

Pirates of the North Atlantic in Kaliningrad

Six black listed Georgian flagged fishing vessels are currently in the Russian port of Kaliningrad. All six arrived between September 14th and 19th 2006. These are the trawlers named CARMEN, EVA, ISABELLA, JUANITA, ROSITA and ULLA. Greenpeace calls on Russia to act according to its legal obligations as a NEAFC member state and arrest or expel the pirate trawlers.

All these six trawlers are black listed by the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), of which Russia is a member. The full list of vessels is available on the internet at <http://neaafc.org/measures/iuu-b.htm> According to the NEAFC-agreement, Russia is obliged to refuse any of these vessels even to enter their ports. In case they still enter, they shall be refused any service, supply or repairs, and be expelled or arrested.

Greenpeace has documented the activities of these five fishing trawlers since April 2005; as they fished illegally without quota for redfish in the Irminger Sea, over-wintered in the German port of Rostock, and then returned illegally to their old fishing grounds in the North Atlantic in the 2006 season. This happened despite the fact that all five vessels were already black listed by the European Union, Iceland and NEAFC (North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission).

Now the same story is about to unfold again, unless Russia takes concrete action to stop these vessels from operating. The redfish stocks in the North Atlantic (*Sebastes* sp) are seriously depleted and in need of strong protection measures. The marine science division ICES has recommended a zero quota for 2007, based on the serious stock situation.

The five "trawler girls" Carmen, Eva, Isabella, Juanita and Rosita are all formally operated and managed by Northern Fishers Co (Severnaya Rybolovetskaya Kompaniya), based in Murmansk. However, this company is nothing more than a postbox address for black listed vessels, on behalf of the real owners, Pionerskaya Baza Okeanicheskogo Rybolovnogo Flota in Kaliningrad.

Pionerskaya Baza Okeanicheskogo Rybolovnogo Flota (PBORF / ПБОРФ) has its head quarter in Pionersky (Пионерский), a small town in Kaliningrad Oblast by the Baltic Sea. PBORF has about 1200 employees. In Soviet times, PBORF operated one of the large far-going fishing fleets of the USSR, now it acts as a privatized 'holding' for a number of fishery and port related companies. Due to financial problems early 2000, PBORF had to reduce its fleet (once 115 ships) by transferring them to affiliates or offshore companies. At present, the fleet linked directly or indirectly to Pionerskaya includes still some 60 vessels, among them 41 trawlers, 10 fish factories, and 6 reefers in addition to the 5 black listed trawlers currently in Kaliningrad. Several of the other vessels, including Olshana, Ostankino, Orlik and Ozherelje, which are owned by Pionerskaya through its affiliate Zapmorflot, fished for redfish in the Irminger Sea under legal NEAFC quotas in parallel with the illegal operations conducted by the "trawler girls". Greenpeace believes this highlights the need for company black listing, not only on the individual vessel level.

The Russian Federation is a NEAFC member country and therefore obliged by the NEAFC rules (http://www.neafc.org/measures/docs/ncp_sch-may-06.pdf) to refuse entry into port of its blacklisted vessels. This means that the vessels that arrived to Kaliningrad between 14-19th of September 2006 are in Russia illegally. These vessels should be inspected, any fishing gear removed and all services to them prohibited. It is now the responsibility of the Russian authorities to ensure that these vessels are expelled from Russia and to ensure that the captain and the owners are prosecuted and punished accordingly. Greenpeace calls on Russia to live up to its obligations.