Final report

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

Visits to Finland and Estonia 26th – 29th May 2013

Finland 27th May 2013

During the visit, an overriding question for Finland emerged: is this an issue of improving health and safety, or is it one of how to enhance recruitment into the sector?

Background on Finnish fisheries (from FAO fishery country profile 2005; quotas given for 2013)

A particular characteristic of the Finnish fisheries is created by the climatic conditions. Fishing waters, and especially coastal waters, are to varying extents covered by ice for part of the year. This means that ice fishing using nets, hooks and traps is common in the winter season while the main fishing period lies between April and November. There are around sixty species of fish indigenous to Finland, of which approximately twenty are fished, including commercial and main recreational species, and one species of crayfish. The Finnish fleet consists of trawlers, gill-netters and coastal vessels. The commercial fleet comprises largely small-scale vessels, with the majority of the vessels less than 18 metres long. Most of the national catch is comprised of herring and sprat. The main species caught in Baltic are herring (106.683 tonnes) and sprat (12.908 tonnes), taken for industrial purposes by a small number of larger trawlers, and salmon (41.941 pieces). There is a small, but active inland small-scale commercial fishing industry. Small-scale fisheries are a socially important part of the Finnish fishing fleet, and many of the fishermen operate part-time on a seasonal basis, largely targeting non-quota species such as whitefish and pike-perch and the fishing grounds worked are generally close to the shore. Recreational fishing is also important, with approximately forty per cent of the population fishing at least once a year. Ninety per cent of the inland catch is taken in recreational fisheries, as is approximately half of the marine catch other than Baltic herring.

Baltic fleet information sent to the BSRAC from the Finnish authorities (2013):

Year	Length of vessels - 0-6	Length of vessels - 0-12	Length of vessels - 12-18	Length of vessels - 18 and up	Total Number of vessels
2013		3157	50	529	**3736**

Active Fishermen/women (2013)

Inland fisheries	Coastal fisheries	Harvest sector	Total
674	2158	2832	5664

From the EU fishing fleet register 1st September 2011:

Number	% of EU fleet	GT	% of EU fleet	Engine power kW	% of EU fleet	Trawlers	% of fleet	Non-trawlers	% of fleet
3369	4.1%	16.314	1.0%	172.437	2.7%	79	2%	3.290	98%

229 fishers reported employed full-time equivalent (2011)

Some 50 % of the Finnish trawl fleet capacity is nowadays owned by Estonians. These vessels belong to companies registered in Finland: they are flying Finnish flag and fish Finnish quota, but the owners and crew are Estonians.

Meeting at Livia College, Parainen

Ms. Mailis Kuuppo, Headmistress of Livia College
Anders Oljemark, Navigational teacher
Vesa Karttunen, Federation of Finnish Fisheries Associations
Kaj Mattsson, managing director of the local member association (Åbolands Fiskarförbund rf) and chairman of the board of Livia College

By way of introduction to the visit, Vesa Karttunen informed that Livia College is most typical of its kind for vocational fisheries education. The challenge for the college was that the fisheries department was competing for students who are attracted to other studies. The reduction in the number of trawlers in the Finnish fleet was making it harder for emerging students to enter into the profession. It was not so difficult for the coastal and onshore fisheries where it was still possible to make a living, but fishing was typically one of several jobs held by the fisherman.

The staff informed that this is the biggest school in Finland offering education in fisheries. It had formerly been owned by the state, and there had been better provision of equipment for safety training. This was not highlighted as a problem. A certificate supplement is attached to this report. It gives information on the vocational qualification in fishery, which consists of 120 credits. Students come from all over the country and there is a predominance of students from non-fisheries backgrounds. Education is free. Only the books and teaching materials have to be paid for. The estimated cost is 2.500 Euros. The school is geographically well placed to give a good variation in training – located near the waters of the archipelago. Four specialised lines in fisheries are offered: commercial sea going fishery, small-scale coastal, aquaculture and fisheries tourism. The most popular choice for students is fishing tourism. The least popular is the commercial sea going fishery: there are only 1 – 3 applicants per year. The school does not educate skippers. Only the Boat master's certificate B is offered on vessels up to 15 metres.

The education is built up to provide the most basic skills, covering as much as possible in the time provided for the education. The basic studies take one year and students can start at 15/16 years. The education provided is a combination of theory and practical experience, divided roughly 50-50. The school has different vessels for training: smaller, open vessels (5-6 metres) where the students learn to handle and steer the vessels; one cabin boat (10 metres) and one trawler (15 metres), plus one trawler model boat of iron for transporting fish containers. The education thus gives the possibility to use many kinds of boats – this is seen as an important strength of this college. The school emphasises the importance of practical training, relying initially in the basic training on own skills and not depending on electronic instruments.

In addition, specific local Finnish conditions are included in the education: training to use a snow scooter and training to deal with falling through ice in winter conditions. This was highlighted as an important factor in connection with EU legislation, which does not always understand the local conditions.

With respect to safety, the school follows the provisions and requirements that are laid down by the authorities and meets the requirements laid down in the STCW-F Convention. Safety education covers the requirement to take appropriate action in emergency situations. In addition to the basic education on safety, the additional considerations of “how to do” and “taking care” were provided for in the work experience provided for the students.

At the same time, College staff admitted that it can be hard to follow and keep up with the changes and amendments that come out of the ministry. The College has to be more aware of the rules coming out of the different provisions.

No major safety issues were highlighted in the pelagic fleet. There are a few pelagic sea going vessels, all relatively modern and safe. The owners of these vessels are mostly onboard the vessels themselves, and they know where the problems lie. The challenges are commercial: getting into or buying into the sector. Additional challenges are the day to day economics of fishing and making a profit and the fear that safety can be compromised in the need to earn a profit from the fishery. There were no significant safety issues raised in connection with the coastal fleet.

A broader and more overarching discussion dealt with employment prospects in general for fishermen. There are no opportunities at this College to go beyond the basic education and take the skipper education or to go further in their training. A more academic education is possible, for example at university level, but this means pursuing a more administrative career, rather than one as fishermen.
Only a few choose to specialise in the commercial fishery. The majority follow the other lines offered at the College.

It is hard to recruit students. They do not see a future in the fishery. Some blame environmental factors such as cormorants and seals as limiting the scope for fishermen to develop a profession. The image of the fishery has in some ways been tarnished by environmental issues and bad news, such as claims of over fishing.

The problem of ageing fishermen (over 50 years) was also highlighted. There was a need to promote the positive image of a sustainable fishery, but there were no clear ideas about what to about it.

One or two students from Estonia and Latvia have studied at the College, and this was seen as one possible way forward to promoting the sector and education.

Occupational health was seen as a health insurance, rather than as a preventative means of avoiding such problems as wear and tear. It provided cheaper medical services and life insurance and other benefits. Nevertheless, only a few fishermen (<20%) have entered the scheme.

There was agreement by all that it could be an idea to have some shared common safety materials and educational materials were available in the respective language, for example, a film on seal safe traps. This could be produced in small modules e.g. 15 minutes long. Financial support could be applied for.

The visit dealt with by this project was appreciated, and the idea of there being cooperation around the Baltic was welcomed.

Meeting with local coastal fisherman Ismo Johansson

Ismo Johansson is the classic example of a small-scale coastal fisherman, fishing and working single handed in the archipelago, Källvik, Väståboland, Finland. He uses different vessels and gears: standing trapnets, fyke nets, pontoon nets. He applies common sense and his long experience (25 years) in his daily work – following the winds and the currents and not going out to sea if there is danger or if the weather is going to be against him. The gears he uses are environmentally friendly, but also less physically demanding for him to use. He appeared to be in good physical shape. He had started by learning the skills from his father and only buying in to the profession after trying things out and deciding to pursue this career. The pontoon seal friendly net was the latest acquisition and learning to use that had required a certain amount of trial and error. There were risks associated with it and extra care was required. He was open about naming the risks he could see in what he was doing, but awareness of the risks was clearly based on long and varied experience as a fisherman. He has the two basic items of safety equipment: a life vest and the floating suit with wellingtons attached. He used the suit in cold weather.
Apart from his basic maritime education, he has taken a refresher two day safety course to remind himself of the risks.
He also discussed the problems of encouraging youngsters into the profession. Other professions have a more attractive image. He had no real answer as to what to do about this. But safety issues were not highlighted as a factor preventing the young from starting as fishermen. He had investigated hiring an apprentice, but there had been no interest.
Another factor limiting access to the profession was the closed access to fishing rights. Finnish ownership rights limit possibilities for non-owners to start fishing. This was seen as a paradox because the quotas are not individually allocated to the fishermen. So ownership rights were tied to the coastal areas which, if not exploited, went unused.
Another problem mentioned was that there were so many vessels registered (>3,000) on the fleet register and there was a need to create space on the register for newcomers. Vesa Karttunen informed that the authorities are looking into this, because there are fisheries resources not being used.

The example of Ismo Johansson shows that it is not dangerous to be a small scale fisherman. He is operating close to shore, he can always can see the shore, there no deep currents or strong tides.

His long experience in the profession is an important factor. He has learnt and knows what to do. But he pointed out that it takes a few years before risk appreciation becomes an automatic part of the daily work as fisherman. He does not ignore the risk of being a fisherman and thinks of everything in advance - for example weather conditions. He compared his profession with the recreational gillnet fishermen in Finland who think differently about the risks and he reported that a few have drowned this spring.

Finland: the snow scooter is used to meet the local conditions

Estonia Tuesday 28th May 2013

Two key issues emerged during the meetings and discussions: how to improve the general culture of reporting accidents and incidents; and the need to introduce obligatory refresher health and safety training for fishermen.

Background on Estonian fisheries (from FAO fishery country profile 2005, the Estonian Ministry of Agriculture 2007; quotas given are for 2013)

According to the EU fishing fleet register, the Estonian Baltic Sea fishing fleet at the end of 2011 consisted mostly of trawlers (124 fishing vessels) and non-trawlers (803). Regulated fish species in the Baltic Sea are Baltic herring (24.251 tonnes), sprat (28.6334 tonnes), cod (1.572 tonnes) and salmon (3.872 pieces).
The quotas allocated to Estonia are divided among trawling enterprises according to historical fishing rights. Within the country, 70% of the Baltic herring quota is allocated to trawl fishing and 30% to coastal fishing. Baltic herring and sprat are mainly destined for human consumption and to a small extent for fishmeal. Primary fishing gear are trawls, and to some extent cod and salmon nets.
The main coastal fishing grounds are Pärnu Bay, Väinameri Sea and the Gulf of Finland. Coastal fishing extends to 12 nautical miles or up to the 20-metre isobath. Coastal fishing concentrates on a number of different species; economically more important are perch, Baltic herring, smelt, pike-perch, flounder, eel, also garfish and sea trout and to a lesser extent salmon and pike. Fishing gear used in coastal fishing includes traps, nets and tended lines. Catching Baltic herring with pound nets has been gaining importance in recent years. Passive fishing gear is mainly used in coastal fisheries.
For economic reasons, companies have moved to integrating distant-water and Baltic fishing, and fishing and fish processing.

Baltic Fleet Information supplied to the BSRAC by the Estonian authorities:

Year	Length of vessels - 0-8	Length of vessels - less than 12	Length of vessels - 12 and up	Length of vessels - 15 and up	Total Number of vessels
2013	0	1402	38	0	**1440**

Active Fishermen/women

Inland fisheries	Coastal fisheries	Fishing Permits	Total
	1140	1841	

From the EU fishing fleet register 1st September 2011

number	% of EU fleet	GT	% of EU fleet	Engine power kW	% of EU fleet	Trawlers	% of fleet	Non-trawlers	% of fleet
927	1.1%	14.293	0.8%	39.089	0.6%	124	13%	803	87%

In 2009 2004 fishers were employed full-time and part-time.

Meeting at Labour Inspectorate of Estonia

With Mr Indrek Avi, chief specialist on occupational safety
Veigo Tumaševski, labour inspector on maritime work
It was regretted that a representative from the Estonian Maritime Administration had been unable to take part in the meeting. Two representatives had been invited and one had sent apologies. They also received a copy of this for comments.

Indrek Avi and Veigo Tumaševski explained that their responsibility was to focus on the well-being of the employees and their working environment. They felt that there was a lack of clarity as to the distinction of responsibilities between the two authorities (Labour Inspectorate and Estonian Maritime Administration) and this in their opinion could give rise to there being too much control or double control, or no control whatsoever. They looked to the Estonian Maritime Administration for guidance on how safety onboard the vessels should be observed and maintained.
Indrek Avi referred to Directive 93/103/EC of 23 November 1993 concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for work on board fishing vessels (thirteenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) as the one which was relevant to their daily work.

We referred to the number of accidents that the Labour Inspectorate had sent us information on and invited comments.
Their main concern was an uncertainty about exactly how many accidents or incidents were reported to the authorities. This was not only a problem for the fishing sector. It was a problem in general. Other sectors such as construction were mentioned as examples where there was a lack of reporting. Generally, employers were not interested in reporting on or registering accidents. This did not imply that casualties or deaths were covered up or that the most serious accidents were not reported on.
They had the impression that a rather large proportion of the less serious accidents was not reported. The accidents that were reported were usually ones where doctors had been involved or where the employee complained that the employer had not reported on the accident. Lack of reporting, they felt, was due to a lack of reporting culture generally. They did not recognise the claim from different sectors that reporting was bureaucratic and required a lot of paperwork, since the reporting procedure was rather straightforward.

Nevertheless, there was a positive increasing trend in reporting accidents, either because employees were becoming more aware of their rights, or because it was possible to obtain compensation. Some avoided reporting accidents because they did not want to see the authorities get involved in the case. So there was a need for a positive change in the reporting culture and the introduction of obligatory insurance schemes to compensate employees who are involved in accidents. Employees were becoming more aware of their rights and that it was possible to receive compensation.
They had the impression that the bigger fishing companies did carry out a more detailed reporting of accidents.

One risk factor highlighted was that the fishing seasons were not so long and the demands placed on the employees were big: fishers were working very hard during relatively short periods.

Indrek Avi, Veigo Tumaševski and Rein Reisberg have subsequently commented that the reason why there is not a lot of reporting of occupational accidents might also be linked to the fact that fishermen may not have a contract of employment, or that they might have other contracts such as a contract of self-employment. Therefore the other contracting party (the employer) does not have an obligation to report any accidents.

According to Statistics Estonia, the government statistical agency, the covering rate of occupational accidents in the fishing sector is 2.5, this being the number by which registered accidents are multiplied. For example: if there are 10 registered accidents, then according to Statistics Estonia, there might actually have been (2.5*10=25) 25 accidents.

Dan Heering, Head of Foreign Relations and Information Department, Estonian Maritime Administration has been following the project from a distance. He has also been in contact with Priority Area 13 under the Baltic Sea Strategy. He has informed that information on fishing vessels in the Estonian Ship Register can be found here: http://www.vta.ee/atp/index.php?id=18974.

He also informed that the Estonian Maritime Administration has been investigating ship accidents. Short reports may be found here http://www.vta.ee/atp/index.php?id=720

The reports are sorted according to year on the left-side menu.

He has given us additional contacts at the Estonian Maritime Administration and we have added these to our contact list.

Meeting at the Estonian Maritime Academy
Andres Jagor, Faculty manager
Eha Merirand, teacher of navigation

They explained that the Estonian fishing fleet consists of three segments: the open sea segment and the costal fleet in the Baltic and the high seas/long distance segment.

Basic maritime training - the able seaman course - takes two months and is given to all – not just potential fishermen. It was regretted that there was no possibility to offer more specialised fisheries education. It was also pointed out that the practical work experience periods were very short.

The training course follows the provisions laid down in the national rules and the STCW-F convention which is close to being ratified by Estonia.

Relevant safety requirements were laid down in the Maritime Safety Act, which regulates the seaworthiness of ships, recreational craft and other water craft and their navigability in navigable inland waters, the safety of ships and ensuring the safety of vessel traffic on waterways, and the Seafarers Act which provides the specifications relating to employment relationships of persons working on ships entered in the Estonian ship register or the register of bareboat chartered ships.

Once students have been issued with a health certificate and have completed their basic education, they are given a certificate which qualifies them to start as a fisherman.

There are strict regulations concerning the requirement to become a fisherman, for example even to use passive gears, fishermen have to have a licence. The requirement to have a licence applied not only to fishermen, but to all those working on board. The licences are approved by fisheries organisations and associations in Estonia through the so-called Occupational Qualifications System. This is a so-called interface between the labour market and the lifelong learning system enhancing the development, assessment and recognition of occupational competence. The system is developed and administered by the Estonian Qualifications Authority and it has the support of the employers' and employees' organisations.

The College staff underlined the importance of a good maritime education - with the overall objective of making the fishermen and crew even more professional and better trained. There should be more practical training and education. The education was more theoretical than practical – a balance was needed or to do this by finding apprenticeships on vessels.

The subject of re-training qualified fishermen came up repeatedly. It was not enough to issue fishing licenses without there being an obligation to have a refresher course at regular intervals. It could be a particular benefit for fishermen on one-man coastal vessels to meet with others and learn about new safety issues and techniques.
Crews on larger vessels could also benefit from refresher training in improved cooperation in critical situations. Such courses should also be age differentiated and match the different age groups: younger and older fishermen had different perceptions and needs with respect to training. Or courses at different levels according to different qualifications or backgrounds: operational level (depending on the function on board): i.e. management level (for masters), maintenance level (for deck hands).

A wish for the future was to make such refresher courses obligatory. Current attempts at providing voluntary courses were not a success. Courses were offered, but fishermen did not take up the offer. Perhaps they were not informed of adequately or advertised widely enough. Could the local fisheries organisations do something about this? Could the courses be offered at a time when fishermen are not out fishing and have time to take part? Could women's fisheries groups play a part here?

An integral part of the basic training could also be an introduction to fisheries biology and ecosystem considerations to give a wider perspective and understanding. This could even have a beneficial spin off with respect to safety awareness, for example fishing in tune with the biology of the fish stocks and species.

The introduction of new clothing (e.g. dry suits) could be informed on and tried out at such refresher courses. The purchase of safety gear and clothing could be reimbursed by the government (EU funded), as could the courses. Mentioned here were suits equipped with PLB (personal location beacon).

Andres Jagor later sent us a report produced by the European Transport Workers' Federation and Europêche on skills and employment in the fisheries sector. The report addresses the

feasibility of creating a sector Council for the skills and employment in the fisheries sector at European level. Although the report does not focus specifically on health and safety issues, such a Council with a broad membership base of maritime stakeholders, employers' organisations, and training centres, could also include these issues on its programme of work. It is attached to this report.

It was pointed out that not much time was spent on work place assessments and the discussion of work related issues to prevent accidents and it was agreed that this was a relevant issue and needed to be thought about. But also the opinion that this was the responsibility of the fishing companies rather than the authorities.

The tradition of holding weekend coastal camps for younger school children was explained. Whilst enjoying the pleasures of an outdoor camp, the aim was to focus on safety aspects e.g. to learn how to use and put on a lifejacket at the same time as learning about fish, how to fillet, cut and cook it – so as to give a basic introduction to fishing. It was agreed that one way to introducing change and knowledge amongst grown-ups was often through the children, and they could provide motivation to adults to focus more of safety.

Meeting with industry representative

Mart Undrest, Estonian Fishermen's Association

The Estonian Fishing Association is a producer organisation founded in 2005. It consists of five trawling companies operating in Estonian waters and its members hold 48% of the historical sprat-fishing rights issued in Estonia and 43% of the Baltic herring-fishing rights. The trawling companies own altogether 12 trawlers, while the coastal fishermen in Pärnu own more than 160 boats. The members also have three trawlers based in Finland fishing the Finnish quota.

Mart Undrest explained that from his experience accidents in the fisheries sector were not a big issue in Estonia. The issue was in any case not discussed. The sector had gone through some difficult times with fleet adjustment and the introduction of ITQs. It was again profitable to operate a fishery and the sector was again becoming attractive as a work place.

He was optimistic that young men would be attracted to the profession and could demand an attractive salary and this in turn would have a beneficial influence on health and safety in the sector.

It was not possible to visit fishing vessels because the pelagic season was now finished and the cod fishery had been postponed because of the poor quality of the cod.

Estonia: Trawler

Severe ice conditions during the winter mean that the fishermen have to be extra careful.
Serious accidents may occur for both and crew if the situation is mis-calculated.

Estonia coastal vessel

This is quite a big segment in Estonia, with still a lot of manual labour, and fishing season very short (this year - 2013 - was only 2 weeks) and intensive which may result in accidents if fishermen are not careful (usually a broken arm or leg).

Recommendations/ suggestions from the two first countries visited

Follow up on basic education and training as fisherman: Are there any requirements on refresher courses for fishermen?

Consider introducing regular and obligatory refresher courses in how to use the safety/rescue equipment on board.

The Danish consultant informed that there are no refresher courses and this was highlighted as a weakness. Contrast that with the use of the medical chest: every five years it is obligatory in Denmark to have a refresher course in how to use it. Why is it compulsory to have a refresher course in how to use the medical chest, but not in how to use some of the safety equipment?

Creation of an information library in Baltic languages. That could lead to the compilation of written and /or audio and visual material.

To have improved exchange and contact between the Baltic Sea States, for example student exchanges, seminars and workshops.

Introduction of standardisation or common reporting of accidents [ref. anticipated requirements from Eurostat 2015]

The involvement of women's fisheries groups in awareness raising and refresher courses – and can the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) be applied to for this?

The recreational sector was named as an area requiring more obligatory courses in basic navigation and safety.

Purchase of equipment with safety elements – and to be able to apply for EMFF (European Maritime and Fisheries Fund) funding (await the final adoption of the new EMFF- anticipated end 2013).

The involvement of children – e.g. the summer camps that are held in Estonia.

Relevant documentation:

From Finland
Presentation by Livia College on its education and training
Certificate supplement: Vocational Qualification in Fishery, 120 credits, Study Programme/Competence Area in Fishery, Fisher, Fish Farmer, Fish Processor, Fishing Instructor (EN)
Map of the journey made

From Estonia
References to relevant legal acts and
The materials given to us by those we met:

Directive 93/103/EC
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1993L0103:20070627:EN:PDF

Links provided by Andres Jagor:
Qualification authority: http://www.kutsekoda.ee/en/index
The European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) is a reference framework which links different countries' qualifications frameworks together. It acts as a translation device to make qualifications easier to understand across different countries and systems in Europe. An important goal is also to support the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

Stakeholders of the labour market are involved in all parts of the occupational qualifications system – employers, employees, the state, trainers. Agreements are based on the co-operation of various stakeholders;

From the Maritime administration: http://www.vta.ee/atp/?lang=en

Maritime Safety Act
Scope of application of Act
(1) This Act regulates the seaworthiness of ships, recreational craft and other water craft and their navigability in navigable inland waters, the safety of ships and ensuring the safety of vessel traffic on waterways.
Entry into force: 1 January 2003 (consolidated text June 2005)
http://www.legaltext.ee/en/andmebaas/ava.asp?m=022
This Act applies to the vessel and the reporting of accidents.

Seafarers Act
Scope of application of Act
(1) This Act provides the specifications relating to employment relationships of persons working on ships entered in the Estonian ship register or the register of bareboat chartered ships (hereinafter ships registered in Estonia).
(2) This Act applies to crew members provided for in subsection 3 (1). This Act applies to employment relationships of other persons only in the cases prescribed by law.
Entered into force: 1 April 2001 consolidated text April 2004
http://www.legaltext.ee/en/andmebaas/ava.asp?m=022

Feasibility study and potential impact of the European Council for skills and employment in the fisheries sector (European Transport Workers' Federation and Europêche)
VS/2011/0542 EP (12)111 final
Dated 3rd October 2012

Those we met during the visit:

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