Super-trawlers: Destructive or Sustainable?
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Super-trawlers: a perverse product of the CFP
LIFE’s Goal: to bring small scale fishers from the periphery to the centre of policy and from passive to active actors in decision taking processes that affect them

As a professional, member based, organization engaged in decision taking processes

As an advocacy group, providing a dedicated voice for small scale low impact fishers

Providing information, capacity building and other services to small scale fishers and their organizations
Some figures to start with…

Launched in 2012; operational 2015
Over 6000 small boats, ca. 9,500 fishers...
12 Member States, Baltic to Med

The HOW (basic principles)

Organization of organisations run by fishermen for fishermen
Cooperation not confrontation
If you’re not in the decision-making room, you’re nowhere
Recognize & respect the role of women (AKTEA)
Seek solutions, don’t create problems

The WHAT (the objectives)

Build alliances, build capacity
Ensure rewards for sustainable, low impact fishing (Article 17)
Redirect subsidies to good practice
Exert political influence
Work at European, Regional and national levels

The WHO (Membership criteria)

Fishing using low impact gears & practices - Right Gear, Right Time, Right Place
Vessel owner aboard when fishing
Positive contribution to sustainable fisheries, local economies and coastal ecosystem
Sustainability: a key CFP objective and international commitment
SDG14: Conserve and sustainably use.... marine resources for sustainable development

Article 2.1. of the CFP: fishing activities are environmentally sustainable consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits

Small offshore islands dependent on fishing should be recognised and supported in order to enable them to survive and prosper.

Article 17 of the CFP: sustainable criteria to be used for allocating fishing opportunities
Sustainability: Getting the balance right

Between Environmental, Economic and Social Objectives

Between different interests; between big and small; between millionaires and coastal communities

Between current needs and future aspirations

A CFP that works for all fishing interests, not just a few
Getting the Balance Right: 2 different models of fishing

**Small scale inshore fishing**

- locally based small scale fishing activities, rooted in centuries old traditions
- dependent on local resources, supporting communities, providing livelihoods
- securing local services – schools, health centres, lifeboats, with spin offs for tourism, marine based activities, skilled labour, generating knowledge, providing social safety nets.

**Super-trawlers**

- Delocalised, ocean going fish hunting factories,
- Not restricted by distance or national boundaries
- Multimillion dollar enterprises, owned by some of the world’s richest
- Supplying 00s of 000s of tonnes of fish to global markets
Getting the Balance Right: size matters

**EU Small scale fishing fleet (under 12 metres, non-towed gears)**

- No of vessels in EU: 47,545 or 74% of fishing fleet, 8% of gross tonnage
- Average daily landings per vessel: 104 kgs per day (2015)
- 51% of jobs at sea, but earnings 50% less than large scale activities
- Landings: 5% by weight, 12% by value
- Gross value added 65% of revenues

**Super-trawlers**

- Catching capacity greater than processing capacity
- Freezing vessels capacity to process and store: 100 – 400 tonnes/ day
- Non Freezing vessels: 1,000 tonnes/day in some cases
- Can spend 2 months at sea, store 7000 tonnes of fish
Super trawlers impacting on small scale fisheries

By catch of sea bass

SSF gear losses in Ireland:

No official system in place to address gear conflicts or compensation: considered a civil matter

Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), Naval Service, Garda and Coastguard can’t/ won’t help

Estimated losses:
2016: 91 pots lost at €86 per pot rigged = €7,826
2017: 285 pots, €24,510 value of equipment

Not accounting for time and fishing effort lost.

Un recorded high grading and discards
Un recorded by-catch of endangered and threatened species

VMS on supertrawlers: signals position only every 2 hours
Gerard van Balsfoort, president of the Dutch-based Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association (PFA):

*It was one of the few areas where still you could get free entry. It looked as though too many vessels would head south, but there was no choice ... if you were too late in your decision to go there, they could have closed the gate*
A cautionary tale or how to become a Killybegs multibillionaire

The Atlantic Dawn AKA Annelies Ilена “the greatest fish killing machine the world has ever seen.”

1. Become too big to fail

2. Persuade the Banks and the Government that the law does not apply to you

3. Bankroll a deal to construct a 144 metre super trawler, obtain EUR 100 million subsidies from the Government

4. Get the Irish Government to register the vessel as a merchant ship

5. Obtain Irish tonnage by swapping flags with another supertrawler

6. Sell the vessel, but keep the tonnage

7. Sell the tonnage to Irish fishing companies for EUR 00’s of millions
A cautionary tale or how to become a Killybega multibillionaire 2

The Atlantic Dawn AKA Annelies Ilena “the greatest fish killing machine the world has ever seen.”

The Balance Sheet

1. Atlantic Dawn cost 63 million Euros to build, bank rolled by Irish banks and Norwegian subsidies
2. Irish Government subsidies to Atlantic Dawn may have amounted to Euros 100 million
3. Irish Government intervention on licensing brought Euro 40 million benefit to owners
4. 2006, Atlantic Dawn owner dies, leaving estate worth Euros 72.5 million
5. 2007 Sale of Atlantic Dawn to Parlevliet & Van der Plas for Euros 30 Million
6. Atlantic Dawn tonnage kept by company sold off at Euros 10,000/ tonne
Ireland Coastal Fisheries: a history of neglect

16th Century/ 17th : British sell of fishing rights to Spain, France, Holland and Sweden; English and Scottish vessels fish in Irish waters;

1845 to 1852: Irish Famine decimates population

1950 to 1970: Irish fish landings increase x 7

1970 to 1980: rapid industrialisation of Killibegs based pelagic fishery; fishing industry pivotal role in rural development

1972: Ireland joins EU; 1983 first Common Fisheries Policy

2002 to 2006: County Donegal population decreases by 6.8%; Killybegs by 8.3%; and the vital fishing communities of Burtonport 22%, Rathmullen 8.8% and Greencastle 7%

2017: Irish islands small scale inshore fleet request for 1% of mackerel quota, 106 tonnes declined
Arranmore Island, Donegal, a small offshore island dependent on fishing
Population declined by 14% from 2006 to 2016, from 522 to 451

2017: Irish Islands (Heritage Licence) bill presented to Dáil July 2017, to “facilitate the continence of traditional fishing practices on Ireland’s offshore islands”
Super trawlers take home messages.

Keep outside areas where can negatively impact on small scale coastal fisheries

Improve Monitoring, Control and Surveillance through
• iVMS
• On-board observers
• Regular controls

Stop subsidizing super trawlers; subsidies should work for all interests, not just a few
Thank You!

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