Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation, NAFO: control measures of vessels of non-contracting parties

1999/0231(CNS) - 09/11/1999 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to lay down new means of control for ships flying the flag of non-contracting parties to the NAFO. CONTENT : the North West Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO), of which the Community is a contracting party, has adopted very strict measures for the conservation of fish stocks within its purview. Key fish stocks have even been put under moratoria. Fisheries in the Regulatory Area of NAFO are for the most part multi-species fisheries such that it is not possible to target one species without a by-catch of other species. NAFO conservation measures, therefore, comprise very specific by-catch rules, gear restrictions and a series of other technical measures that seek to take into account this inter-relationship between the fish stocks concerned. Lately, the NAFO has observed a sustained and massive influx of vessels flying the flag of non-contracting parties and fishing in spite of the conservation measures laid down in its regulation zone. For many years, this organisation has undertaken a keen information campaign with respect to non-contracting parties in order to entice them either into joining the NAFO, or into applying the conservation measures that it has agreed. Given that the fishing vessels of these States have not ceased pursuing their activities, the contracting parties have agreed to take measures at the 19th Annual Meeting in 1997, in the form of programme seeking to promote the respect by the vessels of non-parties of the conservation measures and regulations adopted by NAFO. Essentially, this programme provides that when such a vessel is sighted active in the NAFO Regulatory Area, an obligatory inspection will be carried out on that vessel when it is voluntarily in the ports of Contracting Parties. In addition, there will also be, in the case of fishing of several species, a ban on of landing and the handing over of the catch, if in the course of the inspection it can be established that the catch has been taken in contravention of conservation and enforcement measures established by the NAFO. At the 20th and the 21st Annual Meetings (in 1998 and 1999 respectively), additional measures were added to this basic principle concerning at-sea transshipments and relevant sightings, as well as the way that stateless vessels should be treated. The objective of this proposal is to allow the Community to approve these various measures in order to transpose them into Community law.