Herring: conditions of landing for industrial purposes other than direct human consumption

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Adopting the report by Mrs Brigitte LANGENHAGEN (PPE, D), the European Parliament takes the view that industrial fisheries are acceptable provided that they are properly monitored. Under Regulation (EEC) No 2115/77, direct fishing for herring for industrial purposes other than human consumption was prohibited within all the maritime waters under the sovereignty of the then Member States. The reason for this regulation was the reduction in the Atlantic herring spawning stock. Before the accession of Finland and Sweden, it was agreed that the two countries would be granted an exemption whereby they were allowed to continue fishing in the Baltic for herring for use as animal fodder for three years. Since Baltic herring stocks are now healthier, the new rules would allow for industrial fishing for herring in the Baltic but would maintain the ban elsewhere. The main change would open up the possibility of landings of herrings for industrial purposes by Denmark and Germany. In order to avoid disrupting stocks of young cod, the Commission proposes that landings of herring for purposes other than human consumption should not be permitted in subdivision 24 (which is a nursery ground for juvenile cod). However, Parliament proposes an exemption authorizing herring catches provided that the herring are landed unsorted with sprats and/or other species. In this case, Parliament specifies that the herring must not comprise more than 10% of such landings and also calls for an extension to the zones in subdivision 25 situated to the west of 16 degrees east of the protection measures applicable in subdivision 24. Parliament calls for the regulation to apply from 1 January 1999 and for the Council to decide, on a proposal from the Commission and after prior consultation with the European Parliament, on modifications to the regulation before 1 January 2003.