



Committee on Fisheries

29.9.2017

MISSION REPORT

following the delegation to Tokyo, Japan from 18 to 22 September 2017

Committee on Fisheries

Members of the mission:

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Gabriel Mato | (PPE) (Leader of the mission) |
| Isabelle Thomas | (S&D) |
| Francisco José Millán Mon | (PPE) |
| Julie Girling | (ECR) |
| Izaskun Bilbao Barandica | (ALDE) |

Introduction

A delegation of the European Parliament's Committee on Fisheries visited Tokyo, Japan from 19 to 21 September 2017. The delegation, headed by Mr Gabriel Mato, Coordinator of the EPP Group, included Ms Isabelle Thomas (S&D), Mr Francisco Millán Mon (EPP), Ms Julie Girling (ECR) and Ms Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE). The programme was organised by the PECH Committee Secretariat in cooperation with the EU Delegation in Tokyo.

This mission confirms the European Parliament's engagement to closely monitor the global fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing¹. It provided for an opportunity to assess with the Japanese government and key stakeholders the measures currently in place in Japan to this effect and to explore on how to strengthen the bilateral and multilateral cooperation against IUU fishing.

At the same time, it provided an opportunity to exchange with the Japanese legislator on the models of fisheries management applied, to compare experiences and implementation tools, in particular regarding the setting of quotas, the controls of catches and the traceability of imports of commercial fish and seafood species.

The European Union and Japan are important producers and, at the same time, the biggest importers and consumers of fish and seafood products. This implies the responsibility to promote, at a global level, appropriate management tools for the sustainable use of fisheries resources. In this respect, the EU and Japan share the same values and goals and have committed to cooperate closely to tackle and prevent IUU fishing practices worldwide, which account for more than 20 bn. EUR worth of fish and seafood every year, not to mention the impact on fish stocks and the marine environment.

Japan is also a strategic trading partner for the EU fishing fleet and a protagonist in a number of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, such as ICCAT, IOTC and WCPFC², to which the European Union is also an active party.

Japan, with a population of 127 million and a GDP per capita of 39.000 USD (2016) is a major economic player in Asia and, as member of G7, one of the most industrialised countries. It is also surrounded by some of the world's richest fishing grounds: the Northern Pacific accounts for almost 24% of the global fish and seafood production. The diversity of fish and shellfish in Japan is such that more than 3.300 fish species are found in its waters.

Most of Japan's fisheries production originates from its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)³: however, no single species constitutes dominant catches: 80% of Japan's total catch volume is shared among 24 species⁴. The latest fish stock assessment (2015 data) show that resource levels of the 16 most significant species were not bad overall, but on the decline for the past two decades, causing the country to be more dependent on imports. On the other hand,

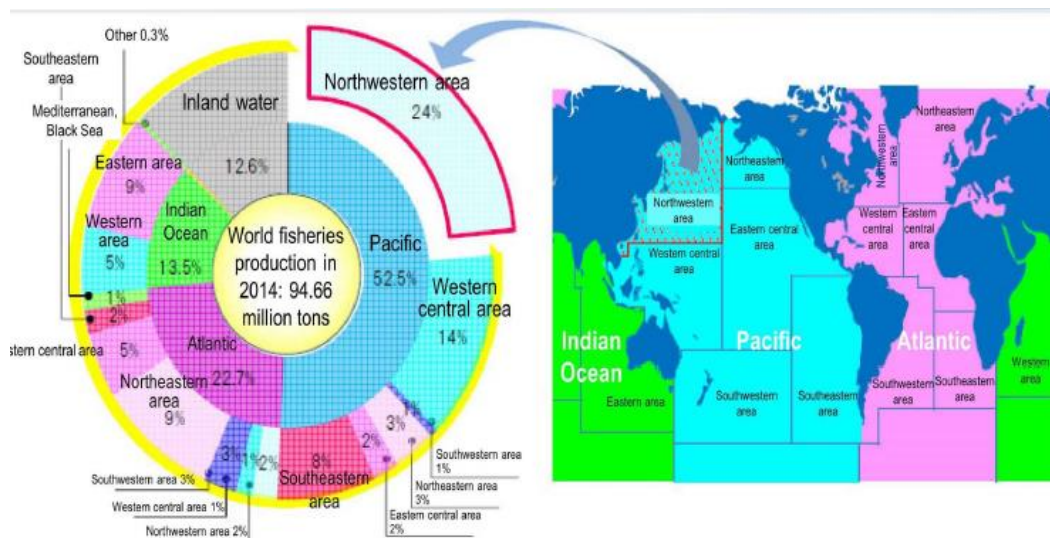
¹ The implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which entered into force on 1 January 2010, and applies to the EU fleet operating in all waters.

² International Committee for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna; Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

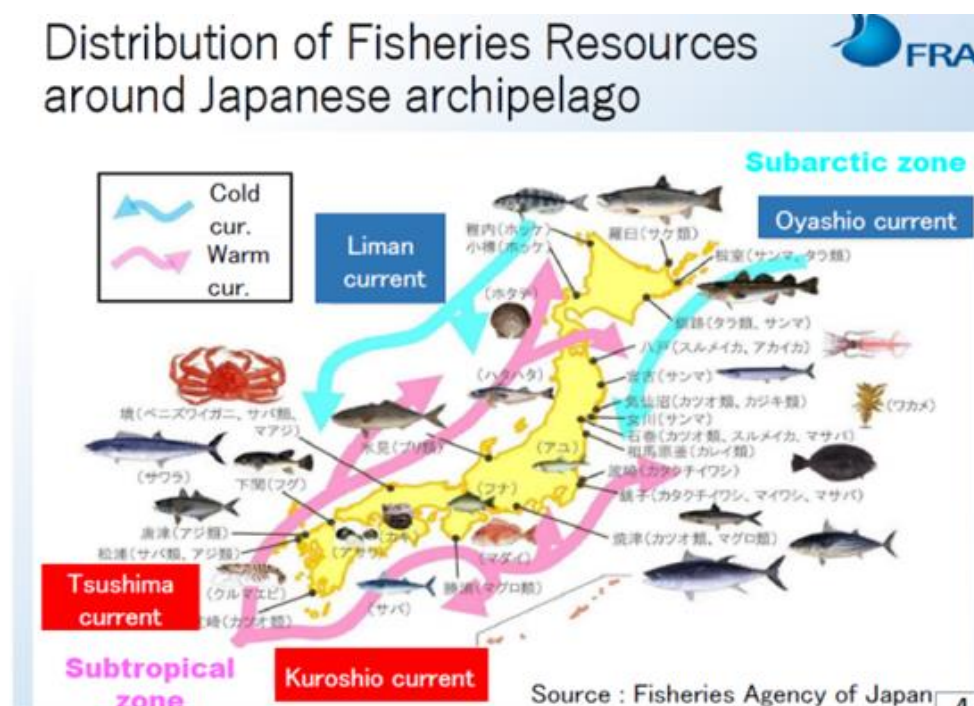
³ Japan's EEZ covers an area of 4.47 m km², the 6th largest in the world

⁴ To compare with other big fishing nations: in Norway and Iceland 5-6 species account for 80% of total catches

Japan's aquaculture production has increased significantly and now contributes strongly (over 20%) to national seafood consumption.



While producing only a small share of the country's GDP, Japan's fishing industry plays a major role in providing a vital source of food protein and contributes to the livelihood of coastal communities. Traditionally, Japan had the **world's highest levels of per-capita fish and seafood consumption** (35-40 kg/person/year); over the last decade, a decreasing trend has set in, as the younger generation in Japan seems to prefer meat to fish, while in the EU per-capita consumption of fish and seafood has steadily increased over the same period.



Japan is still the **world's largest consumer Bluefin tuna**, which led the country to apply anti-IUU measures for the management of tuna stocks, to develop suitable statistical and catch documentation programmes, IUU vessel blacklists etc., measures that were later expanded also to other stocks. In this context, it is important to underline that in May 2017 Japan ratified the **Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA)**, an international treaty adopted

by the FAO in 2009⁵ and designed to curb illegal fishing. This ratification signified a critical step in Japan's efforts to close its ports to illegal fishing.

Summary report of meetings and visits

Introductory briefing (EU Delegation)

Mr Francesco Fini, Deputy Head of the EU Delegation in Tokyo, welcomed the EP delegation⁶ and gave Members a detailed introduction on the current political situation in Japan, its economy and key elements in the bilateral relations

Members were updated on the “breaking news” of the day, i.e. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe calling for snap elections to allegedly take advantage of opposition disarray and public support for his hard line against North Korea's ballistic missile program, with elections set to take place on 22 October.



Another factor strongly affecting Japanese politics and its economy are the 2020 Olympic Games, for which the country is preparing itself at every level. This has even implication for fisheries, i.e. the moving of the Tsukiji Fish Market from its traditional location to a new site in 2018, in order to gain valuable urban areas close to the high-value Ginza district.

As regards the control of its territorial waters, Japan is involved in three island disputes with its neighbouring countries South Korea, China, Taiwan, and Russia⁷. Thus, as Mr Fini pointed out, questions related to IUU quickly become questions of territorial waters and national sovereignty, raising the stakes far beyond fisheries issues.

Looking at EU-Japan relations, the focus is clearly set on the “Economic Partnership Agreement” (EPA), for which the political framework was signed in July 2017, but with a good number of details still to be hammered out in bilateral negotiations. For instance, for trade in fisheries products it is still unclear whether the abolition of import tariffs will also imply the abolition of quotas, or not.

An issue Japan regards very critically are the EU's “Fukushima measures” applied on its agricultural and related food exports to the EU, which are seen here as an unjustified ban.

⁵ The PSMA, ratified by 47 other countries, including the European Union, entered into force in June 2016

⁶ EU Ambassador Viorel Isticioaia-Budura met the Members briefly at the end of the programme of day 2.

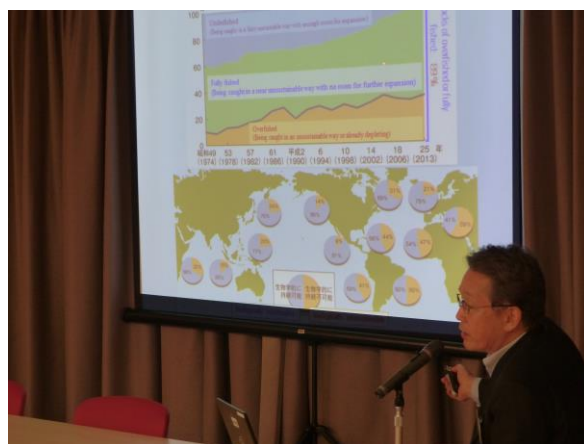
⁷ The Senkaku Islands, located in the East China Sea and administrated by Japan, are claimed by China and Taiwan; the Liancourt Rocks in the Sea of Japan, controlled by Korea, are claimed by Japan; the South Kuril Islands, located north-east of Hokkaido, are under Russian administration but also claimed by Japan.

Looking at fisheries, Japan's recent ratification of the Port State Measures Agreement is to be acknowledged as an important step and highlights the country's strong commitment to step up its fight against IUU fisheries. But as far as controls of catches and landings are concerned, a proper assessment is more difficult. Whaling still poses another classical strain in EU-Japan relations, due to the long-standing divergences on this subject.

Presentation by Prof. Masanori MIYAHARA, President of the Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency

The Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency was established in 2016 through a merger of the Fisheries Research Agency and the National Fisheries University. Headquartered in Yokohama, it features 10 Institutes with specific areas of interest.

This Research Agency is responsible for conducting stock assessments, making forecasts for priority fisheries and projects concerning climate change and environmental conditions and promoting new developments in aquaculture.



Members had a very fruitful exchange with Prof. Miyahara, following his detailed and interesting presentation on the state-of-play of Japanese fisheries management. The following key messages were singled out for questions and further discussions:

- An overall **government review of Japanese fishery laws and regulations** is going on, to issue recommendations in early 2018; the declared goal is to rebuild the fish resources around Japan to more productive and sustainable levels, to ensure the viability of the Japanese fish production and to raise its international competitiveness;
- **Japan's dependence from fish seafood imports** has risen to 40%, and as the domestic consumption is shrinking since 2000, operators need to increase exports to keep their profitability; thus China now has become a strong export market, with allegedly good commercial partnerships in place;
- On **data collection**, the fishery cooperatives which are present in every port, provide reliable data on their members' catches and landings;
- **Fishing productivity** (tons/fisher/year) in Japan is not high if compared to NZ, Iceland or Norway, but in line with the EU's average;
- The **lack of young fishermen** is a problem for Japan; young people do not find fishing an attractive profession, nor do they consider it suitable to earn a good living (northern Hokkaido, where fishermen can earn more, is an exception);

- **Fish stocks** around Japan are generally not in a too bad shape: in the NW-Pacific 76% of fisheries are assessed as biologically sustainable; however, all stocks are steadily declining, and there are examples of recent stocks slumps (sardines: cyclical stock, similar experience in Europe!), Pacific saury and Japanese squid);
- Japan reports to have no **discarding problem** yet, as fishermen don't need to highgrade their catch at sea; **no “landing obligation”** is known in Japan, and there is clearly no intention of taking such a step;
- An estimated **25-36% of wild-seafood imports to Japan in 2015 were reported to come from IUU fisheries**, mostly tuna, chub mackerel, crab and eel species; IUU fishing activity by foreign vessels taking place outside the Japanese EEZ is regularly noted, but out of reach of Japanese enforcement authorities; most likely, such vessels would then land their IUU catch in non-Japanese ports... but not only, as these figures suggest;
- **Aquaculture production** in Japan is on the rise, notably due to increasing prawn production; unlike in Europe, companies do not experience many administrative burdens or restrictions. Aquaculture also manages to attract a younger workforce, as the work is seen as less hard and wages higher than in traditional fisheries;
- Contrary to other world markets, **fish and seafood consumption** in Japan is steadily declining since the year 2000, as younger people tend to prefer meat products. The reduced domestic demand has pushed producers to explore new export markets.



Meeting with Mr Shingo OTA, MAFF Councillor, and representatives of the Japan Fisheries Agency & MoFA

The **Japan Fisheries Agency** is the national government body in charge of fisheries management, including the planning and implementation. It is subordinated to the **Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries**.

Members met with a high-level delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MAFF) to discuss the implementation of fisheries resource management in Japan, international cooperation against IUU fishing and control measures in place. The Japanese delegation consisted of:

- **Mr Shingo OTA**, MAFF Councillor and Japan's ICCAT & IOTC Commissioner
- **Mr Yukiya TSUNO**, Dept. Director, MoFA Fisheries Division
- **Mr Hirohide MATSUSHIMA**, Dept. Director, Japan Fisheries Agency
- **Mr Takaaki SAKAMOTO**, Director, JFA Fisheries Products Trade Office
- **Mr Toshiyuki KUBODERA**, Director, JFA Resources Promotion Office
- **Mr Koichi MIZUTANI**, Dept. Director, JFA Enforcement Office
- **Mr Yoshikiyo KONDO**, Dept. Director, JFA International Affairs Division



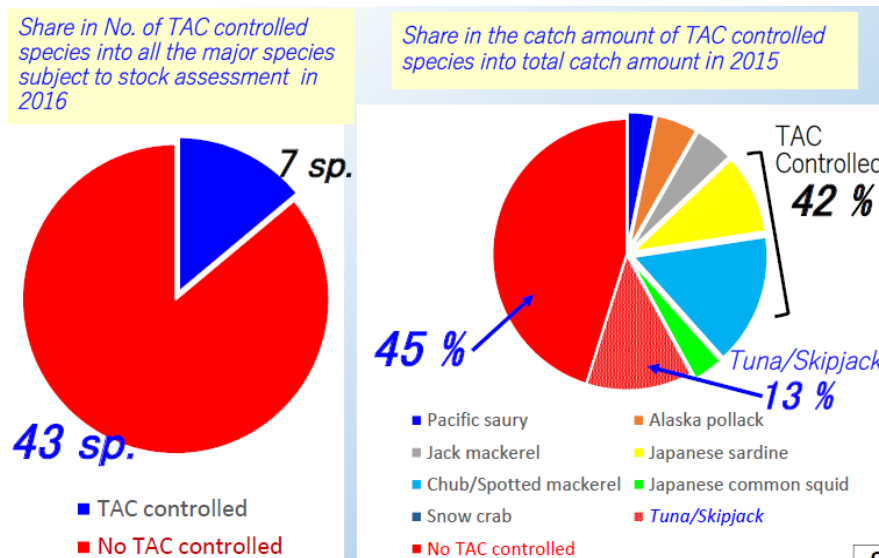
Questions⁸ raised by Members on fisheries management focused in particular on the following subjects:

- Why are there TACs & quotas only for seven species⁹? (*42% of catches are covered by TACs, including Snow crab (!), but no political wish to extend quotas to other species*)
- What is the principle applied in Japan to allocate these fishing quotas? (*Table presented*)
- Are there plans to further reduce the Japanese fishing fleet? (*No, reductions applied are sufficient*)
- Is MSY used as a parameter to set TACs (*“b-limit” is the scientific parameter used*)
- How strong is the consumers' weight in Japan to influence fisheries management? (*Not as high as in the EU and the MSC ecolabel is hardly used. Consumers check if a fish is of domestic production or imported, but generally don't ask for the level of sustainability of the seafood products they consume (ex. eel)*)
- Who actually monitors the catches and landings? (*Cooperatives control landings of small vessels, the JFA is to control bigger vessels in Japanese waters... (sporadically). Catches are also marketed by the cooperatives, which are investigated by the JFA only if grossly irregular data are spotted*)
- Is there a catch documentation scheme? (*Yes for certain species*)

⁸ Replies are summarized in italics!

⁹ Pacific saury, jack mackerel, chubb mackerel, snow crab, Alaska pollock, sardine, squid

- The treatment of discards: is there a “landing obligation” like in the CFP, or a law to use discards for fishmeal? (*No, not considered*)
- Is there a different treatment or specific incentives for small-scale fisheries, i.e. when allocating quotas? (*No, not in principle*)



A specific exchange on **IUU fishing** followed, which focused in particular on:

- The role of the newly created North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC)¹⁰ in ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries (*Starts becoming effective, adopted a list of 30+ IUU vessels and suitable management measures*)
- Are transshipment forbidden in NPFC? (*Not yet, but working on it!*)
- Monitoring of non-tuna catches outside the Japanese EEZ (*Difficult to implement*)
- Onboard inspections and sanctions against foreign IUU vessels? (*Inspections mostly done in port; occasional sanctions applied, but are formally the responsibility of the foreign government*)



¹⁰ The NPFC is an inter-governmental organization established by the “Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean” with the objective to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the Convention Area; current Members include Canada, China, Japan, South Korea, Russian Federation, Taiwan, USA and Vanuatu

On IUU, the Japanese delegation recalled the significance of its ratification of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement, and the bilateral agreements in place to collaborate in the fight against IUU fishing, signed with the EU (2012), the USA (2015) and Thailand (2017).

The government's strong commitment and enhanced surveillance to prevent illegally caught tuna, swordfish and crab from entering the Japanese market led to:

- Import prohibition of tunas originating from countries or vessels on any RFMO IUU list or from vessels not registered by RFMOs;
- Conducting DNA tests of tuna to verify compliance with RFMO measures;
- Collecting information on bluefin tuna farming in various countries.

For crab imports, mostly from Russia, a bilateral agreement with the Russian Federation also introduced additional certifications and countermeasures against poaching and illegal trade.

Visit of the Tsukiji Fish Market

The **Tsukiji Fish Market** is the largest seafood market in the world, handling some 2,350 metric tons of seafood daily, worth about 1.6 bn ¥. It consists of an inner market where most of the wholesale business and the famous tuna auctions are taking place, and an outer market whose retail shops and restaurants cater to the public. The market handles more than 400 different types of seafood, from seaweed to expensive caviar and from tiny sardines to tuna and whale meat.



Members were invited by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to a guided early-morning visit of the fish market in Tsukiji. After an introduction by Mr Haruta, Deputy Director of the Market Management Division, they could witness the frantic activity and the huge variety of fish and seafood offered for sale. The highlight of the visit was of course to attend the tuna auctions.



Tsukiji opens at 3.00 a.m. with the arrival of the products by ship, truck and plane from all over the world. The value of the tuna - unloaded deep-frozen - is estimated by auction houses, with the auctions starting at 5.00 a.m. Only licensed participants (wholesalers, agents for restaurants, food processing companies, large retailers) can make bids.

Since the fish market is relatively close to the central Ginza district, it will be relocated to Toyosu in 2018 to gain valuable real estate for the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics.



The daily tuna auction at 5:00 a.m. is usually closed to the public; a sample from the tail provides information on the meat quality (fat content) of each deep-frozen tuna to be sold.



Meeting with ZENGYOREN

JF Zengyoren is the nationwide federation of **Japanese Fisheries Cooperatives** organized by fishermen at local level. There are **950 cooperatives** operating in **2,866 Japanese ports**. On behalf of their members, they may engage in lobbying, marketing, consultancy & auditing, fish processing, storage etc. with an annual turnover exceeding 100bn ¥ (750 m€).

Mr Toshihiro OMORI, managing director of Zengyoren, welcomed the delegation and presented the wide range of activities covered by the cooperatives' network. He highlighted in particular the **"Pride fish"** and other campaigns/initiatives to promote lesser known fish species to Japanese and overseas consumers and fish consumption in general, as well as some international cooperation projects (i.e. marine products restaurant in Singapore).

There was a request to the EU to withdraw the **"Fukushima restrictions"** imposed on Japanese imports, including fish and seafood products, as the restrictions are considered unjustified, since fish and seafood products from Japan are strictly controlled and perfectly safe for consumption.

Currently **160,000 fishermen** are registered as cooperative members, aged on average 56.7 years, with a yearly net loss of 8,000 members over the past decade. Two successful measures for members are in place: a leasing plan to scrap older vessels (50% government subsidy, the rest financed by a 10-15 year lease) and an insurance to cover the loss of landed catch volume (also subsidized).

Regarding **fisheries controls and IUU issues**, Zengyoren admitted that while minor poaching activities might occasionally occur in coastal waters, no IUU activity was registered by Japanese vessels. While the cooperatives closely control their members' catches and landings, imports by larger and foreign vessels have to be inspected by the government enforcement authorities (JFA, Coast Guard, Customs) at the designated ports of entry.



Meeting with Members of the Japanese Diet (National Parliament)



Members attended a working lunch with **LDP¹¹ Members of the Japanese Diet** from the Committee on Fisheries in both Houses (House of Representatives and House of Councillors):

- Mr Yasukazu HAMADA (HoR), Chair Res. Committee on Fisheries
- Mr Kiyoshi EJIMA (HoC), Chair, Committee on Fisheries
- Mr Genjiro KANEKO (HoC), Dept. Chair
- Mr Arata TAKEBE (HoR), Vice-Minister for Environment

In a very open and friendly atmosphere, Members exchanged on subjects as:

- Promotion of small-scale fisheries and means to boost the income of local fishermen;
- Generation gap affecting fisheries;
- Factors behind the success of aquaculture in Japan (20% of production)
- Territorial waters dispute affecting IUU controls



¹¹ Liberal Democratic Party, the ruling party in Japan

Meeting with SUISANKAI & OPRT

Suisankai, or Japanese Fisheries Association (JFA), was established in 1882 as the lobby organisation of Japan's fishing industry, and counts today more than 400 members (associations, companies and individual members).

OPRT was created as an initiative of the Japanese tuna industries to promote the sustainable use of tunas; it represents all stakeholder in tuna fisheries and publishes, *inter alia*, a "positive list" of tuna fishing vessels. OPRT currently covers 998 vessels and membership is open also to foreign vessels and consumer organisations.

Mr. Toshiro SHIRASU, President of Suisankai, welcomed the PECH delegation and presented the other members of his high-level delegation:

- Mr Yoshiyuki SHIGE, Suisankai, Senior Executive Managing Director
- Mr Daishiro NAGAHATA, Managing Director of OPRT (Organisation for the promotion of responsible tuna fisheries)
- Mr Takahide NARUKO, Vice-President, All-Japan Purse-Seine Fisheries Association
- Mr Mitsunori YOSHIDA, President, Japan Overseas Fishing Association
- Mr Masashi NISHIMURA, Manager of Suisankai Operation Division
- Mr Katsunori HIRAI, Dept. Director, Suisankai Fisheries Administration Div.



The debate with Members focused on the following issues:

- Ecolabels, traceability of tuna products and the role of consumers: are they interested to know the origin of the fish, or if it was fished legally? (*For tuna catches the five RFMOs have a good overview and traceability is very advanced, the catch documentation thorough and controls are done by JFA inspectors!*)
- OPRT campaigns for the promotion of responsible tuna promotion? (*caught by longliner vessels, the product stays frozen at -60°C for best conservation until being sold at the market*);
- Current trends in the tuna market and promotion campaigns targeting the EU market? (*yellow fin tuna increases in EU, swordfish consumption in Japan is low*);
- State of fish stocks (sardines), whaling policy and how to tackle an IUU level of 35% of imported wild catches?

Scientific presentations on IUU issues & illegal trade in fisheries

Back in the EU Delegation, Members had the opportunity to discuss with Prof. Kenzo KAIFU, of the Tokyo Chuo University, and Ms. Hiromi SHIRAISHI, programme officer at the WWF-sponsored NGO “Traffic - The wildlife monitoring network” on the subject of IUU and illegal trade in fisheries in Japan.



IUU fishing risk by species

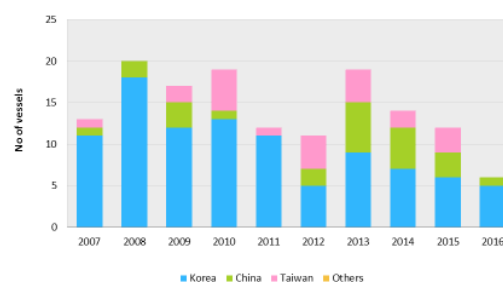
| Risk Area | 1. Fishing vessels, legal personality and companies | 2. Fisheries | 3. Flag State | 4. Coastal State | 5. Port State | 6. Market State | Average |
|--------------------|---|--------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------|
| Eels nei | 3.00 | 2.90 | 2.83 | 2.91 | 2.90 | 1.88 | 2.74 |
| Flatfish nei | 2.33 | 2.08 | 2.28 | 2.04 | 2.11 | 1.84 | 2.00 |
| Herring nei | 2.63 | 1.67 | 1.05 | 1.10 | 0.99 | 1.81 | 1.54 |
| Jumbo flying squid | 2.33 | 1.37 | 1.66 | 1.70 | 1.46 | 1.84 | 1.73 |
| King crabs | 2.33 | 2.32 | 1.36 | 1.24 | 1.65 | 2.02 | 1.82 |
| Mackerel nei | 1.54 | 1.17 | 1.45 | 1.67 | 1.61 | 1.81 | 1.54 |
| Octopus nei | 2.42 | 2.27 | 1.01 | 1.26 | 1.40 | 1.86 | 1.70 |
| Pacific salmon nei | 2.50 | 2.07 | 1.28 | 1.18 | 1.75 | 1.91 | 1.78 |
| Smelts nei | 2.64 | 2.12 | 1.35 | 1.17 | 1.52 | 1.88 | 1.78 |
| Tanner crabs | 2.29 | 1.88 | 1.31 | 1.31 | 1.48 | 1.81 | 1.68 |

TRAFFIC is a strategic alliance of



Source: WWF Japan

Number of foreign vessel seizures in charge of IUU fishing in Japanese waters



TRAFFIC is a strategic alliance of



Source: Fisheries Agency of Japan

The two presentations gave an interesting overview of the IUU risk levels of the different fisheries, as well as the numbers of foreign vessels actually seized by Japanese authorities for IUU-related infringements in Japanese waters. Most offending vessels were registered in China or South Korea. However, the presentations also suggested that IUU fishing of other species by both domestic and foreign vessels could be possible even in Japanese waters, since effective controls by the Coast Guard or JFA inspection vessels are not too frequent.

A particular focus was set on **eels** (different species), of which Japan is the world's largest consumer. Since Japanese waters have now been depleted and domestic catches are dwindling, imports - mostly from China - are filling the gap. These eel imports however are particularly at risk of IUU activity, since legal and illegally caught eels are often mixed in the same cargo, making it very difficult for controllers to differentiate. Illegal cargos of European eel, which is an endangered species protected under CITES, are routed from the EU via northern Africa to China, end up on the Japanese market. Investigations are ongoing, but firm evidence is difficult to find.

Field trip to KANAGAWA prefecture: Yokosuka & Misaki port

On the last day, Members visited the fishing port of Misaki, reported as one of Japan's most important fishing harbours for tuna catches and specialized in the processing of tuna. After a brief exchange with representatives of the Misaki Port authority and the Kanagawa prefectural government, Members visited the Nishimatsu tuna processing plant and deep-freezer warehouse, where the tuna landed is deep-frozen at -60°C before being sliced, packed and marketed. Reportedly, only domestic vessels are authorized to land tuna at Misaki, while foreign vessels are supposed to land their catch in designated ports such as Yokohama and Yokosuka.

A very lively and instructive exchange with the head of the Miura JF Cooperative, Mr Fujimura, gave Members an insight on the fishing gear used in this area and on how climatic change is affecting fish migrations and catches in the surrounding waters. The Miura cooperative reportedly has 600 vessels (mostly tuna longliners), catching 300-400 t/year.



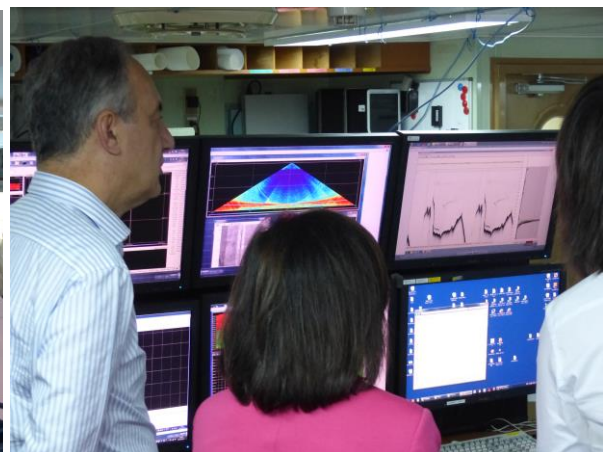
Visit of JAMSTEC in Yokosuka

JAMSTEC, the Japanese Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology, is a leading research institute for marine-earth science and technology, covering a broad spectrum of marine science and technology. Reporting to the Ministry of Education, Technology and Culture, it obtains funding of 40-60bn ¥ (450m €).

JAMSTEC Executive Director Dr Yoshihisa SHIRAYAMA and the Director-General for MARITEC department, Dr Takeo TANAKA welcomed the PECH delegation and presented the Agency's main research projects in the field of fisheries, such as:

- Recovery of fisheries in coastal regions after the 2011 earthquake (mapping of fishing grounds, estimation of marine resources);
- Research of flexible responses of phytoplankton to changing environmental conditions and monitor the decrease of radioactivity in waters;
- Research of the neon flying squid habitat in the central/northern Pacific;
- “Argofloat” project in cooperation with 20 countries worldwide (floats to collect marine data, set as deep as 2000m);
- Effects of microplastic on the foodchain and the marine environment: new priority issue, but no project yet.

Dr Tanaka led Members for a guided tour of the JAMSTEC facility, including a visit aboard the research vessel “Yokosuka” (one of six research vessels operated by the agency) and to the submarine depot with the deep-sea manned research submersible “Shinkai 6500” (which can dive with 3 people onboard to depths of 6.500 m!) and the cruising unmanned submersible “Urashima”.





Main Findings & Conclusions

Following their delegation visit to Japan, the Members of the Committee on Fisheries:

1. Express their gratitude and appreciation for the warm welcome and the open exchanges held with all stakeholders, as well as for the assistance provided by the MAFF and the Japan Fisheries Agency to facilitate the very informative visits;
2. Underline that the EU and Japan are strong partners and fully committed to the global fight against IUU fishing; recall that, as world's leading import markets for fish and seafood products, they share a common responsibility to close their markets and ports to any kind of illegally caught or traded fish and seafood;
3. Appreciate that the Japanese government is deploying substantial means to promote sustainable fisheries, and to put in place effective monitoring and control and enforcement structures to tackle and eradicate IUU fishing practices;
4. Stress the importance to keep implementing systematic controls and inspections of suspicious fishing vessels within and outside of Japan's territorial waters, as well as in the ports of landing, so as to successfully deter IUU operators and eradicate IUU practices;
5. Call for a strong EU-Japan coordination within the RFMOs where both are contracting parties, notably ICCAT, IOTC and WCPFC, in a continuing effort to encourage other contracting parties and countries to join in the fight against IUU fishing;
6. Took note of the different approaches in setting catch quotas and in fishery management in general; realize, however, that the EU and Japan share common concerns and challenges, such as the need to raise productivity and profitability of their fisheries, to strengthen management measures, to rationalise fishing capacities, to implement effective controls and to motivate young people to take up a profession in fisheries;
7. Took note with interest of the ongoing review of fishery policies by the Japanese government, scheduled to produce recommendations in early 2018;
8. Recall the importance of collecting reliable fisheries data in order to be in a position to take the correct management decisions, and the need to allow for proper funding of data-collecting activities;
9. Recall the importance to protect small-scale fisheries, as they play a very important role in sustaining the coastal communities and their culture;
10. Look forward at further strengthening the relations with the Japanese legislator and fisheries' stakeholders.