

### **Non-trade barriers and fisheries: the example of the Seychelles**

In 2002, for example, the maximum acceptable level of cadmium in swordfish was set at 0.05 mg/kg. For the Seychelles, this excessively low level led to a clearly incoherent situation: The EC had set levels of cadmium on certain foods such as crustaceans at 0.5 mg/kg, bivalve molluscs at 1.0 mg/kg, kidney of cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry at 1.0 mg/kg, and liver of cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry at 0.5 mg/kg etc. The level set for some of these foodstuffs is 20 times higher than the level set for swordfish, yet these items are consumed more than swordfish.

The Seychelles government highlighted the fact that the fishing agreements between the EC and several countries of the Western Indian Ocean including the Seychelles allow EU surface long liners to catch swordfish, the *same* swordfish which, because of the regulation concerning cadmium, the Seychelles cannot export to the EU. There are at least three EU countries whose vessels are fishing for swordfish in the Western Indian Ocean<sup>1</sup>.

In December of the year 2005, this situation was remedied by the European Commission. Soon after, Regulation 1881/2006 changed the maximum amount of cadmium in swordfish to a more reasonable level, although still well under the maximum acceptable level for other products (e.g. liver, oysters, etc.).

This development, of course, is to be applauded. In the meantime, however, over a year had passed in which the Seychelles could not export their swordfish catches to the EU. As a consequence, a large number of fishermen and small- and medium-sized firms in the Seychelles had either gone out of business or started targeting sea-cucumbers and shark fins for East Asian Markets. Thus, the EU non-trade barrier (the fixed maximum level of cadmium) acted to shift fishing effort to catch different and unsustainable marine resources. This, also, is clearly incoherent and impedes sustainable-development-policy goals.

Sources: Béatrice Gorez, Fisheries Executive brief 'Market access; tariff and non-tariff aspects', CFFA and Position paper by the Seychelles on the level of cadmium in swordfish set by the EC, 2002.

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<sup>1</sup> *Position paper by the Seychelles on the level of cadmium in swordfish set by the EC (2002).*