

European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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ORAL QUESTION (0-63/76)

with debate pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

by Mr PRESCOTT, Mr SCHMIDT, Mr LABAN, Mr ESPERSEN and Mr CONCAS on behalf of the Socialist Group to the Commission of the European Communities

Subject : Extension of Community Member States' fishing zones to 200 miles; and fishing agreements with non-Community nations

The latest session of the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference has just ended without agreement on an international convention. Some states (including Iceland, Norway, the United States and Canada) intend to extend unilaterally their fishing zones to 200 miles by early 1977. The consequences of this will be severely detrimental to the fishing industries of the Community if the Community States fail to extend their fishing zones to 200 miles. It is therefore vital for Member States of the Community to take immediate action. It is also urgent for the Commission to open discussions on fishing agreements with non-Community nations, and to begin immediately negotiations with Iceland concerning the British fishing agreement which ends on 30 November.

Since the unilateral extension of fishing zones by Community Member States and other European States will raise a number of social, political and economic problems, there is a need for a conference of Ministers from Community Member States and other European States in the Council of Europe to discuss these problems.

The Commission is accordingly asked :

1. What is its view of the current state of progress in the Law of the Sea Conference ?
2. When will it open discussions on fishing agreements with non-Community nations, and in particular, when will it begin negotiations with Iceland concerning the British fishing agreement which ends on 30 November ?
3. Is it prepared to take the initiative in calling for a conference of Ministers from Community Member States and our European neighbours in the Council of Europe to discuss the social, political and economic problems that will arise from a unilateral European extension of fishing zones ?