

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(79) 73 final

Brussels, 16 February 1979.

## COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

on the development of the common fisheries policy

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COUNCIL ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMON  
FISHERIES POLICY

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Explanatory Memorandum

1. Since 1976 the Commission has forwarded to the Council all the proposals needed to adapt the common fisheries policy to international developments and to biological conditions.

In establishing its proposals in line with the objectives of Article 39 of the Treaty, the Commission has sought to establish a Community policy which provides for the coherent, non-discriminatory and rational management of resources, based on the most relevant scientific data, and including both the necessary conservation and control measures and steps for adapting structures.

2. As the Commission already emphasized in its Communication to the Council of 21 November 1978 (COM(78)661 final), it considers that it is now essential for the Council to take a decision; in its Resolution of 20 December 1978, the Council stated its intention of reaching an agreement as early as possible in 1979 on Community measures for the conservation and management of fishery resources and related matters.

In the next stage of discussions in the Council of Ministers, the main problems still to be tackled will be:

- access to the various fishery zones, in conformity with the basic principles of the Treaty and the specific provisions of the Act of Accession, and fishing activity within the 12-mile coastal limit; the Commission has already put forward ways of helping solve these problems, by means of fishing plans;
- the relationship to be established between fishing for human consumption and fishing for industrial purposes;
- the fixing of quotas, and especially allocating availabilities for 1979;
- the problems of adapting structures.

3. The Commission also emphasizes that evaluating stocks and fixing TACs, which in the final analysis determine the annual fishing potential of the main stocks, are essential elements of the policy for the conservation and rational management of resources.

The Commission considers that the scientific discussions to be begun this year, both internationally and within the Community, must serve the double purpose of ensuring rigorous protection of stocks while at the same time ensuring that fishing conditions are properly related to economic and social circumstances.

To this end, and in order to provide a wider basis for later decisions on TACs, the Commission informs the Council that it intends shortly to set up a Scientific and Technical Committee on Fisheries.

As regards TACs for 1979, the proposals submitted to the Council were based on the technical data available. The Commission would point out here that these proposals were based on the prospect of Community rules on mesh size as put forward in the Commission's proposal on technical conservation measures (R/3048/78 (Agri 831) (Relex 101)).

4. On the basis of its proposals to the Council on TACs, the Commission has conducted and concluded consultations on determining mutual availabilities for 1979 with Norway, Sweden and Canada. Consultations should be finished by the end of this month with the Faroe Islands and by the end of March with Spain. Meanwhile, reciprocal arrangements applied in 1978 are continuing.

The Commission therefore submits to the Council Regulations enabling fishing vessels flying the flags of these countries to fish in the Community fishing zone, as agreed in these consultations. This concerns availabilities in the EEC zone in 1979 for vessels flying the Norwegian and Swedish flags, and provisional availabilities for the Faroes for March. The arrangements for Canada will be dealt with in a later proposal, after current technical discussions requested by Canada itself have been completed.

5. As regards the allocation of available resources among the Member States, the Commission already indicated in its Communication of 21 November 1978 what were the general criteria; on this basis, and in the light of the general approach which emerges for the whole context within which Community fishing will be carried on this year, the Commission will submit concrete proposals for 1979 quota allocations, taking into account the outcome of the remaining consultations still being held with some non-Community countries.

6. The Commission also takes the view that, pending a decision by the Council on quotas for each Member State, the Community should fulfil the commitments it has entered into for the management of mixed stocks, responsibility for the protection and conservation which is either shared with such non-Community coastal countries as Canada, Norway and Sweden or is dealt with in international fishery bodies to which the Community or its Member States belong.

To this end, the Commission submits to the Council proposals for placing appropriate ceilings on the Community's total fishing potential for the stocks and zones concerned. These proposals are for establishing total catch quotas for one Member State of the Community in the Skagerrak, the Kattegat, the Baltic Sea, the North Sea and certain areas of the North-West Atlantic, and for ensuring that the commitments entered into with Norway and Sweden, on the use of certain gear or fishing methods in the Skagerrak and the Kattegat, are complied with.

7. The Commission proposes that the Council agree to finalize in 1979 the Directive on adjusting capacity and the common measure for restructuring the inshore fishing industry, so that they can be implemented from 1 January 1980. In the meantime, it proposes that the Council agree to extend, on the basis of a Commission proposal, Council Regulation 1852/78 of 25 July 1978 on an interim common measure for restructuring the inshore fishing industry. The estimated cost of the common measure to the EAGGF for the 1979 financial year will be 15 million ECU.