Poland's Baltic Sea Fishery on the Eve of Accession to the Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union

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INTRODUCTION

This article deals with changes in Poland's Baltic Sea fishery from 1993 until Poland's integration with the European Union structures on 1 May 2004. Political and economic transformations in Poland's economy as well as preaccession adjustment changes occurred during the period concerned. The purpose of the article is to discuss Poland's Baltic Sea fishery with regard to political and economic transformations in Poland and the adjustment of operations within the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) of the European Union. 1 To

1. The European Union's Common Fisheries Policy has been applied since 1983. It was developed on the grounds of legal, political, economic, social, and natural (biological and environmental) issues. The aim was to improve the protection of interests of fishermen from the European Union member states. It also seemed easier and more cohesive to co-manage the fish stocks in waters along the coasts of member states to retain the stocks concerned at renewable levels to avoid overfishing and pollution. The CFP was also established to accomplish economic and social objectives such as maintaining the income (i.e., standards of living at the same time) of the population living on fisheries and indirectly of the population associated with fisheries, along with restructuring the fishing fleet, including upgrading and gradual fleet reduction to adjust the fleet to existing fish stocks. The CFP is aimed at the protection of fish stocks against overfishing, retaining jobs for fishermen as a protection against unemployment, and providing the processing industry and consequently consumers with a supply of fish on a regular basis at fair prices. There have been supplements to the initial assumptions regarding the CFP that covered four groups of issues: access to fish stocks of third countries, protection and management of the fish stocks of the European Community countries, structural policy, and market policy. Decisions are made both by the European Commission in Brussels and other authorized bodies of the Community, as well as by national authorities and fishermen themselves and their organizations. These bodies are responsible not only for the decisions taken but for implementation thereof as well. See The New Common Fisheries Policy (Brussels, Luxembourg: European Commission Directorate-General for Fisheries, 1994): 10; J. Zieziula, “Polityka rybacka Wspólnot Europejskich,” (hereafter cited as: Zieziula “Polityka rybacka”) in Agrobiznes i obszary wiejskie wobec integracji z Unia Europejska—nagdzie, szanse, obawy, IV Kongres Ekonomistów Rolnictwa i Agrobiznesu (Szczecin: Akademia Rolnicza w Szczecinie, 1997), p. 235-45.
accomplish this, a qualitative and quantitative analysis of natural and economic conditions in Poland's Baltic Sea fishery is presented, with due consideration of the role played by the State. It is followed by a description of the procedure for adjusting Poland's fishery to the CFP, which is supported by two preaccession programs described later that were co-financed by the European Union and Poland. The Sectoral Operational Program—Fisheries and Fish Processing in 2004–2006—was developed in 2002–2003 and provides for further changes in Poland's Baltic Sea fishery after Poland's accession. These changes are to be implemented and supported by European Union instruments for co-financing the CFP such as the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG), which is aimed at restructuring the fishing industry within European Union countries. The changes before 1 May 2004 resulted in legal and formal adjustments of Poland's Baltic Sea fishery to meet the CFP requirements. Further structural changes will take place in 2004–2006 with the assistance of public support, Polish funds, and the FIFG.

Changes in Poland's Baltic Sea fisheries are analyzed and the general situation is described in the fisheries sector, which since 1989 has undergone socioeconomic transformations. On 1 May 2004, Poland became a full member of the European Union and Poland's Baltic Sea fishery is now part of the CFP. For some years the adjustment process in the Polish fishery has been ongoing to prepare for activities in the new economic environment. The changes resulted in legal and organizational adjustments in Poland's Baltic Sea fishery to meet the CFP requirements based on an evaluation by the Economic Council of the European Union. Further restructuring is to be completed in 2004–2006 with public funding support and the use of FIFG funds allocated for restructuring the fishing industry in European Union member states. Pursuant to the new CFP, Poland can unconditionally obtain financial resources by scrapping fishing cutters. Supporting other priorities and activities with the FIFG funds is subject to severe conditions and their fulfillment presents some difficulties.

AN OVERVIEW OF POLAND'S BALTIC SEA FISHERY

General Characteristics

Poland is situated in the southern Baltic Sea Basin and the marine fishery is predominantly conducted in Poland's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (fig. 1). Poland's coastline totals 528 km and the coastal zone is composed of 36 communities (gminas), located in 18 counties (poviats), within 3 provinces