



## **Seminar on the safety at sea of fishermen Le Havre – 3 / 4 April 2007**

### **Summary of proposals – recommendations**

The seminar enabled a review of the situation concerning the safety of fishermen in the Channel, taking particular account of the density and diversity of maritime traffic, geographical and natural conditions, and also economic and social factors, regulations and the development of other activities in the area.

The importance and seriousness of this theme was stressed from the outset, as it is the safeguarding of human lives which is at stake.

But the image of the profession is also implicated. This was the reason for emphasizing that a career as a fisherman also has its positive aspects and can remain attractive, all the more so if safety conditions are improved.

The exchanges on the situation with regard to safety and the mechanisms in place resulted in some proposals and recommendations to reduce risks and accidents. **These are set out in the current document by risk factor, without judgement being passed by all stakeholders of the maritime sector on their feasibility or acceptability.**

In conclusion, the proposals and recommendations that could be the subject of initiatives directed to the IMO and the EU or of co-operation projects are summarised together.

#### **I. Proposals and recommendations by risk factor**

Notably:

- Internal risk factors or those linked to navigation
- Risk factors particular to the Dover Strait
- External risk factors or those linked to other activities.

##### **1. Internal risk factors or those linked to navigation**

The risk of collision and accidents are linked to:

- Difficult working conditions and fatigue, linked to reduced workforces (commerce and fishing), resulting in inadequate watch systems and increased risk of collision and work-related accidents (high rates for fishermen)
- Poor perception of fishing vessels by commercial ships
- Poor manoeuvrability of commercial ships due to their size, in particular very large tankers
- The composition and instability of crews on commercial ships, with problems at times due to lack of qualifications and to behaviour
- An ageing fishing fleet linked to European regulations, and yet the boat represents the principal safety tool.

##### **Recommendations - proposals for equipment and material**

- To make it possible for all types of fishing vessels to draw attention to themselves by authorising the use of flashing lights during fishing operations and when approaching

cargo boats. One action is to bring this to the attention of the IMO which currently only authorises this use for gill netters during fishing operations and not for trawlers

- To make an AIS (Automatic Identification System) compulsory for all fishing vessels (currently carrying an AIS on board is only compulsory for fishing boats of more than 45 metres in length) with clear guidance on the type of AIS to install (Class A or B)
- An electronic watch system (radar alarm system) to be developed
- To ensure the widespread use of safety equipment for lone workers (dead-man devices) that activate an alarm in the case of illness and detect a loss of verticality (this equipment is not expensive)
- To emphasise the importance of survival equipment, such as emergency beacon, wearing a PFD (personal flotation device)
- To encourage a renewal of the fishing fleet to improve boats' reliability and working conditions.

#### Recommendations - proposals for training and raising awareness

- To strengthen links between CROSS (French Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres – MRCC) and all those working in the fishing industry for a better mutual understanding (at CROSS, on fishing boats)
- Training and raising the awareness of commercial sailors of the risk of collision with fishing vessels: building bridges for a better mutual understanding and the adoption of appropriate piloting behaviour (for example, steering clear)
- Training for emergency situations based on actual cases (learning how to respond to an emergency) and not just how to use safety equipment
- Practical training exercises to be repeated every 10 years
- Raising the level of first aid knowledge in order to respond to work-related accidents
- To develop all aspects of prevention (to prevent, rectify, give the alarm)
- To promote training for sailors at a European level (to have European sailors on board the ships)
- Importance of leaving information ashore to facilitate search and rescue in the case of an accident.

#### Recommendations – proposals for regulation

- To enforce the regulations
- To punish severely failure to report an accident and severe infractions in general.

## **2. Risk factors particular to the Dover Strait**

The risk of collision and accidents is intensified by:

- the narrowness of the navigation channel
- traffic density
- the diversity of traffic, with different traffic lanes (ferries / commercial shipping) and vastly differing navigation speeds, having to co-habit
- traffic rules adapted to the Strait but inadequately enforced.

#### Recommendations - proposals:

General recommendations:

- To improve the identification of ships
- To strengthen links between CROSS (French MRCC) and all those working in the fishing industry for a better mutual understanding (at CROSS, on fishing boats), such as a compulsory visit to CROSS Gris-Nez for future skippers
- To define zones that are particularly dangerous for fishing
- To review some of the rules for traffic in the Strait: a reduction in speed for all ships in the Strait (falling within the competence of the IMO), prohibiting the catching up of the preceding vessel and head-on navigation
- To place a pilot on board each ship crossing the Strait, when it is not able to communicate with CROSS
- Exchanges of personnel between CROSS – MRCC Dover – Calais to be continued.

To respect certain practical rules for navigation in the Strait:

- To respect the rules of navigation determined for the Strait
- To report to CROSS when navigating in the Strait and to establish communications in the case of an incident to make known the ship's intentions (co-operation)
- To allow the fishing industry within the TSS (Traffic Separation Scheme) subject to the use of the AIS
- To restore the principle of an effective watch system VHF channels 16 and 13 for all fishing vessels
- Not to fish when visibility is reduced (less than 300 metres)
- When clear ahead or astern, to cross the shipping lane at right angles.

### **3. External risk factors or those linked to other activities**

These risks are:

- undersea cables which can be in operation or not, and pipes
- shipwrecks
- containers lost overboard, which can be on the surface or just below, or on the bottom, and which can contain products which are toxic to a greater or lesser extent to the environment
- other sea-based activities: sand and gravel dredging, offshore wind farms.

#### **Undersea cables**

- Cables which are operating are known. SEAFISH has developed a system for locating and identifying these cables for shipping. Information exists on the French side but there is no such system for shipping.
- The location of cables which are out of use is less certain and is not taken into account by the system developed by SEAFISH who would like to guarantee the reliability of the information it supplies.

#### **Recommendations - proposals:**

- To investigate the extension of the system developed by SEAFISH to the French side of the Channel
- To centralise information on the location, even approximate, of out of use redundant cables and shipwrecks, particularly from information provided by fishermen
- To identify ownership and encourage procedures for the removal of redundant cables, particularly when it is a question of laying new cables
- To call for the principle of removing redundant cables to be incorporated into international and community legislation.

#### **Containers lost overboard**

- No precise figures exist on the number of lost containers, but their number must be increasing in line with the development of containerised traffic. Equally there is little information on the origin and contents of lost containers.
- Over and above the risk to shipping and fishing (collision, hooking up), the products being transported can be to a greater or lesser extent toxic to the environment and affect fish stocks.

#### **Recommendations - proposals:**

- To develop a system of pinpointing (the position) and identifying lost containers (the question of the cost of installing a labelling system on each container to be transported is crucial)
- To develop information on the number, origin and contents of lost containers, in order to evaluate, in particular, pollution risks
- To call for the principle of recovering lost containers to be incorporated into international and community legislation

- To reduce the risk of losing containers, in particular by calling for the rules regarding the loading and tonnage of container ships to be amended.

#### **Other sea-based activities (apart from navigation)**

- Activities such as sand and gravel dredging, offshore wind farms etc., which are likely to be developed in the future, present potential risks to shipping, particularly in the case of a ship breaking down
- Over and above the risks to shipping and fishing activities, these activities impact to a greater or lesser extent on fish stocks.

#### Recommendations - proposals:

- To develop a plan for using the sea area, in discussion with the different user categories, as for land areas
- To strengthen consultation prior to authorising these different activities.

## **II. Initiatives and projects**

### **Initiatives to be directed to the IMO**

- To make it possible for all types of fishing vessel to draw attention to themselves by authorising the use of flashing lights during fishing operations and on approaching cargo ships
- To review certain rules of traffic circulation in the Strait
- To reduce the risk of lost containers, in particular by amending the rules for loading and tonnage of container ships
- In the long term, to make a system of recovery and identification of lost containers compulsory.

### **Initiatives to be directed to the EU, in particular the Green Paper**

- To make an AIS (Automatic Identification System) compulsory for all fishing vessels
- To encourage the renewal of the fishing fleet to improve the reliability of boats and working conditions
- To promote training for sailors at the European level (to have European sailors on board the boats)
- To call for the principle of removing redundant cables to be incorporated into international and community legislation
- To call for the principle of recovering lost containers to be incorporated into international and community legislation
- To develop information on the number, origin and content of lost containers, so as to evaluate, in particular, pollution risks
- To develop a plan for using the sea area, in discussion with the different user categories, as for land areas.

### **Franco-British projects**

- Training and raising the awareness of commercial sailors of the risk of collision with fishing vessels: building bridges for a better mutual understanding and the adoption of appropriate piloting behaviour (for example, steering clear)
- To develop all aspects of prevention (to prevent, rectify, give the alarm)
- Exchanges of personnel between CROSS – MRCC Dover – Calais to be continued
- To investigate an extension of the system developed by SEAFISH to the French side of the Channel for the detection of undersea cables during navigation
- To centralise information on the locality, even approximate, of out of use redundant cables and shipwrecks
- To develop a plan for using the sea area, in discussion with the different user categories, as for land areas.