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MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE INAUGURATES
EUROPEAN INFORMATION CAMPAIGN ON OVERFISHING

LONDON - International Trade Minister John C. Crosbie told representatives of the British and European media today there is an urgent need for the European Economic Community (EC) to recognise its responsibility to end overfishing practices that are severely damaging Northwest Atlantic fish stocks.

The London meetings were the first stage in a three-country European visit, during which the Minister will press Canada's concerns on the issue. He will meet ministers responsible for the fisheries, and with the media, in West Germany and France.

"The European Community is compromising the ability of present as well as future generations to harvest these fisheries resources in a sustainable way," Mr. Crosbie stated in a speech to London's Foreign Press Association, attended by journalists from European and international media. Mr. Crosbie also met with representatives of leading British periodicals.

Both Canada and the EC are among the 12 members of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), the international body formed to manage the fishery in the Northwest Atlantic outside Canada's 200-mile fishing zone.

Since 1986, the EC has consistently rejected NAFO conservation decisions and fished at levels far in excess of the quotas set by NAFO. Overfishing by fleets from Spain and Portugal is a major factor in the recent decline of important NAFO-managed fish stocks.

The September 1989 annual meeting of NAFO adopted conservation decisions, including quotas for 1990, based on scientific advice. The EC abstained in voting on most decisions. The EC will decide by the end of December whether it will abide by NAFO decisions or set its own unilateral quotas.

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