

I. INTRODUCTION

On 25, January, 1983 the Council of Ministers of the European Community approved regulations establishing a common fisheries policy (CFP), ¹⁾ adapted to the international regime of two hundred mile exclusive economic or fishery zones (EEZ's). This concluded a six year debate which opposed first, the United Kingdom and then Denmark to the other member states of the Community. The British fisheries minister described the CFP settlement as a 'superb' agreement, the Danish minister was not so sure.

Fisheries was an important issue during the negotiations leading to the Community's first enlargement. Fisheries made the EEC a Community of Nine rather than Ten, from 1973 to 1981, by tipping Norwegian public opinion against joining. Fisheries precipitated Greenland's vote to leave the Community in the referendum held in February, 1982. Spain's fishing fleet is equal in size to three quarters of the fleet of the entire Community of Ten and will claim a considerable share of the Community's resources. So fisheries will again be an important issue in the Community's third enlargement.

II. DECISION-MAKING SYSTEM

The EEC Treaty provides for a relatively simple decision making procedure. To adopt a regulation, take a decision or issue a directive the Council of Ministers, ²⁾ (known as the Council) acts on a proposal or a recommendation from the Commission, ³⁾ having consulted the European Parliament where required to do so by the Treaty. The difficulty arises as the Council must generally act by unanimity. Also, in practice, the system is steeped in red tape.

The Commission is restrained and thus compromises are generally in order. If certain states consider themselves disadvantaged by a particular proposal, the Commission may offer 'compensation', not in the form of a once-for-all payment but in the form of a new common policy from which they will benefit. For example, the reluctance of one member state to agree to tariff concessions to a third country as part of a major agreement may be overcome by persuading others to agree to strengthen the common market organization.