

(98/C 323/110)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0842/98
by Freddy Blak (PSE) to the Commission
(11 March 1998)

Subject: Approval of trawlers

An EU rule that trawlers landing frozen cod at EU ports have to be approved for the purpose will have disastrous consequences for the fishery industry and hence employment on the Danish island of Bornholm.

The Russian authorities are not approving enough trawlers. At present only 6 or 8 of more than 250 trawlers from the Barents Sea have been approved. This would mean shortages of frozen cod on Bornholm from April onwards and hence a loss of jobs.

1. Will the Commission amend the approval provisions so that fish frozen at sea on freezer vessels may be landed within a reasonable time without such vessels having to be approved by the Russian authorities?
2. If that is impossible, how does the Commission think this problem is going to be solved?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission

(29 April 1998)

Imports of fishery products from third countries are regulated since 1991 by Council Directive 91/493/EEC of 22 July 1991 laying down the health conditions for the production and the placing on the market of fishery products ⁽¹⁾. This Directive also provides the conditions for internal production and foresees that the provisions applied to imports of fishery products shall be, at least, equivalent to those governing Community production. In particular, they provide the conditions that shall met by establishments to be approved to place fishery products on the Community market. It should be pointed out that the Directive includes as establishments not only land establishments but also vessels (factory, frozen or fishing).

Specific import conditions for Russia are established in Commission Decision 97/102/EC of 16 January 1997 laying down special conditions governing the import of fishery and aquaculture products originating in Russia ⁽²⁾ including the list of approved establishments. This list is permanently updated and at present includes 69 freezer vessels, 79 factory vessels and 21 processing plants. In the next weeks 8 factory vessels and 4 freezer vessels will be included. Currently there are at least 27 approved Russian vessels fishing cod in the Barents sea. Very soon 3 more will be added. The control of these establishments is a very important matter of public health and therefore imports can only be allowed from those establishments included in the list.

The Commission is aware of the problem raised by the Honourable Member. It has been discussed in several meetings of the standing veterinary committee and it will be tabled again in future meetings. The Agriculture Council of 16-17 February 1998 also discussed the topic.

The Commission is also ready to verify the effectiveness of Commission Decision 97/102/EC across the Community and if necessary to take the appropriate measures. However in no case should be the level of consumer protection in the Community be jeopardised.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 268, 24.9.1991.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 35, 5.2.1997.

(98/C 323/111)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0847/98
by Nikitas Kaklamanis (UPE) to the Commission
(26 March 1998)

Subject: Recognition of the sign language used by the deaf-and-dumb in the EU

Almost ten years have passed since the European Parliament adopted a resolution on 17 June 1988 ⁽¹⁾ calling for the official recognition of the national sign languages used by the deaf-and-dumb in the Member States of