the need for teacher training. These are straightforward areas to be developed as ground for further work. Best practices were highlighted and explained in several of the Baltic Sea States.

On sharing information and building up a library it was agreed that there was a need to build up a platform – this is a necessary tool to be used. All have an interest in sharing information. The BSRAC website can be the forum for uploading the stability guide and for putting the report on the website. This was an obvious part for the report to go more deeply into these sections and to come with recommendations.

It was noted that young people are keener to get knowledge and to seek information. This could make it easier each time there is a refresher course to step up the level of the courses. So it is important with information, flow of information. The younger ones are already more up to date with and familiar with the information coming out.

The representative from Fish Platform informed on its activities. The Fish Platform was created as a result of the Maritime Day in Gothenburg 2012 where there was regret that fisheries had not been getting a mention. The outcome was the creation of the platform with participants from several northern European countries. Four meetings have been held until now and there is no membership fee. The FISH Platform attempts find ways to harmonise and share materials where possible, understanding the differences in legislation. They have no budget, but do manage to produce things. The call was for the industry, educational institutes and policy representatives to take part. He informed of a working group created to give more focus to the topic of prevention of accidents on board the fishing vessels, under the STCW(F) Convention. The aim is to give more clearance on the material they develop to the next Fish Platform meeting in October 2014.

The meeting was informed of a project entitled called REFOPE which is gathering getting information from training institutes into a database. It is an initiative from the EU Social Dialogue Committee.

The meeting was informed of a report produced by the South Baltic Programme which has carried out a foresight analysis of the South Baltic Labour Market to 2017. One of the fields of study is aquaculture and maritime fishing. The labour market analysis showed that the maritime sector in the South Baltic Region is far from cohesive and all south Baltic Sea States differ in terms of strategic segments, maritime policies and level of development.

7. Specific needs for specific fleet segments

There was agreement on the over-arching target of having the same basic level of rules as in the STCW (F) Convention. But under this heading there could be a few points of best practices that can be applied.

There were concerns expressed about safety on board smaller coastal vessels in some of the Baltic Sea States, for example Latvia.

Moreover, the representative from the Danish Maritime Authority highlighted that an increasing number of commercial vessels were being converted for use as recreational vessels. This gave rise to concerns with respect to safety.

No final conclusions were reached on whether to investigate this more deeply with respect to specific fleet segments.

8. Personal safety equipment and awareness for the fishermen (or how to seek funding)

It was agreed that personal safety equipment and awareness for fishermen goes hand in hand with the culture of safety and prevention of accidents.

The meeting took note of the observation by the project team that there is a consistently high level of safety across the Baltic and use of personal safety equipment. Reference was made to the Personal Safety Equipment Directive and the structural difference between the Sea States on who is responsible for acquiring equipment. It would be useful to provide the status on this in the different Baltic Sea member states and to get an overview of funding opportunities for purchasing equipment.

9. The recreational fisheries

Some concerns were expressed about this sector where vessel owners do not have the necessary training in personal safety and safety procedures.

Presentation of the work of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (OSHA) by Tim Tregenza Network Manager, based in Bilbao

Tim Tregenza informed on the work done by OSHA. It does not make policy or legislation. The work of OSHA is anchored in the basic framework of occupational safety which sets out a preventative goal setting whereby the employer has the legal duty to address issues of personal safety. OSHA has a focal point in each member state and there is a Baltic Sea Network, run by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, which takes a broad approach to health and safety. So there are actors in the Baltic region and they can be useful and helpful. OSHA works on making sure that everyone links together. The meeting was informed that Estonia is running a campaign on slips and trips, but if the labour inspectorate is not working with the fishing industry, then the sector may not get to hear of it: there is not necessarily interaction between them all. (The Estonian representative at the meeting confirmed this). It is important to get all the stakeholders engaged and working together, but this is not easy because fisheries tends to be at the margins of the regions and with respect to the administrations.

He informed that there are 6.9 million accidents at work in the EU. The vast majority of these are health related rather than accident related. A recent survey carried out by OSHA showed the importance of health and safety. The main driver for health and safety considerations is the fulfillment of legal obligations, as opposed to financial considerations. Moreover it is the small companies and micro enterprises that have significant problems in terms of health and safety and they are not aware of the problems. The health and safety challenges for the fisheries sector are known. Moreover, information from Eurostat shows fisheries at the top of the scale of accidents.

But there are a lot of structural issues for the sector to take into consideration, for example the distinction between accidents at sea (not to do with work – the maritime issues) and the accidents at work (this is the doing the job on the boat at work). A lot of this was to do with risk assessment. Accident reporting is also a big issue across all sectors.

Moreover, there are strategic approaches and OSHA was pushing for a new strategy on occupational health. In April 2014, DG Mare is expected to release a communication on occupational health which will give long term view on where occupational health should be going. A previous report showed that things were improving, but this is not across the board.

He referred to the key legislation in force. There is also a hierarchy of prevention. The aim should be to put in collective control measures and as a last resort make use of personal prevention measures.

OSHA does a lot of awareness-raising and information campaigns according to theme, group hazard or risk, by sector approach such as awareness-raising and by means primary target group. They produce fact sheets: more recently “e facts” on safe maintenance of fishing vessels. The idea is to get health and safety into the relevant curricula early on. In the fisheries sector to get more health and safety for the fishermen and for all the others engaged in the dimension such as fish buyers. This Flagship project could engage in that.

OSHA also communicates in many ways. It makes a number of no language cartoons – about 100 clips, one of which is for slips and trips, and there is one coming on stress. These can be used as a training facility.

He emphasized the importance of leadership and worker participation. The safety approach is improved if both are in place. And for an effective strategy to work, involvement of all stakeholders - the inspectorate, the boat owner and the workers – gave the best conditions.

Sisse Grøn Teamarbejdsliv: Safety in the fishing industry

Sisse Grøn gave the background to the recently completed project based on the Danish fishing industry where there has been a positive development in the sector whereby attitudes and behavior towards health and safety have become natural. The project set out to investigate what has happened to explain this development. She gave a presentation showing the incidence rates and numbers of accidents from 1998 to 2012, showing a downward trend of accident rates per 1.000 fishermen. Clear results from the figures show that accidents happen within the first year of work (either as new recruits or returning to the profession), so there was something to work on there. The project consisted of a week of field work and interviews with informants.

Most informants talked about technical improvements and it was easy to detect a new attitude towards this – this included focus on improved ergonomic equipment. There were also the structural conditions behind the improvements: one is selection into the industry - there is a professionalism taking place in the sector and the new forms of quota system have something to do with this. In addition to that is the work going on at the Danish Fishermen's Occupational Health Services and the system of safety committees across the country. There needs of course to be legislation, but there also needs to be room for those involved to have an impact. She highlighted the importance of dialogue: the result and the motive behind the trends with authorities, and even with scientists: this reflects a different negotiating climate and is a positive change that such dialogue is taking place.

Attitudes have changed in terms of taking risks: safety is something that is now talked about. Risk perception by fishermen is slightly different, but it is possible to work more on how to deal with safety and safety work could be carried out in a more systematic way. The concept of psycho-social working environment, stress fatigue etc is starting to emerge.

The project report is being translated into English and will be made available.

In summing up the day

The chairman summed up that there are a few topics that can be highlighted as conclusions and possible recommendations for further work:

1. The general state of the sector as in previous presentations: poor recruitment, ageing fleet, can be summed up as the general health in the sector. This needs to be presented in as positive a way as possible by highlighting profitability, new quota systems, making the sector more professional. If such things are addressed, they will also improve the health and safety of the sector.
2. Statistics and data are a subject on their own, with a need for more comparable statistics, knowledge baseline to create a culture of information and of safety
3. The educational part to be described as the four topics given in the briefing note, including the international requirements and baselines without which there is nothing. So there was a clear call from this project to all to ratify the STCW (F) Convention, plus a clear-cut recommendation on refresher courses.
4. Information: we need ideas on what and where can be the focal point. We have the BSRAC as well as the EUSBSR strategy website. If such an information portal is going to be bigger, it may need to have place of its own
5. Teacher training and what equipment when and where to be used in an efficient way and if there are to be training vessels, we need cooperation on that
6. On the different fleet segments it is not clear cut because some rules can be burdensome to some, but not to others. As Tim Tregenza and Sisse Grøn showed, the risks in fisheries are higher, but knowledge about the rules is lower, since this is mainly about small enterprises. So we need to focus information campaigns on that.

The need for safety on small vessels has particular needs and the rules are different in different Member States.

7. The recreational sector is a grey/unknown area. As we have heard, the absence of requirements in some Member States can be hazardous at sea.

The project will formulate the findings as clearly as possible as recommendations for further work.

On the data and statistics: this is for the authorities to work together.

On the education and training: this is for the institutes and schools to work together.

On information: this can be the fisheries organisations, with the involvement of the Advisory Councils.

The information will be disseminated through all the relevant channels from the BSRAC and those taking part will be asked to do the same.

Bjarke Wiehe Bøtcher expressed the hope that all will want to continue the work and that those who were visited will be kept informed. He saw the need for several of the issues that were mentioned in the summary to be developed. He reiterated that the conditions for developing and carrying out projects have never been better.

Henrik Loveby encouraged those contemplating applying for funding from the new project period to be better prepared before the call is put out and to think about what is needed within such a project. The Danish Maritime Authority is available to give help and the Swedish Institute is also interested. What is needed are some committed project makers.

On closing the meeting, Henrik Loveby thanked everyone for taking part.

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Presentations from the meeting are on the BSRAC website:

http://www.bsrac.org/mod_inc/?p=itemModule&id=2122&kind=4&pageId=1106

A Stability Guide in English for smaller vessels - we kindly ask all to spread the word – is also on the BSRAC website:

http://www.bsrac.org/mod_inc/?p=itemModule&id=2120&kind=1&pageId=1081

FISH Platform

<http://www.fish-platform.eu/>

South Baltic Programme Generation Balt Linking maritime education with the changing job market for a new generation of Baltic Sea Experts: Foresight of the south Baltic maritime labour market 2017

<http://en.southbaltic.eu/index/>

The European Network for Fisheries Training and Employment: REFOPE

<http://www.refope.eu/en/index.html>

Personal Protective Equipment Directive

<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/mechanical/documents/legislation/personal-protective-equipment/>

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (OSHA)

www.osha.europa.eu