



January 2018

**Seafood Ethics Common Language Group e-alert
(amalgamation of news alerts issued to SECLG circulation list by email in January 2018)**

Seafood Ethics Common Language Group

<http://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/discussion-forums/the-seafood-ethics-common-language-group>

Seafish news and publications

Joint statement on the decision of Seafish to exit the HRRTS partnership – prepared by Seafish, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP), Liberty Asia and Seafood Watch

Seafish, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP), Liberty Asia and Seafood Watch have agreed to continue their human rights and ethical risk assessment activities under separate programmes. The partnership had originally been established to develop the Human Rights Risk Tool for Seafood (HRRTS). A new partnership between SFP, Liberty Asia and Seafood Watch has been formed to complete the development and implementation of the human rights risk rating tool for the global seafood industry.

Set up in 2015 to support the seafood industry to identify and deal with human rights abuses in seafood supply chains, the partnership has worked to develop and test a risk assessment tool to help businesses prioritize where deeper investigation into the seafood catching sector is warranted.

A recent decision by Seafish to refocus its ethics work programme on initiatives that directly support the seafood sector to engage in good practices across the whole supply chain, means that Seafish has decided to step away from the partnership. SFP, Liberty Asia and Seafood Watch will collectively take forward the work to further develop and refine the risk assessment tool. Seafish wishes its former partners every success as they embark on the next stage of the project.

Seafish remains fully committed to working collaboratively with our stakeholders to guide our work in this area and we will remain actively engaged in a number of initiatives that will directly support the UK seafood sector. The Seafish Seafood Ethics Common Language Group will continue to be the primary channel to keep engaged with this area of our work. If you wish to discuss the detail relating to this particular development further **E: [Helen Duggan](#)**

Consultations and surveys

[Public consultation on measures to implement the ILO Work in Fishing Convention \(ILO 188\) in the UK. Closes on 12 January 2018.](#)

The MCA has launched a public consultation on measures to implement the ILO Work in Fishing Convention (ILO 188). ILO 188 entitles all fishermen to written terms and conditions of employment (a fisherman's work agreement), decent accommodation and food, medical care, regulated working time, repatriation, social protection and health and safety on board. It also provides minimum standards relating to medical fitness. ILO 188 standards will apply to all fishermen working on commercial fishing vessels of any size. They apply equally to employed fishermen and non-employed (share) fishermen. The consultation documents set out the proposal for legislation to implement ILO 188 into UK Law. Comments should be sent to **E: [Louise Unsworth](#)**

[Home Office Territorial Waters Survey. Deadline for completion is Wednesday 17 January 2018.](#)

The aim of this survey is to help the Home Office gain a better understanding of how the immigration system interacts with the operation and needs of the maritime sector. They wish to gain

a fuller picture of the extent and the circumstances in which, the immigration system is used by overseas workers coming to the UK for employment in the maritime sector. They are particularly interested in non-EEA workers in the maritime sector and to gain a better understanding of the profile of overseas workers in the sector, including numbers, the types of role they undertake and their nationalities. If you have any queries about the survey or the research in general E: [Sarah Johnson](#)

[Consultation on Responsible Fishing Ports Scheme](#). Opened 1 December 2017. Closes 29 January 2018.

A certification scheme is being developed to promote good practice in UK fishing ports and give seafood buyers added confidence in the quality and sustainability of the seafood landed there. In a move to assure buyers of a fishing port's good practice, Seafish is currently running a [Responsible Fishing Ports Scheme \(RFPS\)](#) pilot programme and is seeking input and feedback from the seafood industry and other interested parties, as part of a public consultation. [Public consultation page](#)

UK news

[New report finds seafood processing sector reliant on non-UK workers](#). 4 January 2017.

Around 58% of employees at Scottish seafood processing businesses are from the non-UK European Economic Area, according to a new report [Employment in Scotland's Seafood Processing Sector: UK, European Economic Area and Non-European Economic Area Nationals](#). The study looked into the employment patterns of non-UK workers across 18 Scottish processors, which represented around 37% of the sector's workforce in 2016. It found that 86% of all employees in the processing sector worked on permanent contracts, and of these, the majority were from non-UK EEA countries, largely coming from Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. This demonstrates how dependent the sector is on EEA workers. Previous UK-wide figures from the Seafish estimated 42% of the work force were non-UK EEA nationals. All processors reported they were dependent on lower skilled non-UK EEA workers. However, they also said non-UK EEA employees were skilled for the industry and had the skills and experience to work efficiently and safely.

[Death of GLAA Chief Executive](#). 29 December 2017.

It is with profound shock and deep sorrow that the GLAA announces the sudden death of our Chief Executive Paul Broadbent. Our thoughts, prayers and condolences are with his family and friends who have asked for privacy at this distressing time. His legacy is the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority. Paul was a champion for the vulnerable and exploited, he recognised the real need for an organisation like the GLAA and it's because of his vision, determination and a liberal sprinkling of the charming Yorkshireman that he was, that people of influence listened to him.

Thailand

[Thai seafood: are the prawns on your plate still fished by slaves?](#) 23 January 2018.

Four years after damning revelations of chattel slavery aboard Thai fishing boats linked to seafood exported and sold by major retailers around the world, [a new report by Human Rights Watch](#) says that rights violations in one of Thailand's major export industries continue unabated, including forced labour and widespread human trafficking. For the report HRW conducted interviews with 248 current and former Burmese and Cambodian fishermen as well as Thai officials, boat owners, local activists and United Nations agency staff over a two-year period in all of Thailand's major fishing ports. It documented how migrant fishermen from south-east Asia continue to be routinely trafficked on to fishing boats, prevented from leaving or changing employers, and are often not paid for their work or paid less than the minimum wage. The Thai government has responded with a broad programme of reforms including new laws to regulate and improve working conditions, documentation and wages for migrant fishermen. A "port-in, port-out" (Pipo) system was also created to require boats to report for inspections, as well as limiting time at sea to 30 days.

However, HRW said that although some progress had been made, the persistence of trafficking and forced labour on fishing boats illustrated that many of the reforms were cosmetic. The report said that the labour inspection regime was largely a “theatrical exercise for international consumption” and that in 2015 Thailand failed to find a single case of forced labour in inspections of 474,334 fishing crew.

[Report. Human Rights: Hidden Chains - Rights Abuses and Forced Labor in Thailand’s Fishing Industry.](#)

[Federal judge dismisses human trafficking lawsuit against US, Thai companies.](#) 5 January 2018.

A U.S. federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit against two American and two Thai seafood companies accused of forcing workers into involuntary servitude and profiting from human trafficking.

In a decision published on Thursday, 4 January, the U.S. District Judge dismissed the case against the four seafood companies. Seven Cambodian workers [filed the suit in the California court](#) in June 2016, claiming they were promised a monthly wage of USD 250 (EUR 207.46) to work at seafood-packing factories in Thailand. However, upon arrival, their wages were cut nearly in half, and salary deductions, including rent, left them without enough money for food. In addition, the employers confiscated the workers’ passports and forced them to live in unsanitary conditions. The workers sued in an American court citing the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which allows individuals who suffered from forced labor and other trafficking violations to seek remedies from companies that benefit from such abuses.

[Thai Union Fishing Vessel Improvement Program and Code of Conduct 2018.](#) 27 December 2017.

Thai Union has set out its commitment to the safe and fair treatment of its workers in its vessel improvement program and Code of Conduct 2018. This is an extension of their 2015 Business Labour and Ethics Code of Conduct. The 12 ‘Fundamental Principles’ apply to every part of their business and frame both codes of conduct. The implementation of this program will provide clear guidance to the fishing vessels that they source from.

[New centre to address migrant fishing workers’ rights in Thailand.](#) 19 December 2017.

A new centre to tackle human trafficking and other problems faced by workers in the fishing industry has opened. Social organisations led by the Labour Rights Promotion Network (LPN) and the Fish Marketing Organisation, announced the opening of Fishermen Centre at Samut Sakhon fish market in a new approach to solve the chronic problems of slave labour, child labour and human trafficking in the fishing industry. The centre has two additional offices located in Rayong’s Muang District and Trat’s Klong Yai District.

Report and initiatives

[MSC sets out agenda to strengthen assurance model and revisions to certification requirements.](#)

24 January 2018.

Key changes to MSC certification requirements include strengthening labour requirements: In recognition of growing concern about labour abuses in the global seafood supply chain, the MSC will extend its existing provisions to address forced labour in fisheries and supply chain companies. Currently, fishing and supply chain companies and their subcontractors that have been successfully prosecuted for forced labour violations in the past two years are not eligible to participate in the MSC program. The MSC proposes to extend this provision to require that high risk supply chain companies pass an audit against the forced and child labour provisions of credible third party social standards such as SEDEX, BSCI and SA8000. Fisheries and at-sea chain of custody holders will be required to complete a self-disclosure document that reports on the measures, policies and practices that are in place to ensure absence of forced and child labour. Fisheries and supply chain companies will need to comply with these new requirements from 2019. For high risk fisheries, MSC

will extend these requirements to an audit when appropriate third party social standards relevant to at-sea operations have been developed.

[New global Maritime Human Rights Reporting Platform launched.](#) 21 January 2018.

Human Rights at Sea has announced a new and unique partnership with the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre through with the launch of the new global platform for recording cases of maritime human rights abuses, highlighting pertinent international cases from the shipping and fisheries industries, and publishing cases relevant to identifying best Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices for companies operating in the maritime sector. At the time of launch, there are references to over 50 international companies and multiple links to corporate cases which can be identified using the online search function across the maritime industry, fishing industry and ship-breaking resource pages.

[Maritime Industry and Human Rights Resource Page](#)
[Maritime Industry and Human Rights: Fishing](#)

[New Blockchain Project has potential to revolutionise seafood industry.](#) 8 January 2018.

WWF is introducing blockchain technology to the Pacific Islands' tuna industry to help tackle illegal fishing and human rights abuses. The Blockchain Supply Chain Traceability Project is using digital technology in the fresh and frozen tuna sectors of the Western and Central Pacific region to strengthen supply chain management by tracking fish from vessel to the supermarket. The buying and selling of Pacific tuna is currently either tracked by paper records, or not at all. Now fishermen can register their catch on the blockchain through radio-frequency identification (RFID) e-tagging and scanning fish. By leveraging blockchain technology, which provides a digital, tamper-proof record of information accessible to everyone, consumers can have certainty that they're buying legally-caught, sustainable tuna with no slave labour or oppressive conditions involved. A simple scan of tuna packaging using a smartphone app will provide information on when and where the fish was caught, by which vessel and fishing method. Steps are currently underway to find a retailer to partner in the project and use blockchain to complete the tuna's traceability story.

[Assent Compliance eBook: Budgeting for Compliance in 2018.](#)

In this eBook, you'll learn about all the regulatory changes that occurred in 2017, and those that will impact your business in the coming year. This eBook describes how these changes may affect businesses.

[Ergon: Key trends and issues for 2018.](#) 13 December 2017.

Areas highlighted provide a useful perspective:

- Legislation on human rights due diligence and reporting: more legislative developments on non-financial reporting are expected in 2018 in various European countries; the first company reports under the EU Non-Financial Reporting Directive will also start to appear during 2018; Australia will almost certainly be introducing its own draft Modern Slavery Act; in the UK, 2018 will see the second year of Modern Slavery Statements, enabling an assessment of how these disclosures are progressing.
- Benchmarking to multiply but moves towards harmonisation: the trend towards benchmarking company disclosures and performance continues, and new benchmarks and indices are in the making.
- Full steam ahead on ethical recruitment: initiatives to prevent workers having to pay fees to secure a job are set to gather pace and will be one of the stand-out issues for 2018. This is being spurred by the Leadership Group on Responsible Recruitment.
- Living income: the 'elephant in the field'. 2017 has seen major developments in living income initiatives.

SECLG news summary. January 2018.

- Blockchain: is 2018 the year for take-off? It will be interesting to see if 2018 will be the year when blockchain technology and other digital solutions will become fully utilised as part of responsible supply chain management.

This is an amalgamation of the news alerts issued in January 2018.