

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1979 - 1980

22 October 1979

DOCUMENT 1-402/79

Report

drawn up on behalf of the
Committee on Agriculture

on the proposals from the Commission of the
European Communities to the Council for

- I. a regulation allocating among Member States certain catch quotas for vessels fishing in the regulatory area defined in the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (Doc. 1-268/79)
- II. a regulation laying down certain measures for the conservation of fishery resources applicable to vessels flying the flag of a Member State and fishing in international waters in the North West Atlantic (Doc. 1-262/79)

1.2.1

Rapporteur : Mr R. BATTERSBY

By letters of 6 August 1979 and 1 August 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 proposals from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for:

- I. a Regulation allocating among Member States certain catch quotas for vessels fishing in the Regulatory area defined in the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries, and
- II. a Regulation laying down certain measures for the conservation of fishery resources applicable to vessels flying the flag of a Member State and fishing in international waters in the Northwest Atlantic.

The President of the European Parliament referred these proposals to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible.

On 26 September 1979 the Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr Battersby rapporteur.

It considered these proposals at its meetings of 10 and 11 October 1979.

At the same meeting the committee adopted the motion for a resolution by 30 votes with 2 abstentions.

Present: Mr Ligios, acting chairman and vice-chairman, Mr Battersby, rapporteur, Mr Abens (deputizing for Mr Hauenschild), Miss Barberella, Mr Blaney (deputizing for Mr Skovmand), Mr Bocklet, Mr Buchou, Mrs Castle, Mr Clinton, Mr Colleselli, Mrs Cresson, Mr Curry, Mr Dalsass, Mr Davern, Mr Delatte, Mr De Pasquale (deputizing for Mr Papapietro), Mr Diana, Mr Früh, Mr Gatto, Mr Helms, Mrs Herklotz, Mr Howell, Mr Kirk, Mr Maffre-Baugé, Mr Maher, Mr J. Brøndlund Nielsen, Mr Pranchère, Mr Provan, Miss Quin, Mr Sutra, Mr Tolman, and Mr Woltjer.

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
A - MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION	5
B - EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	7

The Committee on Agriculture 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 proposals from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for

- I. a Regulation allocating among Member States certain catch quotas for vessels fishing in the Regulatory area defined in the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries,
and
- II. a Regulation laying down certain measures for the conservation of fishery resources applicable to vessels flying the flag of a Member State and fishing in international waters in the Northwest Atlantic

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposals from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council¹
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty (Docs. I-268/79 and I-262/79),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture,(Doc.1-402/79),
 - Whereas, joint stock management and conservation measures with third countries are essential to safeguard the future of the Community's fishing industry.
1. Approves the Commission's proposals as a necessary implementation of the Convention on future multilateral cooperation in the North West Atlantic fisheries, which is essential to ensure adequate conservation measures in the North West Atlantic and to provide Community vessels with continued access to certain of those waters;
 2. Points out that proposals of the Fisheries Commission of the North West Atlantic Fisheries Organization become measures binding upon the Community in the absence of an objection by the Community;

Insists, therefore, that the Commission inform the European Parliament of any such proposals with adequate time to allow for the proper assessment by it of these measures in good time before any deadline for objection;
 3. Notes that Member States are to be obliged to register all vessels over 50 gross registered tonnes operating in the North West Atlantic;

¹

OJ No C 202, 11.8.1979, p 2
OJ No C 193, 31.7.1979, p 2

Considers that in view of the changed circumstances caused by the extension to the 200 mile limits and the climatic and sea conditions normally encountered in these waters, that this tonnage figure be revised upwards;

4. Urges that the Commission when it draws up its proposals for a licencing system applying to Community vessels fishing in Community waters or in waters covered by agreements with Third Countries makes full use of the experience gained in operating under these regulations and keeps appropriate statistical records;
5. Requests that in any future proposals relating to the allocation of quotas to Community fishing vessels either in Community or third waters with the Community information be included on the basis on which the quota allocations have been made;
6. Urges that the Commission, in the course of bilateral or multilateral fisheries negotiations with Third Countries, ensure that there be a proper coordination between the officials responsible for external commercial policy for fish and fish products and those responsible for fisheries management policies, so that maximum access by Community fishermen to Third Country waters be obtained.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTIntroduction

1. The Convention on future multilateral cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic fisheries has replaced the international fisheries organization ICNAF (International Convention for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries).
2. As a result of the extension of the exclusive zone to 200 nautical miles, the working area of ICNAF had to be revised, which involved so many changes that a new agreement was essential. The ICNAF was not designed for the present situation in which the fisheries area falling under the jurisdiction of coastal states has been extended.

Negotiations took place at a number of diplomatic conferences between the parties concerned for a new form of multilateral cooperation covering the Atlantic Ocean and, following the diplomatic conference held in Ottawa in October 1977, the Convention came into force on 1 January 1979.

3. The text of the agreement has also been signed by a number of important States, such as Canada, Portugal, Norway, Romania and the Soviet Union, and it has also been signed by the Community.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the Community is a party to the Convention in its own right, in accordance with its powers under the common fisheries policy.

4. The fact that the Soviet Union has signed the text is of great political significance, as it is the first time this power has recognized the Community's competence to negotiate in international fisheries. This creates a precedent of great importance for the future, when the Community will be taking part in its own right in international fisheries negotiations in the NEAFC or in regional fisheries organizations.
5. The second important factor in the new agreement concerns the substantial role allocated to scientific research and information, as a result of which the control and conservation of fish stocks in the Northwest Atlantic acquires a scientific basis. Scientific research is institutionalized in the form of the Scientific Council¹.

¹ Scientific Council - Conseil Scientifique, only the English and French texts are authentic.

6. In considering the proposed convention, the Committee on Agriculture approved it as an important step towards multilateral cooperation in the fisheries sector¹.

The proposals

7. The two proposals before the Committee seek to implement the following measures under the NAFO Convention:

- (a) To incorporate technical conservation measures on mesh sizes proposed or effective under the ICNAF Convention.

The NAFO Convention provides that measures transmitted or effective under ICNAF shall become effective under the NAFO Convention.

The present proposal incorporates a number of ICNAF conservation measures which apply to the NAFO regulatory area.

- (b) To allocate between Member States catch quotas inherited from ICNAF and other quotas adopted by the NAFO Fisheries Commission.

Observations

8. The first observation to be made is that these measures concern international waters outside the 200 mile exclusive economic zone.

9. The conservation measures to be implemented are essential and cannot be quarrelled with.

10. The Committee requires, however, further information on the basis on which quotas fixed under NAFO have been allocated between Member States.

11. More significantly, it must be emphasized that the proposals are measures to implement decisions taken under the NAFO Convention and binding upon the Community. Proposals to be adopted by the NAFO Fisheries Commission become binding on the Community in the absence of an objection. An objection by whom: the Member States, individually or collectively, the Commission, the Council, or a management committee.

¹ Doc 491/78

The European Parliament must be informed of such proposals in time to allow for its views to be taken into consideration; and the precise nature of the procedure must be spelled out in much greater detail.

12. A further point to be stressed is that continued access by Community vessels to Third Country or jointly-regulated waters will depend increasingly upon the adequate supervision and control of Community fishermen. This will not be possible without a proper licensing system, backed upon by an adequate inspectorate able to operate within the various zones and on the vessels of each Member State.

