

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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## COMMUNICATION OF THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

with respect to multilateral cooperation on fisheries

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In its Communication of 11 May 1977 with respect to the future fisheries policy, the Commission indicated to the Council its intention to submit to the Council proposals concerning the problems to be dealt with at the forthcoming plenary meeting (1) of the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF) and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). These problems belong essentially to two categories : the conservation and management of fish stocks in 1978 and the future of these fisheries organizations in view of the 200-mile situation.

With respect to these two categories of problems, the Commission proposes that the Community adopts at these meetings the position defined below in this Communication.



(1) ICNAF : 31 May - 14 June, OTTAWA; NEAFC : 6 July - 12 July,  
LONDON.



In its Communication to the Council of 23 September 1976, the Commission made certain proposals as to the role of the Community in securing international cooperation to conserve resources. The proposals were endorsed by the Council in the texts adopted on 3 November 1976. The position to be taken by the Community at the forthcoming meetings of ICNAF and NEAFC follows from that decision. In view of the developments since November 1976, however, the Commission considers it useful to clarify some of the major implications of the decision of 3 November 1976 as regards the position to be taken by the Community at these meetings.

1. Conservation and management of fish stocks in 1978

As regards the first set of problems (conservation and management of fish stocks in 1978), the meetings of ICNAF and NEAFC should not adopt any recommendations in relation to fisheries within waters to which Community rules on fishing apply. For such fisheries the sole tasks to be performed at the meetings are the compilation of scientific advice and the exchange of information.

Fisheries other than in Community waters may be divided into two categories: fisheries within the zones of third States and fisheries beyond the 200-mile limit. It is presumed that only the last-mentioned category will be the subject of conservation and management measures adopted within the framework of ICNAF and NEAFC. Such measures should be negotiated and implemented on a Community basis. This would also apply in the event that a non-member country wished to have measures adopted within ICNAF and NEAFC relating to fishing in the zone under its jurisdiction.

## 2. Future arrangements

As regards the second set of problems (the future of ICNAF and NEAFC), the Community's position should be that the bodies to be established are to have these functions: (1) to act as a forum for consultation and the exchange of information; (2) to make recommendations to ensure the conservation and optimum utilization of fish resources in waters beyond the 200-mile fishing zones; and (3) to make recommendations to ensure the conservation and optimum utilization of fish resources within 200-mile fishing zones if the coastal State concerned so requests and if the recommendation receives its affirmative vote. Recent developments show that there exists already a large measure of agreement of these future functions.

The new organizations will come into being upon the entry into force of the new convention, negotiated by the Community as such. The Community should be the sole participant in the new convention on the Community side, in view of the competence of the Community in this field.

As the entry into force of the new instrument will require some time, appropriate transitional arrangements should be adopted.

The Commission will shortly submit a draft NEAFC Convention to an appropriate Working Group of the Council.

## 3. Denunciation of ICNAF Convention

The Member States concerned should denounce the present ICNAF Convention before 30 June 1977 so as to maximize the flexibility of the Community in negotiating a new ICNAF Convention and transitional arrangements. Denunciation is also necessary in order to protect the position of the Community in bilateral negotiations.

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The policy guidelines here expounded relate to the two organizations ICNAF and NEAFC. They are equally applicable to other fisheries organizations.