

Report on the webinar on CCTV and fisheries

Lessons learned from experiences worldwide

The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands organised on **14 April**, a webinar on **CCTV (closed-circuit television - cameras) and fisheries**. The objective of the webinar was to learn about CCTV and the experiences of some countries that already implemented it or that are running pilot projects. Scientists, fishing industry and ministry and EU officials were invited to share their experiences and opinions. The discussion was timely given the **on-going interinstitutional negotiations on the control regulation** at the EU level. Indeed, in that framework, the Commission proposed to use CCTV for some vessels as a **compulsory tool to control the implementation of the landing obligation**. This proposal is **very controversial** especially among the fishing industry. Topics such as privacy and data protection rights as well as the landing obligation itself are questioned. The Council of the EU and the Parliament have different perspectives on the subject and discussions will be very interesting to follow. The following report is a short summary of the discussions of the webinar.

Speakers :

- **Mario Santos** (Head of Unit EU waters and North Atlantic at the European Fisheries Control Agency - EFCA)
- **Miguel Nuevo** (Head of Sector at EFCA)
- **Edwin van Helmond** (Researcher at Wageningen University)
- **Thijs Vonk** (Skipper mfv Klasina-J)
- **Ditta Maja Noach** (Project Officer Electronic Monitoring, Danish Kattegat Nephrops Fishery)
- **Kenn Skau Fischer** (CEO, Danish Fishermen PO)
- **Brett Alger** (Electronic Technologies Coordinator at the National, Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - NOAA)
- **Pim Visser** (Representative of Dutch Fisheries)
- **Nanou Beekman** (Director of Rural Areas and Fisheries - Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality)

Summary of the discussion:

EFCA set the scene by explaining that **compliance with Landing Obligation (LO) is low** for some fleet segments in some areas. According to the speaker, traditional tools are inefficient to control the LO and **more updated tools such as Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM - CCTV, sensors, GSM, GPS)** have to be implemented in order to control better and to get more reliable data. With operational programs on REM in different EU sea basins, EFCA says REM is **ready to be implemented** in EU fisheries but the **legal basis is lacking**. One of the arguments in favour of REM is also the efficiency of this tool in many parts of the world.

The comments on these assumptions diverged. Pim Visser (Dutch Fishing Industry) began by asserting that **LO is not enforceable** so we should replace it with a recording obligation, for which REM could be helpful. Nanou Beekman (Dutch Ministry) raised the issue of **privacy and data protection**. Representatives of EFCA answered that the acceptance of the industry towards REM has evolved, with increasing voluntary implementation of REM.

After this, the panellists moved away from the EU wide perspective to study the implementation of REM in two countries: **the Netherlands and Denmark**. Scientists from both countries share the same conclusion: REM can document non-compliance to LO. Edwin van Helmond (Netherlands) added that REM increases **efficiency, transparency and traceability** compared to classic electronic monitoring. Ditta Maja Noach (Denmark) explained that fishers see REM as a **severe surveillance** and have difficulties to recruit new crew members due to the presence of cameras. To the latter, Ken Skau Fischer (Danish Fishermen PO) answered that Danish Fishers do like CCTV but not when it is compulsory. He explained that CCTV should be a **bottom-up process** accompanied by **positive incentives** such as extra quotas, instead of sanctions. Pim Visser and him agreed that the **EU approach is top-down** and does not take into account fishers perspectives. Thijs Vonk (Dutch fishermen) insisted on the fact that fishers are **willing to innovate**, but according to him, the **technology is not ready** yet and improvement is needed. Nanou Beekman added that the primary goal of the LO, which is improving the selectivity and the sustainability of fisheries, should not be forgotten.

To conclude the webinar, Brett Alger (NOAA) explained the US implementation of REM and pointed out some of the remaining challenges such as **catch handling, transmission of data, technology use, privacy** and the need for **flexible regulations**.