The European Union and Fishing Subsidies

- Taxpayers throughout the European Union (EU) finance the subsidies given to the fishing sector.

- Despite the precarious condition of fisheries in Europe and beyond, the EU continues to provide massive subsidies to support its fishing fleets.

- Europe is currently one of the world’s top three subsidizers, along with China and Japan.

- Subsidies available to EU fishing fleets totalled EUR 3.3 billion in 2009, which is more than three times the publicly available figures referenced in the past.

- Total subsidies to the fishing sector are equivalent to 50 percent of the value of the total fish catch by the EU in the same year (EUR 6.6 billion).

- Fuel subsidies amount for half of all EU fisheries subsidies.

- Spain, France, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Italy received the most fishing subsidies.

- Thirteen EU countries had more fishing subsidies than the value of the landings of fish in their ports.

- Growing demand for fish, combined with local resource depletion, has promoted the major expansion of European fleets in size and fishing range.

- As a result of these major subsidies, the EU now has a fishing fleet that is estimated to be two to three times larger than what sustainable limits would allow.

- More than two-thirds of these EU subsidies have the ability to enhance fishing capacity and promote overfishing.

- A recent economic analysis by the European Commission revealed that despite subsidies, 30 to 40 percent of the fishing segment it assessed suffered losses each year from 2002 to 2008.

- In 2009, close to EUR 150 million was paid to 14 countries to secure access to fisheries for European fleets.