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Review of Eurostat Fisheries Statistics

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REVIEW OF EUROSTAT FISHERIES STATISTICS

1. Reorganisation of the data base

In 2008 the project of reorganising Eurostat Fisheries Statistics database was launched for several technical and management reasons.

One of the main characteristic of this reorganisation was cancelling the domains where data were downloaded from FAO data base and made available on Eurostat's website, such as "Employment" or "Supply Balance Sheets for Fishery products" statistics because Eurostat wanted to have a complete control on the methodology used by data providers which may ensure data comparability.

With regard to technical reasons, the implementation of new standard informatics tools was decided at Eurostat's general level to harmonize data processing, storage and dissemination.

A new Eurostat dissemination data base was in the meantime achieved.

With about 2 millions of statistical primary and derived series to manage, Eurostat fisheries data base had to be modernised in order to fasten the processing and validation time before data dissemination.

In view of achieving this project, Eurostat launched last year a project of standardisation of the transmission format and adopted the international recognised data transmission format SDMX. In cooperation with other European Commission services and international organisations partners, Eurostat is organising next March

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2010 a workshop for the EU Member States with broad participation of partners' organisations to make a first presentation of the project and draft the implementing next steps.

Concerning the internal management, human resources were progressively limited which required having more efficient informatics tools for data processing, storage and dissemination.

2. Eurostat's contributions to fisheries statistics

Eurostat kept on improving its internal cooperation with other EU services in particular with another European Commission's directorate general, DG MARE in charge of the implementation of the EU Common Fishery Policy. The late started a broad revision process to make it more efficient in ensuring the economic viability of the European fleets, conserving fish stocks, integrating with the Maritime Policy and providing good quality food to consumers.

In the international framework, Eurostat kept on being involved in several international organisations bringing its contributions in the fisheries statistical field. In particular, keeping its continuous cooperation with ICES on the basis of the partnership agreement signed between both organisations in 2003 but also with GFCM because nine EU Member States and two candidate countries are concerned by area 37.

Cooperation with FAO's services keeps on being valuable: mutual attendance to respective meetings bringing sound contributions is one of the concrete ways to improve the quality of both data bases.

A good reason for keeping Eurostat contributing to the improvement of international fisheries statistical standards is to lower the workload of data providers and improve

the efficiency of the data collection system in general, including the close co-operation with international organisations collecting the same data of similar ones.

3. New EU Aquaculture Statistics Regulation

In 2008 the European Commission (Eurostat) issued a new regulation on aquaculture data collection which improves in a significant way the level of details requested by the previous data collection system.

Not only production data and their value are requested but also, the production of hatcheries and nurseries, capture-based aquaculture and data on the structure of the EU aquaculture sector.

To produce this new Regulation, Eurostat refers, as far as possible, to FAO's standards regarding concepts, definitions and methodologies. Eurostat participated to the expert meeting organised by FAO on the revision of the aquaculture statistics terminology which took place in Ha Long Bay last year.

Two new European Commission's Decisions will enter in force in the first half of 2010 granting for some EU Member States either a transitional period to implement the new Regulation or derogations duly motivated.

4. Publications and dissemination

Several publications are available free of charge on Eurostat's website:
<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home>

New projects were launched by Eurostat to provide data available on line free of charge, among them "Statistics Explained" will upload on the website regular updated statistics and information.

New projects are ongoing: the production of a special Fisheries Statistics leaflet in 2010 and a joint contribution of two European Commission services, the "Fact & Figures 2009" of directorate general MARE.

5. New issues

Due to the lack of resources, two important issues were put in standby but might be resumed in 2010: EU Employment statistics for the fishery sector and Supply Balance Sheets for fishery products. Although a European harmonised methodology is not totally achieved, the need of statistics is strong and the work done in the past will be very useful.