

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1982-1983

4 March 1983

DOCUMENT 1-1332/82

REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 1-1223/82 - COM(79) 60 final) for a Regulation concerning the conclusion of an Agreement on fisheries between the European Economic Community and the Government of Finland

Rapporteur: Mr Neil BLANEY

By letter of 2 February 1983, the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament to deliver an opinion, pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty, on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a regulation concerning the conclusion of an Agreement on fisheries between the European Economic Community and the Government of Finland.

On 7 February 1983, the President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible.

At its meeting of 10 February 1983, the Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr Blaney rapporteur.

The Committee considered the Commission's proposal and the draft report at its meetings of 16/17 February 1983 and 24/25 February 1983.

At the last meeting the Committee decided unanimously to recommend to Parliament that it approve the Commission's proposal without amendment.

The Committee then adopted unanimously the motion for a resolution as a whole.

The following took part in the vote: Mr Curry, chairman; Mr Colleselli and Mr Delatte, vice-chairmen; Mr Blaney, rapporteur; Mr Abens (deputizing for Mrs Castle), Miss Barbarella, Mr Battersby, Miss Brookes (deputizing for Mr Howell), Mr Dalsass, Mrs Desouches (deputizing for Mrs Péry), Mr Diana, Mr Gatto, Mr Gautier, Mr Helms, Mr Hord, Mr Kirk, Mr Louwes (deputizing for Mr Jürgens), Mr Maher, Mrs S. Martin, Mr Mertens, Mr B. Nielsen, Mr d'Ormesson, Mr Pranchère, Mr Provan, Ms Quin, Mr Stella (deputizing for Mr Ligios), Mr Sutra, Mr Tolman, Mr Thareau, Mr Vernimmen, Mr Vgenopoulos, Mr Wettig and Mr Woltjer.

The Committee on Agriculture hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

closing the procedure for consultation of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a regulation concerning the conclusion of an Agreement on fisheries between the European Economic Community and the Government of Finland

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities (COM(79) 60 final),
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty (Doc. 1-1223/82),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture (Doc. 1-1332/82),
 - having regard to the result of the vote on the proposal from the Commission,
1. Approves the Commission's proposal given the importance of developing closer relations with Finland;
 2. Notes that this is a framework agreement the conclusion of which will open the way to the negotiation of reciprocal agreements on annual fishing quotas;
 3. Notes that the Agreement primarily concerns access for Community fishermen to Finnish salmon in the Gulf of Bothnia, and Finnish access to North Sea herring;
 4. Points out that the Agreement becomes effective upon the North Sea TAC for herring being fixed at above 100,000 tonnes;

5. Notes that for the definition of annual quotas, account is to be taken of the extent to which Community fishermen benefit from the Finnish production of smolts; and considers that the question of eventual compensation will best be dealt with in the Baltic Commission, of which the Community is now to become a member;
6. Instructs its President to forward to the Commission and the Council the proposal from the Commission as voted by Parliament and the corresponding resolution as Parliament's opinion.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. It was in November 1976 that the Council authorised the Commission to enter into negotiations with Finland for a fisheries agreement. Negotiations were successfully concluded in December 1978 and the Commission submitted a draft Agreement to the Council in 1979. The Council's approval was delayed by disagreements and in particular by the stalemate about the overall fisheries policy package.
2. The significance of this Agreement is primarily political. Traditional Finnish fishing for herring in North Sea waters now under Community sovereignty, and fishing for salmon by Community vessels in what are now Finnish Baltic waters were on a very modest scale. Finland, a neutral country, was concerned to obtain an agreement parallel to those those between the Community and Norway and Sweden.
3. There can be no question that the interests of Community fishermen are adequately safeguarded. This is a framework agreement, which merely opens the way to negotiations for annual quotas. An exchange of letters establishes that such negotiations can only be entered into when the total authorised annual catch for North Sea herring is fixed at over 100,000 tonnes. Even then, the traditional Finnish catch would represent a minute percentage, and there is no obligation to make any concession. Nothing in the Agreement rules out granting the Finns quotas of other fish than herring.
4. It should be noted that procedurally the Council is consulting the Parliament on a proposal from the Commission for a Council regulation, the adoption of which constitutes approval of the Agreement with Finland. Under this procedure, Parliament is consulted before rather than after the conclusion of an international agreement between the Community and a third country.

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