

**LEGAL NOTICE No 67/2003**  
**THE FACTORY VESSEL REGULATIONS**

PART I  
PRELIMINARY

**Art. 1 Short Title**

These Regulations may be cited as the "Factory Vessel Regulations, Legal Notice No 67/2003".

**Art. 2 Scope of Application**

These Regulations lay down the hygienic conditions applicable to fishery products caught on-board factory vessels.

PART II  
CONDITIONS CONCERNING DESIGN AND EQUIPMENT ON BOARD FACTORY  
VESSELS

**Art. 3 The minimum requirements for design and equipment.**

The minimum requirements for design and equipment needed on factory vessels are the following:

- (a) A reception area set aside for receiving fishery products on board that is designed and arranged into pounds or pens large enough to allow each successive catch to be separated. The reception area and its movable parts shall be easy to clean and shall be designed in such a way as to protect the fishery products from direct sunshine or from dust and from any source of dirt or contamination;
- (b) a system for conveying fishery products from the reception area to the working area that meets the rules of hygiene;
- (c) working rooms that are large enough for the preparation and/or processing of fishery products in hygienic conditions. The working rooms shall be designed and arranged to prevent any contamination of the products;
- (d) storage rooms for the finished products that are large enough and are designed to allow easy cleaning. If a waste processing unit operates on board, a separate hold shall be designated for the storage of these by-products;
- (e) a dry room for storing packaging materials that is separate from the preparation and processing areas;
- (f) special equipment for pumping waste or fishery products that are unfit for human consumption either directly into the sea or, where circumstances so require, into a watertight tank reserved for that purpose. If waste is stored and processed on board with a view to cleaning, separate areas shall be allocated for that purpose;
- (g) equipment that provides a supply of potable water within the meaning of the requirements laid down in the Potable Water

Regulations in fishery product activities Legal Notice No 68/2003 or pressurised clean seawater. The seawater intake shall be at a position where it is not possible for the water to be affected by wastewater discharges into the sea and waste and engine coolant outlets; and

- (h) a suitable number of changing rooms, wash basins and toilets, the latter not opening directly into areas where fishery products are prepared, processed or stored. The washbasins shall not be hand/elbow operable and shall be equipped with appliances for washing and drying hands that comply with the hygiene requirements.

**Art. 4 Areas used for the preparation and/or processing and/or freezing of fishery products**

Areas used for the preparation and/or processing and/or freezing of fishery products shall have:

- (a) A non-slip floor that is easy to clean and disinfect and that allows easy drainage of water. The drainage system shall be large enough not to be obstructed by fish waste;
- (b) walls and ceilings that are easy to clean, particularly where there are pipes, chains or electricity conduits;
- (c) the hydraulic circuits shall be arranged and protected in such ways as to prevent the possible leakage of oil that contaminates fishery products;
- (d) adequate ventilation and, where necessary, proper vapour extraction system;
- (e) adequate lighting;
- (f) appliances for cleaning and disinfection of tools, equipment and fittings; and
- (g) appliances for cleaning and disinfection of hands with taps that are not hand/elbow-operable and with single use hand towels.

**Art. 5 Equipment and tools**

Equipment and tools such as cutting benches, containers, conveyors, gutting or filleting machines, etc., shall be resistant to seawater corrosion, and should be easy to clean and disinfect and should be well-maintained.

**Art. 6 Factory vessels that freeze fishery products**

Factory vessels that freeze fishery products shall have:

- (a) A refrigeration plant that is sufficiently powerful to lower the temperature of the products rapidly to achieve a core temperature that complies with the specification of these Regulations; and
- (b) a refrigeration plant that is sufficiently powerful to keep fishery products in the storage holds at a temperature that complies with the specifications of these Regulations. The storage holds shall be equipped with a temperature recording system that is kept at a place where it can easily be read.

PART III  
CONDITIONS OF HYGIENE RELATING TO ON-BOARD HANDLING AND STORAGE  
OF FISHERY PRODUCTS.

CHAPTER 1: General hygienic conditions for onboard handling and  
preparation of fishery products

**Art. 7 Best Practices**

A qualified person on board the factory vessel shall be responsible for implementing the best practices. The person shall have the authority to ensure that the provisions of these Regulations are applied and shall make available to inspectors:

- (a) the program for on board inspection and checking of control points and critical control points,
- (b) a register containing the inspector's comments, and
- (c) the temperature records that may be required.

**Art. 8 General conditions of hygiene applicable to the preparation and/or processing areas and equipment**

The following shall be applied:

- (a) floors, walls and partitions, ceilings or roof linings, equipment and instruments used for working on fishery products shall be kept in a satisfactory state of cleanliness and repair, so that they do not constitute a source of contamination;
- (b) rodents, insects and any other vermin shall be systematically exterminated from the premises or the equipment. Rodenticides, insecticides, disinfectants and any other potentially toxic substance shall be stored in a premise or cupboard that can be locked and their use shall not present any risk of contamination to the products or have adverse effects on the machinery and equipment. The Competent Authority should approve any chemical used on board;
- (c) working areas, instruments and working equipment shall be used only for fishery products; and
- (d) drinking water, within the meaning of The Potable Water Regulations in Fishery Product activities, Legal Notice No 68/2003, or clean seawater shall be used for all purposes. However, by way of an exception, non-drinking water may be used for steam production, fire fighting and as a cooling water, provided that the pipes installed for these purposes preclude the use of such water for other purposes and present no risk of contamination to the products.

**Art.9 General conditions of hygiene applicable to staff**

- (a) staff shall have the highest possible standard of cleanliness. More specifically:
  - (i) staff shall wear clean working clothes and headgear that completely encloses the hair. This applies particularly to persons handling exposed fishery products;
  - (ii) staff assigned to handle and prepare fishery products shall wash their hands before the start of work, during work and

each time work is resumed. Hand wounds shall be covered by a waterproof dressing; and

- (iii) smoking, spitting, eating and drinking in work and storage premises for fishery products shall be prohibited.
- (b) The employer shall take all the requisite measures to prevent a person liable to contaminate fishery products from handling them until there is evidence that such a person can do so without any risk.

When recruited any person shall be required to prove, by a medical certificate, that there is no impediment to his/her employment.

**Art. 10 Hygienic conditions applicable to heading, gutting and filleting**

- (a) operations such as heading and gutting shall be carried out hygienically. The products shall then be washed thoroughly with potable water or clean seawater immediately;
- (b) operations such as filleting and slicing shall be carried out in such a way as to avoid the contamination or spoilage of fillets and slices, and in a place other than that used for heading and gutting operations. Fillets and slices shall not remain on worktables longer than is necessary for their preparation and shall be protected from contamination. Fresh fillets and slices for sale shall be chilled as quickly as possible after preparation; and
- (c) guts and parts that may constitute a danger to public health shall be separated and removed from the vicinity of products intended for human consumption.

**Art. 11 Conditions of hygiene for on-board freezing of fishery products**

- (a) fresh products to be frozen or quick-frozen shall comply with the hygienic requirements for fresh products laid down in Article 12 hereof; and
- (b) storage rooms shall have a temperature-recording device in a place where it can easily be read. The temperature sensor of the recorder shall be located in the area farthest away from the cold source, i.e. where the temperature is the highest. Temperature charts shall be available for inspection by the supervisory authorities at least during the period in which the products are stored.

**Art. 12 Conditions of hygiene for fresh products**

- (1) The chilling of fishery products shall be carried out under the following conditions:
  - (a) quick chilling of fishery products is necessary to prevent undesirable physical, chemical and microbiological deterioration;
  - (b) at the end of the chilling cycle, the temperature of fishery products shall reach the temperature of melting ice, i.e., 0°C with a tolerance of  $\pm 1^\circ \text{C}$ ; and
  - (c) for *Scombroid* and related species of fish, in order to control histamine formation, their internal temperature shall be brought

from ambient temperature to 10° C or below within 6 hours, and once chilled shall be maintained as close to the temperature of melting ice as possible. After chilling, during preparation or processing, the fishery products shall not be exposed to temperatures above 4° C for a cumulative period of more than 2 hours.

- (2) Chill storage rooms shall comply with the following requirements:
  - (a) establishments preparing fresh fish as a final product shall have separate chilled stores for raw material and finished products;
  - (b) a chilled room used to store fresh fish shall operate at a temperature of melting ice;
  - (c) a chilled storage room shall not be used for initial freezing of fish or fishery products; and
  - (d) chilled rooms shall be kept clean and free from accumulation of ice. The floor and general structure of the room should be kept in a good condition.
- (3) The chilling of unpacked fishery products shall be carried out under the following conditions:
  - (a) where chilled unpacked fishery products (raw material) are not dispatched, prepared or processed immediately after reaching the establishment, they shall be stored under ice in the establishment's chill storage room. Re-icing shall be carried out as often as is necessary; and
  - (b) the ice used, with or without salt, shall be made from potable water or clean sea water and be hygienically stored in clean and well maintained containers provided for that purpose.
- (4) Fresh products shall be packed in ice or a similar temperature condition shall be created by mechanical refrigeration.
- (5) The preparation of fishery products shall be carried out in compliance with the following requirements:
  - (a) operations such as heading and gutting shall be carried out hygienically and the products shall be washed thoroughly with potable water or clean seawater immediately after such operations;
  - (b) the quantities of fish on the worktables at any one time shall be kept to a minimum;
  - (c) fish, which is held on the tables awaiting preparation, shall be protected by adequate quantities of ice. Tables provide a good heat transfer medium, therefore, the fish shall rest on a layer of ice and also be covered with it;
  - (d) when the workers break off, there shall not be any fish left on the tables;
  - (e) the internal temperature of the fishery products during handling and preparation on the worktables shall be maintained below a limit designed by the management and approved by the Competent Authority;
  - (f) all equipment used for the filleting of fish shall be washed and disinfected regularly during the process. This applies to knives, cutting boards, tables, etc;
  - (g) fillets shall be rinsed immediately after filleting and prior to subsequent packing;

- (h) all fish handlers shall wash and disinfect their hands properly or wear clean gloves before commencing their work;
- (i) if the fillets are not immediately packed or frozen they shall be stored at 0° C with adequate quantities of ice, or in a chill store; and
- (j) containers used for the dispatch or storage of fresh fishery products shall protect and preserve the products under sufficiently hygienic conditions and shall allow drainage of melt water.

**Art. 13 Conditions of hygiene for frozen products**

- (1) Freezing of fishery products shall be carried out under the following conditions:
  - (a) establishments shall have freezing equipment such as the blast/contact/plate/tunnel or brine freezers that are sufficiently powerful to achieve a rapid reduction of the fish temperature so that the core temperature laid down in these Regulations can be obtained as fast as possible;
  - (b) fresh products to be frozen or quick-frozen shall comply with the requirements, conditions and procedures for fresh products laid down in Article 12 hereof; and
  - (c) the freezing process shall be carried out in such a way that it minimises undesirable chemical and microbiological changes.

Therefore:

- (i) fish shall be frozen in a room or chamber specifically designed for the purpose and it should be clean and free from accumulation of frost;
  - (ii) blocks of fish or fish products for freezing shall not have a maximum thickness of more than 80 mm;
  - (iii) if the fish is not to be packed and frozen immediately, it shall be stored with sufficient ice to maintain its temperature at 0° C or in a chill store at that temperature;
  - (iv) any glaze water that is added to the fish shall first be chilled to 0° C. It is recommended that a mixture of ice and potable water be used;
  - (v) during off-loading of the freezer, the core temperature of the fish shall not rise above -18° C and the fish shall be packed in a chamber held at 0° C or less; and
  - (vi) packing in a master carton shall be done rapidly to prevent the temperature of fish from rising above -18° C.
- (2) When freezing fishery products, the management shall take into account the freezing capacity of the facilities:
    - (a) freezing chambers or other freezing equipment, shall reduce the temperature of a product through the zone of maximum crystallisation (in most products -1° C to -5° C) preferably within 4 hours but not exceeding 6 hours from the start of the refrigeration process;
    - (b) where the refrigeration process is continued in order to reduce the thermal core temperature to -18° C or colder, the whole

refrigeration process should be preferably completed within 8 hours, but not exceeding 12 hours. Inadequate freezing facilities lead to longer freezing times that damages the texture and quality of the fishery products;

- (c) the freezing process is completed only when the thermal core temperature reaches  $-18^{\circ}\text{C}$  after thermal stabilisation. Brine frozen fish for canning use that may be frozen at higher temperature, although not exceeding  $-9^{\circ}\text{C}$ , is an exception; and
  - (d) any blast freezer should not be overloaded with quantities in excess of the design capacity. Reference should be made to the specifications of the supplier of the refrigeration equipment in order to determine the recommended capacity, but generally loading should not exceed 70 % of the internal volume.
- (3) To keep fishery products in a frozen condition, cold storage rooms and the storage conditions shall comply with the following requirements:
- (a) the floor and general structure of the cold storage rooms shall be kept in a good condition;
  - (b) all cold storage rooms shall be kept clean and free from accumulation of frost;
  - (c) the cold storage room shall be well organised; different products and batches should be physically separated;
  - (d) in order to permit the free circulation of air within the cold storage, products shall not be stored in contact with the walls or floor. The use of paletting and racking system is recommended;
  - (e) poultry, meat and other products that may contaminate the fishery products shall not be stored in the cold store unless the product is packaged and physically separated from the seafood product;
  - (f) to keep cardboard boxes clean, they shall not be placed on the floor;
  - (g) the principle of first in and first out shall be implemented in the storage of fishery products;
  - (h) temperature fluctuations shall be minimum after the freezing process and during handling and transport;
  - (i) cold storage rooms shall have temperature-recording devices in a place where it can easily be read. The temperature sensor of the recorder shall be located in an area furthest away from the cold source, i.e. where the temperature in the storage room is the highest; and
  - (j) temperature charts shall be available for inspection by the supervisory authorities at least during the period in which the products are stored.

#### **Art. 14 Conditions of hygiene for thawing frozen fishery products**

- (1) fishery products shall be thawed under hygienic and controlled time-temperature conditions. Contamination shall be avoided and there shall be adequate drainage for any melt water. During thawing, the temperature of the products shall be monitored and should not increase excessively.
- (2) fishery products shall be thawed as quickly as possible without causing undesirable physical, biochemical and microbial changes.

- (3) if water is used for thawing, a control system should be installed.
- (4) after thawing, fishery products shall be handled in accordance with the requirements of these regulations. Their Preparation or processing shall be carried out with out delay. If they are marketed directly, their thawed state shall be clearly indicated on the packaging.

CHAPTER 2: Hygienic conditions for on-board  
processing of fishery products

**Art. 15 General conditions of hygiene**

- (1) Fresh, frozen and/or thawed fishery products used for processing shall comply with the requirements laid down for fresh, frozen and thawed products in these Regulations.
- (2) Where processing is carried out to inhibit the development of pathogenic micro-organisms or is a significant factor in the preservation of the product, the treatment shall be scientifically recognised by the inspection service.
- (3) Contamination, cross-contamination and deterioration of fishery products shall be prevented:
  - (a) by design:
    - (i) operating practices shall be designed to avoid contamination of product, product surfaces and packaging materials.
    - (ii) processes in which there is a risk of contamination to the final product such as:
      - (A) prawn heading, de-veining and peeling.
      - (B) lobster heading, gutting and de-veining.
      - (C) dismembering, gutting and scaling of fish.
 shall take place in physically separated areas either by location or partition from where the product is further processed or packed.
    - (iii) pet food and fish meal preparation and packing shall be done at a place separate from that used for processing fishery products for human consumption
  - (b) by operating practices :
    - (i) effective measures shall be taken to prevent raw or semi-processed fishery products from coming into contact with the end product; and
    - (ii) all steps in the production process shall be performed without delay and under conditions that minimise the possibility of contamination, deterioration and growth of micro-organisms.
    - (iii) for the preparation and/or processing of high risk products:
      - a) contaminated protective clothing worn by a person handling raw materials or partially processed foods shall be discarded before the person comes in contact with high risk processed food;
      - b) if there is a likelihood of contamination, hands shall be washed and disinfected thoroughly between handling processed food at different stages of processing; and
      - c) all equipment which has been in contact with raw materials or contaminated materials shall be thoroughly

cleaned and disinfected prior to being used in contact with processed food.

**Art. 16 Hygienic conditions for smoking fishery products**

- (1) Smoking shall be carried out in separate premises or a special place equipped, if necessary, with a ventilation system to prevent the smoke and heat from affecting other premises or places where fishery products are prepared, processed or stored.
- (2) smoking accessories shall be stored away from the place of smoking and shall be used in such a way that they do not contaminate the products.
- (3) Painted, varnished, glued, or materials that have undergone preservation or chemical treatment shall not be used for smoking.
- (4) Smoked products shall be cooled rapidly to the temperature required for their preservation before being packaged.

**Art. 17 Hygienic conditions for salting fishery products**

- (1) Salting shall take place in an area at a sufficient distance from the premises where other operations are carried out.
- (2) Salt used for the treatment of fishery products shall be clean, stored hygienically and shall not be re-used.
- (3) Any container used for salting or brining shall be constructed properly to preclude contamination during the salting or brining process.
- (4) Containers used for salting or brining shall be cleaned before use.

**Art. 18 Hygienic conditions for cooking crustaceans and molluscan shell fish products**

- (1) adequate time/temperature control is a prerequisite for hot blanched/cooked products to ensure that the products achieve the desired functionality and shelf life.
- (2) cooking/hot blanching should be followed by rapid cooling to kill thermotolerant bacteria. The cooling water shall be potable or clean seawater. If no other method of preservation is used, cooling shall continue until the temperature approaches that of melting ice.
- (3) Shelling or shucking shall be carried out hygienically. Where such operations are done by hand, workers shall wash and disinfect their hands as well as contact surfaces. Machines, if used for shelling/shucking, shall be cleaned at frequent intervals and disinfected after each working day.
- (4) After shelling or shucking, cooked products shall be immediately frozen or kept chilled at a temperature that precludes growth of pathogens and then should be stored properly.
- (5) the finished products shall be subject to microbiological checks at regular intervals according to the standards set forth in The Fishery Products Regulations, Legal Notice No. 40/1998, Annex No. 2(6).

**Art. 19 Hygienic conditions for preparing and/or processing shrimps**

- (1) Tanks or sinks used for washing shrimp shall be supplied with a continuous flow of chilled water, sufficient to replace the contents of the tank every half an hour. They should be emptied and cleaned in

between batches and each time work stops. Only chilled water should be used for washing the shrimps.

- (2) Shrimps to be stored for more than one day prior to preparation should be headed immediately after reception and stored with sufficient quantities of ice to maintain its temperature at 0° C.
- (3) If the final product is head-on shrimp, the preparation of the raw material shall commence immediately after reception and should progress rapidly with rigorous temperature control.
- (4) Peeling and de-veining of shrimp shall also be done rapidly to minimise the rise in temperature. The product shall then be stored at 0° C with adequate quantities of ice.
- (5) Higher standards of hygiene and cleanliness shall be maintained at the worktables on which shrimp is peeled and de-veined
- (6) An air temperature of less than 25° C shall be maintained by using air conditioners in areas where cooked or head-on shrimps are processed.

**Art. 20 Hygienic conditions related to cooked shrimps**

- (1) There should be a separate area for processing cooked shrimps and no personnel from the other areas should have direct access to this area.
- (2) All personnel who handle cooked shrimp or work in or enter the area in which it is processed shall wear coats, boots, hats and aprons which are used exclusively by such personnel, and which are kept separate from the protective clothing used in the preparation of raw shrimp. In order to avoid confusion, it is recommended that the uniforms, boots, etc. should be of a different colour.
- (3) All persons entering the cooked product area shall wash and disinfect their hands and boots.
- (4) No equipment or other articles (including fish boxes, knives etc.) shall be transferred from an area in which raw shrimp is handled to the cooked product area, without first being cleaned and disinfected.

**Art. 21 Hygienic conditions for canned fishery products**

- (1) A scheduled process shall be established by experienced personnel for low acid foods in hermetically sealed containers.  
A "Standard Operating Procedure" Manual shall be compiled specifying the:
  - (a) Establishment of the thermal process with
    - (i) heat penetration.
    - (ii) heat distribution study.
  - (b) Process control system with:
    - (i) equipment description.
    - (ii) monitoring system.
    - (iii) general operations in the thermal processing room.
  - (c) Container integrity checks :
    - (i) incoming containers.
    - (ii) seaming machines.
    - (iii) evaluation of double seam integrity.
    - (iv) monitoring of cooling water.
    - (v) cooling of containers.
    - (vi) post-process handling of containers

- (d) Documentation and records :
  - (i) processing and production records.
  - (ii) management review of records.
  - (iii) process deviation records

and shall be approved by the Competent Authority.

The Standard Operating Procedures Manual shall be based on the requirements laid down in Title 21 Food and Drugs, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter I, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, Part 113, Thermally Processed Low-acid Foods Packaged in Hermetically Sealed Containers (21 CFR p. 113).

- (2) The canning conditions shall comply with the following requirements:
  - (a) the water used for canning shall be potable;
  - (b) the heat treatment process shall be appropriate with respect to the heating time, temperature, filling, and size of containers, etc., a record of which shall be kept;
  - (c) the heat treatment shall be capable of destroying or inactivating pathogenic organisms and their spores;
  - (d) the autoclave shall be fitted with devices for verifying whether the containers have undergone appropriate time-temperature treatments; and
  - (e) potable water shall be used to cool containers after heat treatment, without prejudice to the presence of any chemical additives used in accordance with good technological practice to prevent corrosion of the equipment and containers.
- (3) Following checks shall be carried out to verify the canning process:
  - (a) further checks shall be carried out at random by the manufacturer to ensure that the processed products have undergone appropriate heat treatment, this include:
    - (i) incubation test at 37° C for seven days or at 35° C for ten days or at any other equivalent combination shall be carried out; and
    - (ii) microbiological examination of the contents shall be done at the establishment's laboratory or in any other approved laboratory.
  - (b) Samples shall be taken from production every day at predetermined intervals, to ensure the efficiency of sealing or of any other method of hermetic closure. For that purpose, appropriate equipment shall be available for the examination of cross-sections of the can-seams.
  - (c) Checks shall be carried out in order to ensure that containers are not damaged.
  - (d) All containers that have undergone heat treatment under practically identical conditions during the same period of time shall be given a batch identification mark.

CHAPTER 3: Hygienic conditions related to packaging and storage of fishery products

**Art. 22 Hygienic conditions for packaging of fishery products**

Fishery products shall be wrapped and packaged under the following conditions of hygiene:

- (a) to preclude contamination of the fishery products, packaging shall be carried out under satisfactory conditions of hygiene.
- (b) packaging materials and other food contact materials shall comply with all the rules of hygiene, and in particular:
  - (i) they shall not impair the organoleptic characteristics of the fishery products;
  - (ii) they shall not be capable of transmitting harmful substances to human health; and
  - (iii) they shall be strong enough to protect the fishery products adequately.
- (c) with the exception of certain containers made of impervious, smooth and corrosion-resistant materials which are easy to clean and disinfect, no other packaging materials shall be re-used.
- (d) unused packaging materials shall be stored in premises away from the production area and be protected from dust and contamination.

**Art. 23 Hygienic conditions for on-board storage of fishery Products**

On-board storage of fishery products shall be carried out under the following conditions of hygiene:

- (a) Fishery products shall, during storage, be kept at the temperatures laid down in these Regulations and in particular:
  - (i) fresh or thawed fishery products and cooked and chilled crustacean and molluscan shellfish products shall be kept at the temperature of melting ice;
  - (ii) frozen fishery products, with the exception of frozen fish in brine intended for the manufacture of canned foods, shall be kept at an even temperature of  $-18^{\circ}$  C or less in all parts of the product, allowing for the possibility of brief upward fluctuations of not more than  $3^{\circ}$  C, during transport; and
  - (iii) processed products shall be kept at the temperature specified by the manufacturer.
- (b) Unless they are packaged in such a way as to provide satisfactory protection, products shall not be stored with other materials that may contaminate or affect their hygiene.

CHAPTER 4: Conditions concerning parasites

**Art. 24 General conditions for visual inspection**

Visual inspection shall be done as follows:

- (1) during production and before they are released for human consumption, fish and fishery products shall be subject to visual inspection to detect and remove any visible parasites;
- (2) visual inspection shall be performed on a representative number of samples; and
- (3) the persons in charge of on shore plants and qualified persons on board factory vessels shall determine the scale and frequency of the inspections required in sub-article (2) hereof by reference to the nature of the fishery products, their geographical origin and their use.

**Art. 25 Specific conditions for visual inspection**

Visual inspection of eviscerated fish shall be done as follows:

- (1) during production, the visual inspection of eviscerated fish shall be done on the abdominal cavity and livers and roes intended for human consumption. Visual inspection should be carried out depending on the gutting system adapted:
  - in case of manual evisceration, in a continuous manner by the operator at the time of evisceration and washing; and
  - in the case of mechanical evisceration, by taking representative samples but at least less than 10 fish per batch.
- (2) the visual inspection of fish fillets or fish slices shall be carried out during trimming or slicing. Where an individual examination is not possible because of the size of the fillets or the filleting operations, a sampling plan shall be drawn up and kept available for the Competent Authority. Where candling of fillets is possible from a technical viewpoint, it shall be included in the sampling plan.

**Art. 26 Measures to be taken before the release of fish/fishery products for consumption**

Measures to be taken before the release of fish/fishery products for consumption are:

- (1) fish or parts of fish which are obviously infested with parasites, and which are removed, shall not be placed on the market for human consumption.
- (2) the fish and fish products referred to in sub-article (1) hereof that are to be consumed as they are, shall, in addition be subjected to freezing at a temperature of not more than  $-20^{\circ}$  C in all parts of the product for not less than 24 hours. Products subjected to this freezing process may be either raw or finished.
- (3) fish and products subjected to the condition in sub-article (2) hereof are:
  - fish to be consumed raw or almost raw, e.g. raw herring "maatje".
  - the following species if they are to undergo a cold smoking process at which the internal temperature of the fish is less than  $60^{\circ}$  C:
    - herring
    - mackerel
    - sprat

- marinated and/or salted herring where this process is insufficient to destroy the larvae of nematodes.
- (4) processors shall ensure that fish and fish products listed in sub-article (3) hereof or fish to be consumed raw are subject to the treatment described in sub-article 2 hereof prior to their release for consumption.
  - (5) the fishery products listed in sub-article (3) hereof shall, when they are placed on the market, be accompanied by a document from the manufacturer stating the type of process they have undergone.

**Art. 27 Effective Date**

These Regulations shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Gazette of Eritrean Laws.

Done at Asmara, this 30<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2003  
Ahmed Haj Ali,  
Minister of Fisheries.