

News Release

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OUELLET DISAPPOINTED IN EUROPEAN UNION STANCE ON TURBOT CONSERVATION

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet expressed disappointment today that the European Union's stance on the overfishing of Greenland halibut (turbot) by Spanish fishing vessels has forced Canada to take enforcement measures.

"Excessive fishing of turbot by the Spanish fishing fleet is putting more and more pressure on this fragile stock every day. Canada had no other choice but to take action at sea to put a stop to this practice," said Mr. Ouellet.

Today's arrest of a Spanish vessel should leave no doubt that Canada will do whatever is necessary to protect turbot, the last remaining commercial groundfish stock on the Grand Banks. Mr. Ouellet noted, however, that "Canada remains prepared to hold talks to find a solution to the present impasse."

The European quota allocated by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) has already been exceeded this season by at least 100 per cent. The overfishing of turbot by Spanish vessels continues to aggravate the problem.

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