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E.C.-U.S. FISHING AGREEMENT NETS E.C. COUNCIL APPROVAL

The European Community has approved a new agreement with the United States outlining the rights of its member states' fishing vessels in American waters.

The five-year accord, which was adopted yesterday by the E.C. Council of Ministers, recognizes the concern of both sides for the rational management and conservation of U.S. fish stocks. It allows Community vessels to continue operating in 200-mile "economic zones" off both U.S. coasts. In exchange, the Community will help the U.S. develop its fishing industry and increase its fishery exports to Europe.

The E.C. agreed to share expertise, facilitate the transfer of harvesting technology to the U.S. fishing industry and foster joint-venture fishing arrangements between the E.C. and the U.S.

The agreement, which was initialed by E.C. and U.S. officials in June, has been submitted to the U.S. Congress for final approval. It will replace the Community's first fisheries accord with the U.S., which expired this year.

Vessels from three Community countries -- Germany, Italy and the Netherlands -- presently fish in American waters. Under the new agreement, the U.S. each year will determine how much surplus fish to allocate to the E.C. according to factors that are outlined in the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act. These factors, which apply to all U.S. surplus fish allocations, include traditional fishing patterns and the level of cooperation with the U.S. in fishery research and observance of U.S. fishing regulations.

The United States and a number of other countries have claimed jurisdiction over natural resources within 200 miles of their coasts. Similarly, the Community in 1977 established 200-mile fishing zones in the Atlantic Ocean and North Sea.

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The E.C. since 1971 has had a common fisheries policy, with standard marketing norms and a unified price system for its 10 member states. In principle, Community fishing vessels have equal access to the waters of all member states. In 1976 member states recognized the E.C. Commission's exclusive competence to handle international fishing negotiations. The original fisheries agreement with the United States, signed in 1977, was the E.C.'s first fishing accord with a third party.

The Community has concluded a number of other bilateral fishing agreements, including reciprocal fishing-rights accords with Norway, Sweden and the Faeroes. Community boats have the right to fish in Canadian waters in exchange for tariff reductions on some Canadian fish exports to the E.C. The Community has also negotiated agreements with a number of developing countries, including Senegal, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. In exchange for fishing rights in their waters, the Community helps these countries build up their fishing industries.