

GREENPEACE ACT TO STOP PIRATE FISHING VESSEL FROM POLISH HARBOUR

GREENPEACE CATCHES THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

-Another pirate ship is stopped in harbour

Swinoujscie, Poland, March 16th 2006: A pirate fishing trawler blacklisted by the European Union has been stopped from leaving port by Greenpeace activists in Poland - the fifth such vessel in a week to be locked up by the international environmental group.

The Carmen was surrounded with chains at its berth in the port of Swinoujscie and draped with a banner that read "Stop Pirate Fishing".

Greenpeace is calling on the Polish government to prevent this illegal trawler from leaving port and at the same time prevent the continuation of destructive pirate fishing in the Atlantic.

"Poland, just like Germany and other European Union countries, is obliged to prevent pirate fishing. The EU laws on this are clear," says Katarzyna Guzek of Greenpeace Poland. "This vessel has a long history of involvement in pirate fishing together with its sister vessels currently moored in the German port of Rostock. Based on that history, it has to be assumed that if the vessels are allowed to leave these European ports they will continue their poaching."

The Carmen arrived in the port of Swinoujscie on Saturday, March 11th from the German port of Rostock where she had been moored for several months together with her four sister vessels, the Rosita, Eva, Juanita and Isabella after changing their names and flag states (1). The vessels were illegally re-supplied in Germany even though Greenpeace identified them to the authorities and called on the government to comply with European Union regulations and refuse to service them.

The Carmen is black-listed for repeated breaches of European regulations and those governing fishing in both the north east and north west Atlantic. In 2005, all five vessels contributed to the collapse of the redfish stocks of the North Atlantic.

It is estimated that pirate fishing costs countries between 3.4 and 7.6 billion euros each year. Pirate fishing in the deep-sea is worth up to 20% of the global catch (2). These fisheries also wipe out the unknown worlds of the deep-sea. Many pirate vessels are engaged in a fishing technique called high seas bottom trawling which is known to cause huge destruction to vulnerable deep-sea marine life such as cold-water corals.

"Greenpeace is calling for an immediate UN moratorium on high sea bottom trawling and it is in the interest of all EU countries to support this," says Sari Tolvanen, Greenpeace oceans campaigner. "Such a move would mark a major step forward for the protection of deep-sea life and would provide the international community with a strong weapon in its arsenal to stop pirate fishing."

Over the next few months, in partnership with the Environmental Justice Foundation, Greenpeace will expose the activities of fishing pirates in the Atlantic. This is part of Greenpeace's year-long "Defending our Oceans" expedition to highlight the threats to the oceans and demand that 40% be declared no-take marine reserves (3).

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Notes

- (1) Until just recently, the ships were named the Oyra, Ostroe, Okhotino, Olchan and Ostrovets and were flagged in the Dominican Republic. They had been docked in Germany since November 2005 after completing fishing operations in the North Atlantic. For more information on bottom trawlers flagged to European Union Member States, see the March 2006 Greenpeace report "Murky waters: hauling in the net on Europe's high seas bottom trawl fleet"; for electronic version of the report:
<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/murky-waters>
- (2) UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, 'The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2004 Report (SOFIA) p10.
- (3) For more on the Expedition, go to:
<http://oceans.greenpeace.org>