

Proposal by Iceland

Changing of time limits for entering or exiting the Regulatory Area

Background

For several years Iceland has been expressing its view on the time limits for entering and exiting the NEAFC Regulatory Area. For the last 3 years a Pilot Project has been running to test electronic communication between the fishing vessels and the possible inspection vessel or vessels in the area with the aim of giving the inspection vessels the opportunity to inspect vessels upon entering or exiting from the area. By taking part in this project vessels were allowed to cross the boundaries with one hour notice. Despite of repeated encouragement to the inspection authorities in the forum of PECCOE, there is not a single instance of an attempt by an inspection vessel to use its opportunity to inspect these vessels. Neither is there to our knowledge a single example of inspections taking place onboard Icelandic fishing vessels upon entering or exiting the Regulatory Area prior to the Pilot Project.

Proposal

It is proposed to add the following subparagraph "e", into Article 10 of the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement:

- e. vessels may if they so desire transmit daily catch reports while operating in the Regulatory Area. Upon doing so, these vessels may enter into or exit from the Regulatory Area one (1) hour after transmitting their intention to enter or exit the area. Inspection vessels in the area are authorised to delay the entry or exit up to six (6) hours from the time of transmission of the above mentioned reports with the intention to carry out an inspection on board the fishing vessel. Inspection vessel shall communicate to the Secretary the report "Prepare for Inspection" set out in Annex X (C). The Secretary shall forward this report without delay to the FMC of the flag state of the vessel concerned that shall forward it to the vessel.

- f. the Flag State FMC of the fishing vessel shall consequently contact the fishing vessel to further secure its compliance to the inspection vessel's request.
- g. inspection vessels may in addition either contact the fishing vessel directly or contact the flag state FMC of the fishing vessel.
- h. a list of vessels authorised to use this rule shall be transmitted to the Secretariat in the beginning of each year together with their communication numbers.

Explanation

In recent years it has become increasingly obvious that the strict rule for entering or exiting the Regulatory Area is putting excessive burden on the fishing vessels. Taking into view that there are in fact very few if any instances that an inspection vessel is present to inspect fishing vessel or is interested to carry out an inspection prior to crossing the boundaries it is quite obvious that this rule is too excessive and is simply putting undue restrictions on fishing vessels carrying out their legitimate fishing operations in the most economic way possible.

Furthermore, in some instances these vessels have the same quota allocation on both sides of the boundaries of the Regulatory Area and have therefore nothing to gain by reporting different catches.

It should also not be forgotten that catches like herring is very dependent on quick delivery to the processing plant to be a high quality product. In addition it can simply be dangerous to instruct heavily loaded fishing boats to wait during winter in areas where the weather frequently changes very quickly. Under such circumstances an inspection will anyhow never take place. Keeping such a rule which is not used or enforced is in our view simply wrong and should therefore be change.

It is our view that this organisation should rather concentrate on stopping illegal fishing activity in the Regulatory Area rather than restricting legitimate fishing operations of fishing vessels of the Contracting Parties.