



Friday, 24 August 2012

FISH FIGHT EUROPE

FINAL PROGRESS REPORT FOR BALTIC SEA 2020



The following report documents the successes and shortcomings of Fish Fight Europe as specified in the Baltic Sea 2020 Agreement of 18.4.2011.

GRANT PURPOSE

The grant purpose was to raise public awareness about the problems inherent in the current Common Fisheries Policy, and to campaign across Europe for its fundamental reform. We hoped to generate 2 million signatures to a petition calling for the end of discards.

OBJECTIVE ONE

Our first objective was to launch a series of Fish Fight websites and social media platforms in continental Europe, and to encourage as many people as possible to sign our petition for comprehensive CFP reform and the elimination of discards. We hoped to raise as much publicity and press as we could for the campaign, as a way of ensuring that the politicians and decision makers in Brussels couldn't ignore the public pressure.

In detail our objectives were

1. To hire an overall European campaign manager
2. To hire local producers in 4 key countries: FRANCE, SPAIN, POLAND and GERMANY
3. To identify a fish fighting champion in each country
4. To shoot video with him or her and edit for the website
5. For the local producer to write and provide the Fish Fight team with content in local language and photos and bespoke video
6. For the Fish Fight team to build 4 new Fish Fight websites in the style of, but not a copy of fishfight.net
7. To establish links with European marine NGOs and confirm them as supporters of Fish Fight.
8. To identify one of these NGOs who will inherit the database of willing environmental supporters once our campaign has finished.
9. To connect with high-profile celebrity fish fight supporters in each country
10. To translate the viral and the discard elements of *Hugh's Fish Fight* into 11 key European languages
11. To publish local lists of sustainable and seasonal fish stocks
12. To set up 4 foreign language Facebook and twitter accounts
13. To identify an equivalent to the UK Early Day Motion, which will give people a reason to write to their MPs, and make the whole issue more political. In the UK we have had 220 MPs sign up to Zac Goldsmith's EDM.

14. To organise and host launch events, ensuring celebs, NGOs, politicians, fishermen and industry attend, eat fish, and raise as much awareness as possible.
15. For the websites to launch, and for the producers to moderate and deal with all enquiries and postings.
16. To update the sites as and when new press/ information comes through

PRINCIPLE ACHIEVEMENTS

We have now successfully carried out almost all of the above 16 objectives in each of our key countries of Germany, Poland, Spain and France. These campaigns are all now live, they are led and supported by a number of committed celebrities, each is driven by extremely competent teams of producers, each is backed by a large number of key marine NGOs, and each is having an impact in the press. Please see the websites for further details www.fishfight.de, www.rybazaburta.pl, www.niunpezporlaborda.org; www.fishfight.fr.

Objective number 11 (publish local list of sustainable and seasonal fish stocks) we have not completed ourselves, but we have linked on our websites to recommended sustainable fish stock lists in each country.

Objective number 13 (holding the equivalent of the UK Parliament's EDM in each country) has also not been completed. The opportunity to do this has not yet arisen, but of course may well be something we work to incorporate where possible and if relevant at the next stage of the Fish Fight campaign.

Objective 14 (a launch event) has been achieved in Spain, Poland and Germany. Due to the unforeseen delays and setbacks in France it has not yet happened there, but is now scheduled for September 13th in Paris.

We hoped to accomplish several things from these campaigns, including:

1. We expected to directly influence the decision makers involved in the CFP reform process, through the weight of public pressure across Europe.
2. We expected the reformed CFP to eliminate discards, and work better at protecting the marine environment and the long term sustainability of the European fisheries.
3. We expected to get over 2 million signatures to our campaign

In response to each of these:

We feel that we have influenced, and continue to influence, decision makers involved in the CFP process. Maria Damanaki keeps referring to us in Council meetings and in the press, all the fisheries ministers across Europe know what we are doing, and some have even been direct targets for our high-profile campaigns.

We believe that we can take some credit for ensuring that the Council of Ministers' recently agreed to support a discard ban in the reformed CFP at the June 12th Luxembourg Council meeting. (See [The Guardian](#), [The Independent](#), [Public Service Europe](#), [Sky News](#))

The number of people who have signed the campaign so far has risen from 650,000 to over 815,000 and although this figure is not as big as we had initially aimed for, we feel that it has been significant enough to keep the pressure steadily rising on politicians in Europe.

SHORTFALLS

We would like to have achieved 2 million signatures for our campaign petition. We were aware that this would only happen through significant television commissions for Fish Fight documentaries in Europe. These were only partially achieved as discussed below.

OBJECTIVE 2

Our second objective was to stage a continental European campaign launch event in Brussels outside the European Parliament during the summer of 2011, where we planned to unveil a specially designed FISH FIGHT COUNTER, which was to be a permanent fixture in Brussels until the end of 2012.

PRINCIPLE ACHIEVEMENTS

On May 31st 2011 outside the European Parliament in Brussels, the Fish Fight Campaign officially launched in Europe. The event was attended by European Fisheries Commissioner Maria Damanaki, over 30 MEPs and several international news crews. A sustainable fish lunch was provided, and we fed over 400 people.



The central attraction was, as planned, the unveiling of the live interactive sculpture, or Fish Fight Counter, which now lives near to the European Parliament and is brought out at key parliamentary meetings and events as a reminder to everyone who passes of the number of people who support a strong reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.

On one side, it constantly displays the total number of people who have signed up to the petition. On the back, it displays in 12 different languages the Fish Fight viral video, and the names and nationalities of the last 20 people to sign up to the campaign.

As intended, the campaign's main website, www.fishfight.net was joined by 11 more microsites in 11 different languages. They are www.fishfight.pl (Polish) www.fishfight.se (Swedish) www.fishfight.de (German) www.fishfight.dk (Danish) www.fishfight.fr (French) www.fishfight.gr (Greek) www.fishfight.es (Spanish) www.fishfight.it (Italian) www.fishfight.nl (Dutch) www.fishfight.be (Flemish) and www.fishfightpt.com (Portuguese).

This launch event was covered by key press outlets, including [Euronews](#), [The Independent](#) & [MSN News](#), and became a 'must have' photo opportunity for MEPs (See [Ed McMillan Scott](#), [Catherine Bearder](#), [Liz Lynne](#) among many others).

SHORTFALLS

Our initial intention was for the Fish Fight Counter to live outside the European Parliament for the duration of the CFP reform process. However, this was proven to be extremely difficult for practical reasons. We therefore house the Counter in Brussels and bring it out for key parliamentary meetings and events. For this purpose it has been an extremely useful tool.

OBJECTIVE 3

We planned to raise as much publicity and press as we could for our European Fish Fight campaigns, as a way of ensuring that the politicians and decision makers in Brussels could not ignore the public pressure surrounding key fishing issues.

Specifically, we recognised that the large part of the success of *Hugh's Fish Fight* was down to television exposure. We therefore planned to expand our efforts to foreign broadcasters in an attempt to get primetime television exposure for Fish Fight in our 4 key countries (Germany, France, Spain, and Poland).

We also worked at getting *Hugh's Fish Fight* broadcast throughout the European Union and worked hard at gathering on site celebrity support and press coverage in each of those countries too.

PRINCIPLE ACHIEVEMENTS

I am pleased to say that 3 five minute [Biodiario](#) documentaries made on *Ni Un Pez Por La Borda* (Fish Fight Spain) were broadcast on Spain's [La2](#) channel throughout June 2012. We are also still working at getting our Polish *Ryba Za Burta* (Fish Fight Poland) documentary broadcast on Poland's National TV. The Fish Fight campaigns have also been covered on a number of European TV and radio news programmes and chat shows over the past 4 months. These include Spain's [RTVE](#), [La Nube](#), [Ana Rosa Quintana Program](#), [Cadena Ser](#), and Germany's [Frontal21](#) and [Markus Lanz](#) programme on ZDF.

Hugh's Fish Fight has also been broadcast in Denmark, Portugal, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Sweden contributing to a total of 25,370 new sign ups to the Fish Fight petition. It is also scheduled to broadcast in Germany on 1st October 2012 on Germany's [RTL channel](#).

SHORTFALLS

We came extremely close to getting television commissions in Germany and France, but sadly both withdrew after a period of intense negotiations. The reasons were that the Factual Controller at Germany's NDR decided they did not want to copy an English export, and France's France 5 TV became nervous about the political message within a Fish Fight documentary at a time when their government was changing (May 2012).

OBJECTIVE 4

Since the Fish Fight campaigns have launched in Europe we have been able to draw them together with *Hugh's Fish Fight* in order to initiate attacks at specific times on specific targets. The first was Fish Fight's twitter campaign launched on March 15th 2012. In this scenario it was evident that efforts to ban discarding were being thwarted by a group of EU member states whom we understood planned to block the reforms. In response to this we asked our supporters throughout Europe to tweet the 27 European Ministers urging them not to scuttle the discards ban proposals.

PRINCIPLE ACHIEVEMENTS

We were delighted that Fish Fight supporters sent 135,000 tweets in 48 hours. It soon became clear that the French (and Spanish, Portuguese & Belgian) had abandoned their plan to obstruct a discard ban, and that the ban was still on the agenda. The initiative was reported in the press as a success (See [The Guardian](#) and [Independent](#) articles).

OBJECTIVE 5

Hugh's Fish Fight and Fish Fight Europe launched an advertising and twitter campaign on 11th June in response to the critical Council meeting of June 12th 2012. With a one off donation from Harvey Jones from the Pig Shed Trust, we placed full page ads in a number of leading European papers on June 11th in a campaign to tell some of the key EU Fisheries Ministers (Benyon, Cañete, Cuvillier & Sawicki) that '*We'll be watching you*' during their Council meeting. The ads went into *The Times*, *El Pais*, *Le Monde*, and Poland's

Rzeczpospolita. We also asked Fish Fight supporters to tweet the ministers urging them to support the discard ban and back a reform for sustainable fisheries.

PRINCIPLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Early reports on 13th June confirmed that the discards ban is still in the CFP package. We'd like to think the campaign played its part in putting pressure on key Ministers not to let 800,000 committed Fish Fighters down. The initiative was reported on in detail throughout Europe. (See [The Independent](#), [Public Service Europe](#), [The Guardian](#), [The Guardian](#), [Sky News](#), [Europapress](#), [Telecinco](#), [Cincodias](#), [Grancanaria Actualidad](#), [Be Broker](#), [Entitulares](#), [Ecodiario](#), [Ecoticias](#), [Actibva](#), [El Digital de Madrid](#), [Questionity](#), [Tribuna Forum](#), among others).

SHORTFALLS

We are obviously disappointed that the dates being discussed by Ministers for a discard ban are at this stage only provisional. However our intention will now be to persuade MEPS to deliver a committed timetable, and also to improve on, and then ratify the decisions taken by the Ministers on June 12th.

WORK WITH OTHER NGOS

Fish Fight now works with a significant coalition of marine NGOs throughout Europe (WWF, MCS, Greenpeace, Oceans 2012, Oceana, Sustain, Shark Trust, Fish2fork, EFTTA, ECODES, SEO/Birdlife, Fundacion Lonxanet, CEMMA, Adegas, Klub Gaja, Spratanie Swaiata, Eko Unia, Fundacja Nagza Ziemia, Deepwave, Fair-Fish, Reset among others). We hope that we are working closely together with them to make improvements to our message and performance, and we hope that in turn we are influencing and helping them with our strategy at Fish Fight.

We also expect to leave a legacy of over 800,000 email addresses to a variety of different NGOs across Europe, who will be able to contact those people and keep them up to date with developments in fisheries management, and call on them to give support to future campaigns.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

We hope that we have influenced, and continue to influence, decision makers involved in the CFP process. We are happy that the Council meeting of June 12th 2012 saw the inclusion of a discard ban in the CFP at that stage, but we realise this is not the end of the story. We feel that our fight must continue to avoid the ban being watered down and made ineffective.

FUNDS

We have come to the end of our funds sooner than initially anticipated (our grant was to run from May 2011 - Mar 2013). The reason is that the bulk of the Fish Fight Europe budget has been focused on getting our campaigns built and launched before that key PECH Committee vote which was scheduled for July 11th 2012. It was clear from all our sources that campaigning after this date would have less impact on the politics than before it.

We therefore worked hard to get everything built and launched pre July, with our intention being to then manage the campaigns online and in the media over the summer, with a final big push scheduled for the plenary vote at the start of September.

With the voting dates changing however, we find ourselves with more work to be done and limited funds to do it. We have therefore presented to the Oak Foundation, Adessium Foundation, Waterloo Fund and Baltic Sea 2020 a second proposal which would take us from August 2012 to the end of June 2013, or to the end of the CFP process if it lasts longer than that. To date we have commitment from Oak and Adessium to fund this stage (details below).

TOTAL AMOUNT NEEDED FOR PHASE 2 OF THE PROJECT: £412,000

MONEY COMMITTED FROM OAK FOUNDATION: £210,000

MONEY COMMITTED FROM ADDESIUM FOUNDATION: EUROS 100,000

FISH FIGHT PHASE 2

In brief, in this next and final stage of Fish Fight would like to target key MEPs in the run up to the PECH COMMITTEE and PLENARY votes, and to keep pressure up on fisheries ministers until the end of the CFP process.

Fish Fight is also keen to shine a brighter spotlight on 'overfishing' and to incorporate it into our campaign message across continental Europe as a way of encouraging decision makers to focus on it further. We would like our core message to therefore become more firmly 'a call for a discard ban *and* the use of more selective fishing techniques in order to reduce overfishing'.

A full copy of this proposal has been sent to Baltic Sea 2020 already, please advise if you would like it resent however.