

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

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1565th Council meeting

- FISHERIES -

Luxembourg, 3 April 1992

President: Mr Eduardo DE AZEVEDO SOARES
Minister for Maritime Affairs of
the Portuguese Republic

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The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Jan DE BOCK Deputy Permanent Representative

Denmark:

Mr Kent KIRK Minister for Fisheries

Mr Thomas LAURITSEN State Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries

Germany:

Mr Walter KITTEL State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry

Greece:

Mr Christos KOSKINAS State Secretary for Agriculture and Fisheries

Spain:

Mr Pedro SOLBES MIRA Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

France:

Mr Jean CADET Deputy Permanent Representative

Ireland:

Mr Michael WOODS Minister for the Marine

Italy:

Mr Rocco A. CANGELOSI Deputy Permanent Representative

Luxembourg:

Mr Marc UNGEHEUER

Legation Secretary

Netherlands:

Mr Piet BUKMAN

Minister for Agriculture, Nature
Conservation and Fisheries

Portugal:

Mr Eduardo DE AZEVEDO SOARES

Minister for Maritime Affairs

Mr João Marçal ALVES

State Secretary for Fisheries

United Kingdom:

Mr David CURRY, MP

State Secretary at the Ministry
of Agriculture, Fisheries and
Food

Lord STRATHCLYDE

Minister of State at the Scottish
Office

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Commission:

Mr Manuel MARIN

Vice-President

REFORM OF THE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY

The Council discussed in depth the report on the common fisheries policy (CFP) presented by the Commission at the December 1991 meeting.

The report reviews the CFP as a whole since 1983 and maps out a general approach to safeguard the future of the fishing industry and ancillary sectors for the next decade and especially to prepare them for the post-2002 period. The Commission intends to submit appropriate proposals for legislation during 1992.

Following the discussion, the Council reached the following conclusions:

1. The Council congratulates the Commission on its report on the common fisheries policy, the quality and overall scope of which it greatly appreciates.
2. The Council notes that the Commission has stressed the inadequacies of the present situation and agrees with the general lines of the analysis in the first part of the report, which sets out the general trends of the current CFP.
3. In order to ensure the permanence of fishing, the future CFP must be directed towards restoring a balance between resources and fishing effort, including capacity, and towards maintaining the balanced and rational management of resources.
4. The future CFP must be based on the principle of universality in order to make all its various aspects more consistent and efficient.
5. The principle of subsidiarity, the importance of which is emphasized, should apply in particular to action to make fishermen more accountable and to

monitoring measures.

6. Certain basic points should be maintained, namely:

- the principle of relative stability; ⁽¹⁾
- the TAC/quota system;
- derogation from the principle of freedom of access within the 12-mile limit;
- the arrangement for the Shetland Box.

However, the Council reserves the right to examine, at the initiative of the Commission, whether and to what extent adjustments should be made to one or other of these points.

7. Greater flexibility and simplicity could be sought in the way in which the TACs and quotas are applied. The Commission is asked to investigate the desirability of certain adjustments, such as multiannual and multispecies TACs and quotas, the introduction of a days-at-sea system or refinements to the geographical definition of stocks and the application of mini-quotas.

8. In order to ensure the success of the CFP measures, particularly as regards resource management, it would seem desirable to make the various professional organizations in the Member States more accountable according to their respective possibilities.

9. Biological research should be stepped up and technical research (with particular reference to the selectivity of fishing gear) and economic and sociological research developed at Community and national level. Co-ordination of research should be improved.

(1) Two delegations entered reservations pending the Court of Justice judgement on the matter.

10. Further active steps should be taken on a modulated basis, bearing in mind the complexity of the parameters in question, to reduce excess fishing capacity where it exists.
11. Technical conservation measures, in particular those to protect juveniles, should be gradually improved and selectivity of fishing gear given priority.
12. The Commission is invited to study possible economic incentives, for example, making selective fishing more profitable, and to take them into account appropriately in the context of relevant proposals.
13. Where measures taken under the common fisheries policy to reduce and restructure the fishing sector have obvious negative consequences for certain regions and communities in the Community, it seems necessary to provide for the possibility of certain socio-economic flanking measures, including structural measures for fisheries, in order to mitigate such consequences. Such measures should, in principle, be transitional and economically reasonable and should not lead to the distortion of the local economic fabric.
14. Market organization should be simplified to some extent and should also apply to aquaculture products. The crisis mechanisms should apply only in the event of serious disruption. The principle of Community preference must be maintained.
15. The Council recognizes the growing significance of aquaculture for supplying the market and developing certain coastal areas. However, aquaculture must

be developed in harmony with the fishing sector as a whole and must comply with certain criteria regarding environmental protection, hygiene and human and animal health.

16. With regard to trade policy, a balance must be ensured between the interests of fishermen and those of consumers and the processing sector.
17. The Council confirms the importance of having an extensive network of balanced fisheries agreements with third countries. It stresses the advantages of the "first generation" agreements but accepts that, in certain cases, it must be possible to resort to "second generation" agreements.
18. The Council welcomes the continuation of the work under way, which should be intensified, in preparation for the implementation of a common fisheries conservation system in the Mediterranean. The system should apply the principles of the CFP but would take account of the particular nature of those waters and their fisheries and coastal regions.
19. The Council wishes to give further consideration to the following points before working out guidelines on them, if possible at its next meeting.

It therefore instructs the Permanent Representatives Committee, on the basis of the recent Commission reports, to continue its discussions on the Mediterranean, on discards, on monitoring and on quality policy and to report back to it for its next meeting.

20. In order to provide a basis for considering the advisability and details of a possible licensing system to regulate access to resources, the Council

requests the Commission to provide it with all the necessary relevant information.

21. The Council also asks the Commission to examine the oral or written submissions from the Member States regarding the reform of the CFP and to inform the Council of its thoughts on each of them, if possible before its next meeting.
22. Finally, the Council requests the Commission to submit appropriate proposals as soon as possible for the items ready to form the subject of formal decisions, so that such decisions can be taken during the second half of 1992.

COMMON FISHERIES SYSTEM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Commission put forward a communication on the progress made since presentation of the July 1990 discussion paper on the outline of a common fisheries system in the Mediterranean.

The Council took note of the Commission's intention of submitting in due course a proposal for harmonization of the Mediterranean Member States' national legislation.

The Council also asked the Permanent Representatives Committee to examine the communication and report back for its next meeting.

QUALITY POLICY FOR FISHERY PRODUCTS

The Commission presented a communication designed to generate and guide discussion in Community bodies and other relevant fora on the subject of the quality of fishery products.

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to examine the communication further, to enable the Council to reach conclusions at its next meeting (June 1992).

MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CFP

The Commission presented a report on monitoring implementation of the common fisheries policy.

The report describes the practical organization of monitoring of compliance with Community conservation measures in the Member States; it gives an operational review of compliance with such measures and makes recommendations designed to remedy the shortcomings found.

Following an exchange of views, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to discuss the matter further and report back at its next meeting.

DISCARD PRACTICE

The Commission presented a report on discard practice in Community waters.

The report depicts the problem and puts forward possible remedies for the

various kinds of discards.

Following an exchange of views, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to consider the matter further and report back at its next meeting.

COMMON ORGANIZATION OF THE MARKET IN FISHERY PRODUCTS

The Commission presented a proposal for a Regulation on the common organization of the market in fishery products.

This proposal, coming under the common fisheries policy by way of reform of the current common organization of the market in fishery products, sets out to streamline and clarify arrangements in order to make them more effective.

Following a brief exchange of views, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to begin examining the proposal so as to enable the Council to discuss it as soon as possible.

FISHERIES RELATIONS WITH CERTAIN THIRD COUNTRIES

- CANADA

The Council adopted the following Resolution:

"Since 1989 the Community has pursued a policy with the aim of concluding a global fisheries agreement with Canada and has taken numerous initiatives to that effect.

The Community cannot accept that the poor state of the cod stock in divisions 2J+3KL be presented as a consequence of fishing activities by Community fleets within NAFO. According to the conclusions of Community scientists, Community fisheries can only have a minor impact on the state of that stock when compared with that of other parties, considering that Community catches represent hardly more than 10% of total catches of this stock.

The Council urges the Government of Canada to accept the request made by the Commission to summon immediately an extraordinary meeting of the NAFO Scientific Council in order to evaluate the state of the stock concerned.

Nevertheless, the Council has noted that, whilst pursuing the objective of ensuring the conservation and the rational and equitable management of resources, the Commission will propose to the Council a partial suspension of the Community autonomous quota for cod in NAFO divisions 2J+3KL. The Council considers that this new political gesture should have as its consequence the opening of Canadian ports to Community vessels and the normalization of fisheries relations between the Community and Canada.

The Council invites the Commission to pursue appropriate contacts with the other NAFO Contracting Parties in order to explain the Community's point of view."

- BALTIC COUNTRIES

The Council noted the Commission's intention of submitting to it, at its June meeting, draft directives for the opening of negotiations for fisheries agreements with the Baltic countries.

- MOROCCO

The Council was briefed by Vice-President MARIN on progress as regards renewal of the EEC-MOROCCO Fisheries Agreement.

WHITING FISHING IN THE NORTH SEA

The Council was informed of the French delegation's request for amendment of the technical arrangements for whiting fishing in the North Sea, which the Commission would consider at the earliest opportunity.

OTHER FISHERIES DECISIONS

Salmon conservation in the North Atlantic

The Council adopted the Decision setting out directives for the Commission to negotiate a Protocol to the NASCO Convention concerning salmon fishing in the North Atlantic.
