

News Release

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CANADA CALLS IN EU AMBASSADOR

The ambassador to Canada of the European Union today was called in to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to receive a strong protest from the Government of Canada over the EU's reaction to the latest allegations in the Canada-EU fishing dispute.

Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Gordon Smith told Ambassador John Beck that Canada deplores the EU's hasty reaction on the basis of allegations by Spanish fishing captains operating in the disputed area off Newfoundland.

Mr. Smith outlined the events at sea last night, stressing that Canadian patrol vessels at no time attempted to board or cut the nets of the Spanish trawlers, contrary to the allegations of the Spanish captains. He noted that Canada has been exercising extreme restraint in the disputed zone as talks with the EU have progressed. The Canadian vessels were engaged in routine identification of fishing vessels operating in their patrol area.

He told Ambassador Beck that Canada regrets, at this sensitive time in discussions aimed at settling the fishing dispute, that the EU issued public statements condemning Canada without full consideration of the facts in the case. The EU reaction was particularly inappropriate given the advanced state of the process in Brussels.

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