

10th December

Fishing alliance doubts that regionalisation proposal will improve European fisheries

Reform of the EU's disastrous Common Fisheries Policy will be by way of "regionalisation". That was the message of EU Commissioner Maria Damanaki at a recent meeting with ROSA the campaigning alliance of groups from England, France, Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.

The meeting, held in Brussels on 7th December, also provided an opportunity for ROSA to call for a halt to the centralising process that has characterised EU fisheries policy and for a start to be made to a process of repatriation of control of policy, management and stocks back to individual EU maritime Member States.

In a statement issued by ROSA today, the alliance welcomed the recognition by the Commissioner that the EU's top-down centralised micro-management of fisheries has failed in terms of biological and ecological sustainability; matching fishing capacity with fishing opportunities; establishing clear and fair levels of compliance across the EU and bringing in the necessary local experience, knowledge and expertise of the industry to improve fisheries policy.

However ROSA's initial reaction is to be sceptical as to whether regionalisation would really provide a lifeline to an industry being rapidly destroyed and communities devastated by the present CFP set-up.

The concept raises many questions.

For example, EU treaties only recognise two players: the EU and Member States. The EU integration process has involved a massive transfer of power from the Member States to the EU. The CFP is just one manifestation of this process.

There is no indication that the EU authorities want to halt or reverse this process. Neither, under the EU treaties, can they "devolve" powers to regional bodies unless they rewrite the treaties.

Decision making powers must be repatriated to the Member States as a basis for a series of regional fisheries management arrangements between the relevant Member States.

ROSA firmly believes that what is required is regional co-operation between the relevant maritime States on such vital issues as conservation and discard reduction rather than simply moving the deck chairs around on the sinking Titanic that is the EU's Common Fisheries Policy.

Editor's Notes

ROSA is an alliance of fishing groups from England, France, Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland which together with the Irish People's Movement is united in a campaign to halt the economic and social decline suffered by fishing communities caused by the CFP.

ROSA represents a new strategic direction for fishing policy that gives Member States with an interest in a particular fisheries area the primacy of deciding the right policy for that area.

Member Groups:

- The Fishermen's Association Ltd, Aberdeen, Scotland
- Irish Fishermen's Organisation, Dublin
- Northern Ireland Fish Producer's Organisation Portavogie

- Scottish Ship Chandlers Association, Aberdeen
- South Western Fish Producer's Organisation, Devon
- French Industry representatives – Boulogne fishing co-operative, Picardie Fishermen's Organisation, Boulogne Fishermen's Organisation.
- People's Movement, Dublin. The People's Movement is attached to no political party and opposes all forms of sectarianism, racism and sexism. campaigning against any measures that further develop the EU into a federal super-state and working to defend and enhance popular sovereignty, democracy and social justice in Ireland.

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