

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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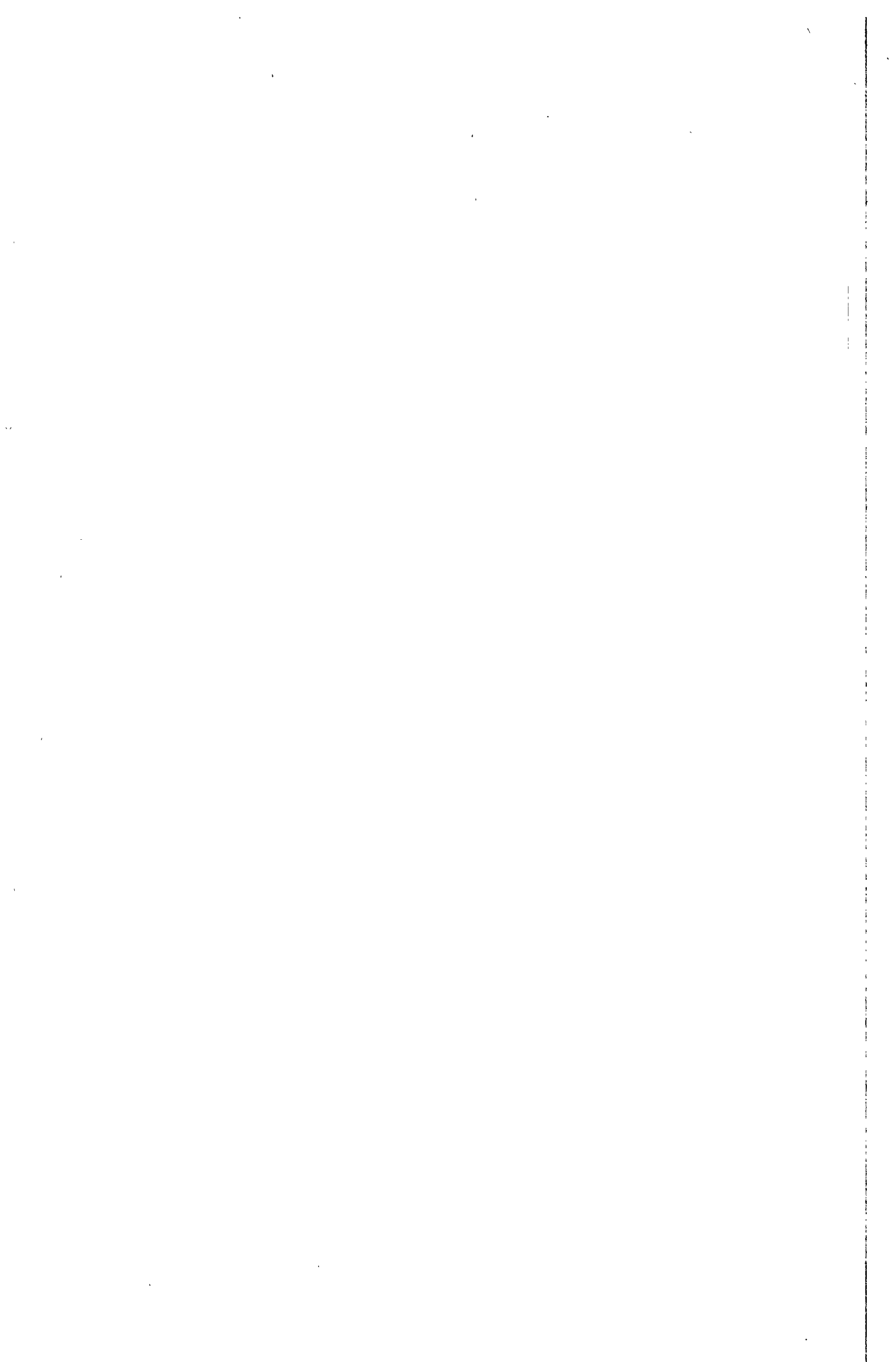
REPORT

drawn up on behalf of ~~the~~ Committee on
External Economic Relations

on the proposal from the Commission of the European
Communities to the Council (Doc. 1-502/79) for a
regulation temporarily and partially suspending
the autonomous Common Customs Tariff duties on
certain types of fish

Rapporteur: Mr. H-J. SEELER

1.2.1



By letter of 9 November 1979 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty, to deliver an opinion on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a regulation temporarily suspending the autonomous Common Customs Tariff duties on certain types of fish.

The President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on External Economic Relations as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Agriculture for its opinion.

On 22 November the Committee on External Economic Relations appointed Mr Seeler rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meeting of 20 December 1979.

At the same meeting the committee unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and the explanatory statement.

Present: Sir Fred Catherwood, chairman; Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul vice-chairman; Mr Van Aerssen, vice-chairman; Mr Seal, vice-chairman; Mr Seeler, rapporteur; Mr Almirante, Mr Jonker, Mr Kellet-Bowman, Mrs Lenz, Mr Radoux, Mr Schmitt, Sir John Stewart-Clark, Mr Welsh, Mr Zagari (deputizing for Mr Fellermaier).

The opinion of the Committee on Agriculture is attached.

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The Committee on External Economic Relations hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a regulation temporarily and partially suspending the autonomous Common Customs Tariff duties on certain types of fish

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council¹,
- having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty (Doc. 1-502/79),
- having regard to the report of the Committee on External Economic Relations and the opinion of the Committee on Agriculture (Doc.1-643/79),

1. Approves the Commission's proposal;
2. Requests the Commission in future to make quite clear whenever possible what effects the measures proposed will have on the Community as a whole, even when they concern more particularly the interests of one or only some Member States.
3. Calls on the Commission to enter into negotiations with those States which benefit from an increase in fish exports to the Community on the granting of further fishing licences to Community fishermen, and to report to Parliament on the outcome in good time before this regulation is again extended.

¹OJ No. C 283, 13.11.1979, p.3

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. Introduction

The Commission's explanatory memorandum reads as follows:

'The Community's processing industry for fish is not sufficiently supplied with cod, haddock and hake by Community fishermen. Denmark especially has become dependent on imports of these fish from third countries (see statistics for the first half-year 1979 in the annex to this explanatory memorandum.) The Common Customs Tariff duties applicable to these fish (15/18%) reduce the competitiveness of the industry concerned compared with the prices of suppliers of finished products from third countries which are cheaper. Furthermore an attempt must be made to prevent a further rise in the price of processed fish.

For these reasons Denmark has requested a duty suspension for the fish in question.

Weighing the interests of Community fishermen and those of the Community's processing industry the Commission considers that a duty suspension to a level of 9% is appropriate. The Commission therefore proposes in the attached regulation that the present duty suspension which expires on 31 December 1979 should be prolonged for a new period of 6 months'.

II. Observations

(a) The Commission gives the impression that this proposal for a regulation has been made solely for the benefit of Denmark. While it is true that the Danish fish processing industry is the largest in the Community and that as a result Denmark has the greatest interest in this regulation, it must be stressed that the regulation affects the Community as a whole and that other Member States will also benefit from a continued suspension of the Common Customs Tariff duties for the first half-year of 1980.

(b) The suspension of duty only applies to fish intended for human consumption. The Commission does not intend to provide the fishmeal industry with cheap supplies of fish. It is pursuing a fish conservation policy, and this measure represents an important part of this policy.

(c) As the Committee on External Economic Relations noted in the report drawn up by Lord Kennett on the same subject in 1978¹ 'it should be stressed that the present regulation is to the advantage of the fish processing industry in the Community compared with the fish processing industry in third countries'. This regulation does not involve a reduction in the import duty on canned fish.

Taking the above considerations into account, the Committee on External Economic Relations recommends that the European Parliament approve the present regulation which seeks to maintain the existing arrangements.

¹Document 450/78

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Letter from the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture,
to Sir Fred Catherwood, chairman of the Committee on External Economic
Relations

Brussels, 29 November 1979

Dear Mr Chairman,

At its meeting of 28 and 29 November 1979, the committee on
Agriculture delivered the following opinion¹ on the proposal for a
regulation temporarily suspending partially the autonomous Common
Customs Tariff duties on certain types of fish.

The aim of this proposal is to prolong for a further period of
six months², that is until 30 June 1980, the temporary and partial
suspension of CCT duties on some species of fish intended for the
Danish processing industry. The duty applicable will be 9% instead
of 15-18%. This is because Denmark is dependent on imports from
third countries for a total of about 15,000 tonnes of cod, 5,000
tonnes of haddock, 2,500 tonnes of hake and 750 tonnes of fillets
of hake, since the Community catch is not sufficient.

Since the purpose is to prolong a suspension which is already
in force, and which the Committee on Agriculture has already approved
in the past, the committee has no objections to approving this proposal
for a period of six months only. During this period the Committee on
Agriculture will be examining the full social and economic impact of such
imports on the Community fishing and processing industries, especially on
small enterprises, to see whether in fact such imports do not adversely
affect these industries.

(sgd) Sir Henry PLUMB

¹ Present: Sir Henry Plumb, chairman, Miss Barbarella, Mr Battersby,
Mr Bocklet, Mr Curry, Mr Delatte, Mr Louwes (deputizing for
Mr Jürgens), Mr Maffre-Baugé, Mr Maher, Miss Quin, Mr Skovmand,
Mr Sutra, Mr Tolman, Mr Vernimmen and Mr Woltjer.

² This suspension is at present in force until 31 December 1979,
under Regulation 984/79 of 14 May 1979, O.J. L 123 of 19 May 1979