

May 2018

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

Seafood Ethics Common Language Group

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

Seafish news and reports

Seafish aims to unite UK seafood industry to secure bright future. 30 April 2018.

Seafish is urging its various sectors to unite in boosting consumption to make Seafish's vision of a thriving seafood industry a reality. The plan sets out a bold vision for a thriving seafood sector with increased consumption a key factor. Seafish has worked closely with its three industry panels which represent the seafood industry from catch to plate to identify the issues and challenges that matter most. Good source and supply is also emphasised to source sustainable seafood in an increasingly competitive global market, alongside continued public concern over practices that compromise human welfare and the environment.

Responsible Fishing Scheme to move to new home as Seafish signs Memorandum of Understanding with the Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA). 24 April 2018.

Following extensive discussions between the parties, an MoU has been signed that outlines a transition period to migrate the Seafish RFS to the GAA's newly established Global Seafood Assurances (GSA) programme. This period will commence on 1 May 2018 and conclude no later than 1 May 2020. As part of the agreement with Seafish, GAA will establish the not-for-profit GSA Programme, which will bring together a network of standards to ensure all aspects of the wild seafood supply chain are covered, with the RFS a key standard in this new suite. During the transition phase, Seafish will retain responsibility for the ongoing management and delivery of the RFS in the UK, whilst Seafish and the GSA will work collaboratively to develop the RFS standard to version 2, to ensure ILO 188 compliance. In order to maintain the ethos of the RFS standard moving forward, Seafish will hold a seat on the GSA Board. Following transition, Seafish will also have the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing development of the standard through its membership of the GSA's vessel standard Technical Advisory Board.

Seafish 2018 Processing Sector Labour Report. April 2018.

This report presents the findings of Seafish's annual survey of workforce composition in the seafood processing sector in 2017 and results of the first quarterly survey on ease of recruitment and retention of staff in the seafood processing sector.

- In December 2017 Seafish collected data from 114 processing sites around the UK operated by 106 companies. The sample covered 12,735 people working in the sea fish processing sector in 2017. This report presents the findings of the survey and includes data on employee nationality, gender, job skill level, recruitment method, and contract type.
- British workers represented 48% of the total sample of people working in the seafood processing sector in 2017. Citizens of other EEA countries represented 49% of the total sample of people working in the processing sector in 2017, and workers from non-EEA countries (or for whom nationality was unknown or unreported) made up 3% of the sample.
- Region was a major factor influencing the nationality mix of the sector in 2017. The survey revealed significant regional variation in the split between British and non-British workers. Non-British workers accounted for 71% of the total sample from the Grampian region, compared to 39% of the total sample from the Humber region.

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- Non-British workers made up a greater proportion of low-skilled and unskilled roles than skilled or high-skilled roles in 2017. Over 80% of high-skilled roles in the sample were held by British staff; workers from other EEA countries held 50% of unskilled roles in the sample.

UK news

[Slavery and exploitation laid bare in new GLAA report. 8 May 2018.](#)

The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), drawing on its extensive work with victims and offenders, as well as inspections at hundreds of workplaces, has outlined the nature and scale of slavery in the UK today - who is being exploited, which industries are affected, and the methods being used. The GLAA was given police-style powers in May last year and a remit to tackle exploitation across the entire UK labour market. The report [The Nature and Scale of Labour Exploitation Across All Sectors within the United Kingdom](#) highlights 17 different sectors, with shellfish gathering mentioned. The main Worker Countries of Origin were predominantly China, with smaller numbers from the UK, Poland and Vietnam. Seven nationalities were identified in total.

[The Director of Labour Market Enforcement first full Strategy for 2018/19 and Executive Summary. May 2018.](#)

The Strategy sets out 37 recommendations to help stop the exploitation of vulnerable workers. Shellfish gathering was again mentioned. Of particular note:

- Better information on rights, including the right to a written statement in week one for all workers; improving provision of and access to information on employment rights via a dedicated web portal linking all related enforcement bodies; and using targeted social media campaigns.
- The right to a payslip for all workers - it should also be mandatory to include total hours worked and hourly rate of pay for hourly paid workers.
- Improving complaints channels: including clearer web presence for the three bodies, and indeed Acas, to help steer workers in the right direction when seeking redress.
- A more cooperative approach involving joint responsibility to address non-compliance in the supply chain - initially this should be addressed privately between the supplier and the brand name. Failure to do so within a given timeframe would then result in the usual sanctions and naming for the supplier, but the end user would also be named.
- Drawing on international precedent, a power to embargo 'hot' goods supplied by a non-compliant subcontractor - this would have a significant disruptive and costly effect for business models where speed of turnaround and supply are critical to responding to consumer demand.

[Human trafficking claims made in Irish fishing industry. 22 April 2018.](#)

Twelve cases of alleged human trafficking in the Irish fishing industry have been reported to An Garda Síochána since July last year. Eight fishermen have been taken into protective Garda custody and a further four men are waiting to be interviewed by garda detectives working with the immigration bureau. They include four migrant fishermen from West Africa, who were taken into the protection of the State last weekend when they were effectively let go by their employer. The men, who had travelled from West Africa to Belfast, were contracted to work on British trawlers but ended up working on Irish vessels. They were left stranded and without visas when their relationship with their employer broke down. They are now being looked after by the State while their trafficking claims are being investigated. The 12 cases currently with the Garda National Immigration Bureau are in the early stages of investigation, according to informed sources.

Thailand

[Ship to Shore Rights Project. April 2018.](#)

The project aims to prevent and reduce forced and child labour, and to progressively eliminate the exploitation of workers – particularly migrant workers – in the fishing and seafood processing sectors. The intention is to oversee a strengthening of legal, policy, and regulatory framework, the implementation of more effective labour inspection and enforcement, an improvement in core labour standards compliance, and a strengthening of workers' access to support services. In 2017, to kick off the Ship to Shore Rights project, the ILO undertook a survey of 434 workers from across Thailand, with the goal of learning more about the country's fishing, aquaculture, and seafood processing sectors. Participants, the majority of whom were migrants, were asked about recruitment practices, wages, hours, safety and health, support services, complaint mechanisms, living conditions, forced labour indicators, and legal compliance levels. Their evidence is included in a report, [Baseline research findings on fishers and seafood workers in Thailand](#), which also sets out the limited progress made to date, outlines major challenges remaining in the industry, and makes recommendations for more effective enforcement of Thai law to prevent and end unfair labour practices for migrant workers. The data will be used as a benchmark and compared with information collected at the end of the project in 2019, according to the project's website.

Presentation by Jason Judd on the Ship to Shore Project. Seafish Stand at the Brussels Expo. April 2018. Key points:

- Progress is being made on reforms by the Royal Thai Government but there is still some way to go – the latest ILO survey corroborates this.
- The ILO is pushing vessel owners to pay crew via bank accounts so the process is more transparent. As most migrant crew don't have bank accounts and are illiterate, the ILO have an education campaign using video and social media to demonstrate how bank accounts work and how money can be accessed.
- The Yellow Card against Thailand is likely to be removed this year. The ILO's concern is that the ongoing reforms will slow down or even cease and wants the private sector to keep pushing for the reforms to be fully implemented.
- The ILO's project may expand to Sri Lanka, where interest is being shown by the Government in ratifying ILO 188
- The ILO would like to see: full payment of wages to all crew – above the legal minimum wage (with no deductions); no document retention by captains/vessels owners; legitimate contracts; and basic health and safety implemented

[Thailand sets up special arrest teams for fishing-related crimes at sea. 30 April 2018.](#)

In March 2018, Thailand's deputy prime minister appointed five special arrest teams to inspect and arrest offenders of fishery-related and human trafficking crimes within the fisheries sector in 22 coastal provinces. The measure aims to strengthen law enforcement in the fisheries sector. The special arrest teams, which comprise officials from the royal Thai police, the department of fisheries and the Ministry of Labor, should speed up the arrests of offenders at sea by utilizing in-depth information and intelligence. On March 11-22 2018, the five teams arrested both Thai and non-Thai vessels conducting illegal activities in violation of the fisheries and labour laws, resulting in 50 cases that were prosecuted in both criminal courts and via administrative sanctions. The 50 cases included 19 Thai vessels and seven foreign vessels on charges of labour and fisheries misconduct, and 24 vessels on labour-related charges.

New reports and initiatives

[GSSI and CGF join forces on a benchmark and recognition tool for social compliance schemes in the seafood sector.](#) 17 May 2018

The Consumer Goods Forum (CGF)'s Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative (SSCI) and the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) have announced their collaboration to provide a benchmark and recognition tool for social compliance schemes in the seafood sector. The CGF Social Sustainability Committee selected the seafood sector as one of the priority supply chains for their social sustainability workstream. Correspondingly, the GSSI Steering Board identified social compliance as a key priority area for the seafood sector. Similar to GSSI's Global Benchmark Tool, the SSCI Benchmark will allow the industry to have access to a list of credible, robust auditing and certification programmes. In close collaboration, the two organisations will develop a social compliance benchmark that takes into account the specificities of the seafood sector and the special nature of work in food harvesting, and will be underpinned by ILO Conventions and Recommendations and UN Guiding Principles, and is aligned with the CGF's Priority Industry Principles on Forced Labour. This cross-industry collaboration will bring together a broad representation of members of the aquaculture and wild harvest sectors, primary processors, retailers, manufacturers and relevant stakeholders to provide a unique opportunity for market alignment and harmonisation of efforts. Stakeholder engagement with the seafood sector will be crucial throughout the process. In the coming months, GSSI and SSCI will be holding a joint webinar to provide an update and overview of next steps to all GSSI Partners, the CGF members and all interested parties.

Surveying core labour standards in 29 countries. May 2018.

Ergon has been awarded a major new contract by the European Commission to conduct surveys on the application of core labour standards and working conditions in countries covered by commitments in GSP+ and in Free Trade and Investment Agreements. The project seeks to hasten real-time information flows on the application of core labour standards in 29 countries with existing trade relationships with the EU or involved in ongoing trade talks.

[INTERPOL Global Fisheries Enforcement. International Law Enforcement Cooperation in the Fisheries Sector: A Guide for Law Enforcement Practitioners.](#) April 2018.

The guide frames the experience of five years' work on fisheries related crime by INTERPOL and its member countries. It is based on the reality of the enhanced law enforcement results achieved by working together using INTERPOL's capabilities alongside those of other Inter-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society; and by connecting national enforcement agencies, often on opposite sides of the world. The goal of this Guide is to provide a comprehensive resource to enhance and develop the capacity, capability and cooperation of member countries to effectively tackle illegal fishing and crimes associated to the fisheries sector.

Launch events

[Interactive Map for Business of Anti-Human Trafficking Organisations.](#) [Launch event in London.](#) 22 May 2018.

Given the rapid development of initiatives aimed at helping businesses fight human trafficking, the Global Business Coalition Against Trafficking (GBCAT), the RESPECT Initiative (comprising Babson College's Initiative on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery, the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)), and the United Nations Global Compact through its Action Platform on Decent Work in Global Supply Chains, have identified the urgent need to provide a unified repository of information as a resource to facilitate stakeholders in their engagement with the private sector in the fight against human trafficking. The Interactive Map aims to improve coordination on the eradication of modern slavery, and provides a unique baseline from which existing and newly formed initiatives can move forward.

SECLG news summary. May 2018.

[2018 Global Forum on Responsible Recruitment and Employment](#). 11-12 June 2018 in Singapore.

The event is hosted by the Institute for Human Rights and Business, The Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment and the Consumer Goods Forum, supported by Humanity United.

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