EU/Norway Agreement: reciprocal access to fishing in the Skagerrak for vessels flying the flag of Denmark, Norway and Sweden

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The Committee on Fisheries adopted the recommendation by Jørn DOHRMANN (ECR, DK) on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Norway on reciprocal access to fishing in the Skagerrak for vessels flying the flag of Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

The committee called on the Parliament to **give its consent** to the conclusion of the Agreement.

In brief, an Agreement on reciprocal access to fishing in the Skagerrak and Kattegat between Denmark, Norway and Sweden of 1966 entered into force on 7 August 1967. This Agreement, which was supplemented by the 1980 bilateral fisheries agreement between the European Union and Norway, allowed for reciprocal access between the three countries to fish up to four nautical miles from their respective baselines in the Skagerrak and Kattegat.

The 1966 agreement remained in force for an initial period of 35 years until 2002 and was subsequently extended for two five-year periods until 2012.

Subsequently, Norway entered into formal negotiations with the Commission, on behalf of the European Union, with the aim of establishing a replacement agreement on reciprocal access to fishing in the Skagerrak and Kattegat area. This new Agreement was initialled on 24 October 2013 and signed on 15 January 2015.

The new Agreement:

- maintains the exclusive access granted to vessels from Denmark, Norway and Sweden to each other's waters outside four nautical miles from the baselines;
- ensures continued reciprocal access for the two Member States and Norway to the respective waters of the other Parties in the Skagerrak and Kattegat area, whilst at the same time, ensuring sound conservation and management measures for fisheries in the area;
- allows for control measures in harmony with the principles of normal Coastal State jurisdiction, as is already the case for fisheries in the North Sea.

In a short justification accompanying the draft resolution, it is recalled that traditionally, fishermen do not fish in certain waters: they fish certain stocks or for certain species and fish in the waters where those stocks or species are found and follow migrating species. This tradition predates the creation of states and the recognition of territorial waters and, much later, of exclusive economic zones. The Kattegat and Skagerrak are typical examples of this.

The Agreement adds to the **support of the historical fishing rights in this area** and will also be beneficial for the implementation of the reformed CFP in the Kattegat and Skagerrak.