

REPORT OF EC 1992 WORKING GROUP ON FISHERIES PRODUCTS

I - INTRODUCTION

Chaired by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Working Group on Fisheries Products was formed in November 1988 and has included representatives of the Departments of External Affairs and International Trade; Industry, Science and Technology; Consumer and Corporate Affairs; and National Health and Welfare. It was one of a dozen similar groups set up within the government to assess the implications of the European Community's 1992 market integration program.

The Working Group on Fisheries has met at irregular intervals since the autumn of 1988 and carried out impact analyses of available EC market integration directives or regulations of specific or possible interest to the fisheries sector. As the great majority of these items concerned health and hygienic conditions or technical standards, the Inspection Services Directorate of Fisheries and Oceans played a major role in this exercise and coordinated its input, as appropriate, with other working groups such as that on Standards.

II - EC 1992 MARKET INTEGRATION

Creation of a single EC internal market by 1992 is intended to clear away remaining barriers to the free circulation of people, capital, goods and services within the Community's twelve member states. The rationale behind this project is to have a full common market area within the Community, to strengthen the competitiveness of Europe vis-a-vis the United States and Japan and to further promote the goal of European unity.

The Community's approach focuses on developing some three hundred harmonized regulatory measures in the areas of physical barriers (such as customs and immigration controls); technical barriers (such as product standards, health and safety requirements); barriers to labour mobility, services and capital movements; and fiscal barriers (such as differing rates of taxation). Not surprisingly, about one half of the approximately three hundred measures concern physical or technical barriers to the trade of goods.

As of the end of October 1989, the EC Council and Commission had tabled over 90 percent of the proposals envisaged by the Commission's 1985 White Paper on "Completing the Internal Market."

III - EC TRADE REGIME FOR FISHERIES PRODUCTS AND 1992 IMPLICATIONS

Although the EC is a major consumer of fisheries products, Canada's export performance in the European market has not