

The Spanish Fishing Industry

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This paper discusses the various disputes over fishing in which the Spanish have been involved in the last year, explaining the background and how they relate to the British fishing industry.

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A Introduction

Over the past year, there have been several fishing disputes involving the Spanish fishing industry. The British tabloid press has largely stigmatised the Spanish as persistent cheats whose activities are responsible for depletion of the seas wherever they fish. There was strong popular British hostility to increased Spanish access to EU waters, agreed at the end of 1994 to come into force from 1 January 1996. In the Spanish dispute with Canada, popular British support was demonstrated by people sporting Canadian flags. There were disputes over the tuna fleet last year, and there are fears of further clashes this year. In the tuna case, the Spanish object to the British nets on environmental grounds, but the general wave of British hostility towards the Spanish fishermen spread on to this issue as well.

The Spanish fishermen cannot be held responsible for the major depletion of fish stocks, simply because they did not have access to the waters. The Canadians ruined their own vast cod fishery by overfishing within their own 200-mile limit. The severe depletion of fish stocks in EU waters has taken place while the Spanish have had limited access and no quotas at all. The real problem is that modern technology has made fishing too easy and the world's fish stocks can be caught quickly, unless agreements can be put in place to limit catches. Yet that does not explain why the Spaniards are so often singled out for criticism.

The Spanish fleet is a large one, unsurprisingly in view of the long Spanish coastline. The actual number of boats may be less important than the tonnage and enginepower. For these we have EU figures¹ for the end of 1993. According to the declaration by the Spanish government, the tonnage (GRT) was 570,505 at the end of 1993, a decline of 11.5% from the 1991 figure. By comparison, the equivalent UK figures were 219,001 in 1993, an increase of 2% over the 1991 figure. Although the tonnage of the Spanish fleet is much higher than that of the UK fleet, the engine power - often taken as an indicator of the fish-catching potential - is not so far out of line. In 1993 the Spanish figure was 1,764,391 kw compared to the British figure of 1,265,988. For a given tonnage, the British boats are much higher powered. Some of the new Spanish vessels, however, are very powerful and of high quality.

¹*Annual Report to the Council and the European Parliament on the progress of the multiannual guidance programme for the fishing fleet at the end of 1993, Cons Doc 7541/94*

The point of view of Spanish fishermen, in very general terms, was expressed by J.R.Fuertes, director general of the Co-operative of Fishermen of the Port of Vigo, writing for a Spanish audience ².

Spain catches and produces around 1,400,000 tonnes of fishery products, and imports another 600,000 to satisfy the demand of her population. Fish is, then, a strategic sector whose direct and indirect effects carry over an infinity of complementary and subsidiary activities...It is national wealth. It is value added.

It is certain that, in spite of having a coastal perimeter of 7,000 kilometres, our narrow continental platform determines that two thirds of our catch is taken in free international waters or in waters regulated by international conventions. The Spanish fleet has accumulated...an enormous volume of historic rights which on not a few occasions were cheerfully given away and wasted, as happened with our precipitous entry into the European Union.

Those who suggest that little by little we stop maintaining our own fleet so as to comply with transnational formulas, as could be the joint ventures or mixed companies, offer us the recipe that, simply, we should give up for ever the national flag of our ships and surrender the little which remains for us to those who are more ready, or more bold, or who hold less scruples.

B Spanish Access to EU waters

In the latter half of 1994, much concern was expressed in the UK at the prospect of Spanish fishermen gaining access to EU waters and taking fish away from the British. Spain and Portugal entered the EC in 1986 after the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) started. Under the transitional arrangements following their entry, they were offered only a limited improvement in their access to EU waters, and they were not admitted to the CFP. There are basic and periodic lists of Spanish vessels allowed to fish in EU waters, based on access arrangements existing before Spanish accession, and reflecting the areas to which Spain already had access. The number of vessels on the lists increased (allowing 150 vessels to fish at any one time, compared with 118 in 1984 and 106 in 1985³). Spain and Portugal insisted on better conditions, by the end of 1994, including full membership of the CFP from 1996, as a condition of their ratifying the entry of Austria and the Scandinavian countries into the EU. When settlement was reached, there was some criticism of the British Government for having agreed it. The issues, however, were more complex than they seemed.

Under the EU Common Fisheries Policy, regulation operates via quotas and effort control. For each major type of fish, the Council of Ministers agrees a Total Allowable Catch (TAC)

²*EL Pais*, 20 April 1995

³ *R.R.Churchill, EEC Fisheries Law*, 1987, p.138

which is then divided into quotas for each fishing nation, according to the principle of "relative stability" so that it is based upon the proportion of catches taken in that area by the various countries before the CFP came into operation in 1983. Quotas were considered an insufficient method of control of fish stocks and were supplemented by "effort control", because fishermen aiming at one type of fish may catch another as well, and also because of the continuing problem of fraud. Effort control often amounts to decommissioning, but may also mean a limitation on the number of days in the year when a fishing vessel may actually fish, or rules covering their gear.

Spain and Portugal naturally wanted full access to EU waters, but that would have greatly upset other states which are trying hard to reduce over-fishing. The principle of "relative stability" is being interpreted to mean that the entry of two new countries should not change the rights of the other member countries to national fishing quotas.

Considerable problems arose in reaching an agreement to satisfy both sides. Member states were invited to put forward proposals for a management regime and the UK offered a plan (*MAFF Press Release 13 October 1994*) based on the following key objectives. The Irish Box is an area of sea around Ireland in which British and Irish fishermen share preferential access.

No change to relative stability. No increase in fishing effort.

Access to Western Waters to be limited to vessels with established rights in the areas concerned.

The UK to have an effective role in monitoring the access arrangements for vessels of all nations in its Western Waters.

Special treatment for highly sensitive zones. The Irish Box must be one of these.

To assist enforcement, larger vessels to be required to report when they enter or depart from areas covered by the regulations and to report catches.

Strengthening of technical conservation measures.

These proposals show the difficulty of arranging a plan to satisfy all the interests. The British plan, for example, did not offer much to Spain or Portugal, except the opportunity to fish for non-quota fish in a larger area. The agreement finally reached, to come into force on 1 January 1996, did not move far from what was inevitable in the circumstances. Spanish fishing vessels were granted access to almost all EU waters, but not quotas, so they still have

no right to fish there for cod, haddock or the other quota fish. The Minister (Mr Waldegrave)⁴ stressed some positive features of the agreement, but regretted that some Spanish vessels (40 at a time) would be allowed into the Irish Box. They would not be able to enter the Irish Sea or the Bristol Channel. He abstained on the vote over the Irish Box, but these issues are decided on majority voting so there was no question of a veto.

The question of effort control was left to be resolved during 1995, after failure to reach agreement on a plan from the European Commission to regulate fisheries west of Great Britain by "standard vessel days" so as to allow for increased fishing by Spain and Portugal without depleting the fish stocks. This is, of course, the same as "days at sea" but would not be open to the objection of discrimination against British fishermen and therefore could not face the same objection as the purely British scheme. However, the plan was rejected by the Council of Fisheries Ministers in late September 1994. The European Commission has recently made proposals for a more flexible version of the original vessel days proposal, based on kilowatt-days. Precisely how member states implement this additional effort control will be up to them, but the Commission will retain the right to monitor the efficacy of the system applied in each member state. Spanish effort in the Irish Box, according to these proposals, would be set at 7.519 million kilowatt days. The figure has been calculated by multiplying 515kw (the "standard" power of a vessel) by 40 (the ceiling on the number of vessels allowed to fish in the area) by 365 (the number of days in a year)⁵.

C Does the Spanish Government allow its fishermen to cheat ?

The CFP allows for enforcement by Member States, rather than by a corps of EU fishery inspectors, but enforcement is of two types. First, there are rules about the type of equipment, such as nets, carried by the fishing boat. This is enforced by the country within whose 200-mile limit the fishing vessel is. Therefore British authorities will be able to check on this. The second type of enforcement concerns fishing over quota. Here the enforcement is undertaken by the country where the fishing vessel is registered. The point is that these authorities can co-ordinate the catches from the various vessels and decide whether or not its own national quota has been exceeded. One problem with the CFP is that there is no incentive for the country to enforce the rules strictly, since any benefit to fish stocks is shared amongst all the other countries fishing in that area.

⁴MAFF News Release 23 December 1994

⁵ *Eurofish Report* 8 June 1995 BB/1

The responsibility for enforcement will not be changed from that in the current regime. Enforcement is shared between the country with whom the fishing boat is registered and the country whose waters are being fished. For convenience, we can consider a French fishing boat operating within the UK 200-mile limit. The British authorities can board a ship to check that illegal tackle is not being used and to check that the boat is not fishing for fish for which there is no French quota in that area. If an offence is committed, the fishing vessel can be taken to a British port and action can be undertaken in the British courts. However, it is the responsibility of the French authorities to ensure that the level of fishing does not exceed the French quota for that area.

These principles will apply in the Irish Box. An added complication is that there will be a list of Spanish vessels allowed to fish in that area, and it will be the responsibility of the British authorities to check that any vessel fishing in the area should be there at all. The Spanish will not have quotas for quota fish, so checking that they are not fishing for a fish like cod would be a job for the British authorities.

The Spanish undoubtedly do have a bad reputation for not following the rules, as the following article indicates⁶

It didn't take long to find evidence of the sort of illegal practices that have given the Spanish fishing industry a bad name internationally when we toured the huge dockside fishmarket at La Coruna, the biggest fishing port in Galicia, north-west Spain. Amid the vast array of prime, adult fish..we saw boxes of small, immature megrim, a type of sole, angler fish and hake - the most highly prized in Spain. Later, in the local retail fish market...we obtained and photographed baby megrim...The smallest of these fish were only 14 cms long - nearly half the minimum landing size of 25 cms allowed under EU rules designed to protect stocks. We also bought baby hake measuring as little as 26cms long. The minimum landing size laid down by the EU is 30cms for fish caught north of the Bay of Biscay and 28 cms for those caught to the south...If allowed to grow, these fish can reach several feet long to provide more food for consumers and higher prices for fishermen...Under EU rules, these small fish should be returned to the sea if they are caught accidentally, whether they are dead or not, to prevent fishermen profiting from cheating. In Britain, where the rules are rigorously enforced, fishermen would be fined up to £5,000 for each offence.

We saw no scales for weighing landings of fish...It was impossible for staff or inspectors - who were conspicuous by their absence - to make an accurate record of landings, as required by EU rules. Without accurate records it is impossible to assess the impact on stocks and whether fishermen are exceeding their quotas.

⁶ *Daily Telegraph* 30 March 1995

Of course, in most EU waters the Spanish do not have any quotas and probably will not until 2003 when the CFP will come to an end and have to be replaced by a successor regime. If Spain did have quotas, a stricter regulatory regime would be required, and might perhaps be acceptable.

The Agriculture Select Committee⁷ noted improvements in Spanish control and the recruitment of more staff for this purpose, but considered that the level of Spanish enforcement remained inadequate.

111 Despite recent improvements in the conservation-consciousness of Spanish fishermen, and in the apparent willingness of the central and regional authorities in Spain to confront the less responsible elements of their fishing fleet, we attach credence to most, if not perhaps all, of the evidence we received about malpractice on the part of a number of Spanish vessels. Anecdotal evidence from UK fishermen, and from UK and French fisheries protection authorities, is borne out by statistics contained in the European Commission's report on monitoring implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy, which show that in 1990 541 infringements of regulations by Spanish vessels were discovered from a total of 2,549 inspections at sea. 108 of these offences were due to fishing in an unauthorised area. This proportion of offending vessels compares unfavourably with all other member states' vessels, with the exception of Portugal's, and cannot be explained away, as some Spanish fishermen claimed, by the over-zealousness of inspection authorities in dealing with their vessels.

One has to remember, of course, that other countries have problems and the Spanish behaviour may partly stem from a feeling that they are not being offered a fair chance to catch fish. It is not possible for an outsider to know how much fishermen really break the rules, but it appears that rule breaking has sometimes been a problem among British fishermen as well as the Spanish. There have been many newspaper articles describing in apparently plausible detail clear cases of breaking the law, particularly in 1993 when Scottish fishermen finished their quotas in the autumn and continued to fish for so-called "black fish", which were landed away from the regulated ports and sold informally. The following is just one example from that period⁸:

Grimsby was the final destination for the cod collected from the unmarked trailer in Edinburgh. Marked with the name of the agent, three hours later it was for sale alongside legally landed fish. A Grimsby merchant bought the lot, ready for processing and selling to the consumer. Black fish made legitimate. Terry, a handler for 14 years on the Grimsby market, said the illicit trade was huge and operated out of sight of the Fisheries Protection Officers. Officials, he said, had not visited the market for more than two months.

⁷ Agriculture Select Committee, *The Effects of Conservation Measures on the UK Sea Fishing industry*, 1992/93 HC 620

⁸ Scotland on Sunday, 24 October 1993

"Everybody does it because it's so easy. They tried to crack down a while ago but nothing recently," he said, "It's a joke."

D The Spanish Fishing Dispute with Canada

(1) The background

The background is that the Canada cod fishery has been ruined by overfishing, mainly by Canadians within the 200-mile limit. Canadians feared that the same thing was about to happen to the much smaller fishery for Greenland halibut (Turbot) and attributed the problem to the activities of EU fishing boats operating just outside the Canadian 200-mile limit, hence the seizure of the Spanish fishing vessel Estai.

One of the most dramatic examples of depletion of fish stocks has been the spectacular decline in the Canadian Atlantic cod fishery, often considered to be the richest fishing ground in the world. Originally, this was a story of depletion of stocks in international waters before the extension of national limits to 200 miles in 1978. After Canada took control of the fishery, tight conservation measures were imposed and much improvement was noted. However, in the early 1990s stocks again declined sharply, despite Canadian control over the 200-mile zone.

In 1992 the unthinkable happened and the rich Newfoundland fishery was closed for a two-year moratorium. *Eurofish* reported at the time that the devastating decline in the northern cod stock in the last two years had reduced the biomass by half and the spawning biomass by three quarters, but noted optimistically, "A break until spring 1994 should allow the spawning stock biomass to recover quickly to its long-term average, according to Canadian scientists"⁹.

In the event, the decline has continued, despite the fishing moratorium. Far from there being any question of removing the moratorium, it has been extended to virtually all Canadian Atlantic waters. The human cost of the ban has been considerable, particularly in Newfoundland where there is little alternative employment and 40,000 people depended on the fishing industry.

A major problem is the presence of boats just outside the 200 mile limit. There are difficulties between the EU and Canada over the acceptable level of quotas in these areas and

⁹*Eurofish Report* 16 July 1992

the Canadians are always pressing for tighter quotas. Another serious problem comes from fishing vessels without nationality or flying flags of convenience - which in this context means registered in countries not affiliated to the North Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO). One complaint is that some of these vessels may employ European crews and may be selling into the European market, but the EU is not preventing their activities.

In May 1994, the Canadian government introduced laws to enable Canada to take action to protect fish stocks in the sea beyond the 200-mile limit. The Canadian government, under this law, can make regulations to list the stock to be protected, establish conservation and management measures, and list the classes of foreign vessels to which these measures will apply. This unilateral measure displeased some other countries and the EU has been concerned that the measures would undermine multilateral effort to halt illegal fishing in these areas. This law was used in the dispute of March 1995.

Another approach to this issue has come from the UN. *The Third UN Conference on Straddling Stocks and Highly Migratory Species* met in August 1994, but failed to reach consensus on a revised draft treaty on conservation and management measures. However, a meeting in April 1995 produced a draft treaty, to be finalised after further discussion in July to August 1995. The Canadians have not been willing to wait for a UN solution to the problem.

(2) The Dispute in March 1995

Fishing beyond the 200-mile limit is not covered by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, but it is regulated by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO). NAFO had not previously imposed limits on the volume of fishing but agreed a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 27,000 tonnes for 1995. The problem was how to allocate this between the EU and Canada. After negotiations became stalled, Canada forced through a vote at an emergency NAFO meeting in January giving the EU an official quota of 3,400 tonnes. The EU protested immediately at the way in which Canada forced a vote, and lodged an official objection, which is allowed under NAFO rules. The EU announced an autonomous quota of 18,630 tonnes, equal to nearly 70% of the TAC and based on actual fishing activity over the previous two years. *Eurofish Report*¹⁰ commented :

Assuming Japan, Russia and other NAFO states do not amend the quotas set at the February meeting, the EU's move effectively raises the TAC to 42,330 tonnes. In its recommendation on TAC levels for 1995, NAFO scientists last year indicated that a TAC greater than 40,000 tonnes would lead to a decline in the stock. Canadian estimates suggest that the near 50 EU vessels fishing Greenland Halibut at present have so far caught an estimated 6,-000 tonnes

¹⁰2 March 1995

already this year. Canadian, Japanese and Russian fishing effort is not likely to get under way until June.

(3) Was it legal to seize the Estai ?

On 9 March, Canada arrested a Spanish fishing vessel, the Estai, on the high seas, beyond the 200-mile limit. Although this move attracted enormous sympathy in the UK, and was eventually to lead to a settlement, it was almost certainly illegal under international law. *Eurofish*¹¹ summarised the Canadian case.

Under the Law of the Sea, the right to fish on the High Seas is, Canada claims, explicitly restricted "by the duty to respect the rights and interests of other states and by its obligations regarding conservation. International law requires states engaged in high seas fishing to cooperate with the relevant coastal state for the conservation and management of the stock concerned". As the right to fish on the High Seas is "subject to" the rights, duties and interests of the relevant coastal state, Canada has insisted that the coastal state takes precedence.

However, the *Guardian* quoted a comment by a Canadian professor of law, Yves Le Bouthillier,¹²

In defending its actions, Canada maintains that the Law of the Sea Convention confers a privileged status on a coastal state when it comes to taking conservation measures for straddling stocks. But the relevant section says only that coastal states and other fishing states must use their best endeavours to try to reach an agreement. One would be hard pressed to argue that this gives the coastal state a right to use force in case of disagreement.

He went on to consider the possibility that Canada could use the defence of "necessity".

But Canada would have a heavy burden to discharge in establishing that necessity justified its actions against the Estai. The first obstacle would be showing that its essential interest was threatened. Could it be said that the movement of fish in and out of its economic zone conferred on Canada a sufficient interest to act ? Could Canada argue that it was entitled to act to protect these endangered species for humanity's sake ? There is a precedent... the Russian government invoked "absolute necessity" in temporarily banning seal hunting in a zone which, though contiguous to its coast, was a part of the high seas.

Other problems that would confront Canada would be the need to show that no other actions could have been taken to avert the extinction of the endangered fish stocks, and that it had not itself contributed to creating the necessity. The most difficult issue would be whether states

¹¹16 March 1995

¹²4 April 1995

can ever use force for reasons of necessity. The UN charter prohibits the use of force to resolve disputes, with the exception of self defence and actions taken under the authority of the Security Council. Many commentators believe no other use of force is allowed.

(4) The Settlement

A settlement on the level of quotas was reached on Easter Sunday, 16 April, after both sides had already reached a draft accord on tighter controls and surveillance. They agreed to let the EU catch a further 5,013 tonnes of Greenland halibut in 1995 and a bilateral commitment to seek to set within NAFO a 55.35% quota allocation for the EU in the future distribution of the stock in the contested zone (3LMNO). The settlement has been generally welcomed, except in Spain. In the UK the deal has generally been considered favourable to the Canadians, but that is not necessarily correct. The EU is to be allowed to catch a further 5,013 tonnes on top of the 5,700 tonnes already recorded. *Eurofish Report*¹³ noted :

Both sides appear to have agreed that the logbooks of EU vessels fishing in NAFO waters this year have accurately reflected the volume of fish caught, although there is clear evidence of misreporting of the proportion of Greenland halibut. Even sources in the Commission concede that the Greenland halibut figure of 5,700 tonnes reported is too low...Although the EU may end up catching as much as 5,000 tonnes more than its quota, officials on all sides insist that it is unlikely that the 27,000 tonne TAC will be exceeded, because neither Russia nor Canada are expected to fulfil their quotas.

The Spanish government¹⁴ suggested three possible alternatives for vessels forced to leave the Greenland halibut fishery in the North West Atlantic. Some could fish for flounder and redfish, also there are 15 possible grounds in African waters, and licences could be obtained for 153,000 tonnes of fish in the waters of Argentina. These opportunities should provide fishing for 25 out of the 38 vessels concerned.

E The Dispute over Tuna

This is a separate area of contention, unrelated to the Common Fisheries Policy. The Spanish have traditionally fished for tuna in the Bay of Biscay, using baited hooks on lines, and continue to do so. In 1985, the French started using nets in this area. The Spanish see the nets as potentially destructive of a fishery which was previously sustainable. Then the British joined in, also using nets. The current tuna-fishing season, which is just starting, will be only the fourth in which the British have participated. The Spanish deeply resent the net

¹³27 April 1995

¹⁴ *Eurofish Report* 11 May 1995 FS/1

fishermen, and in 1994 there were several cases of violence as they tried to destroy the nets. Sometimes the Spanish fishermen alleged that the British nets were longer than the permitted 2.5 km, but the British fishermen retorted that their nets included windows for other species to escape. The actual length of net, they said, was within the permitted length. There have also been clashes between Spanish and French fishermen, since the latter have used nets and until 1994 used nets longer than 2.5 km.

A recent article explained why the British vessels go there¹⁵, pointing out that the vessels fish for hake and monkfish in the winter off the Scillies using gill nets, which are anchored to the sea bed.

Yet without the six lucrative tuna trips that the Pilot Star and 11 other boats - the total British tuna fishing fleet - can squeeze in by early September, the sums wouldn't add up. When prices are strong, £9 or £10 a stone, an average catch can earn up to £25,000. Members of the crew, who split a proportion of the earnings, may get more than £1,500 for two weeks work, compared with as little as £200 for hake.

The Minister (Mr Waldegrave) recently expressed his support for the British fishermen¹⁶.

British fishermen have every right to engage in the tuna fishery in the Bay of Biscay. The Government is determined they should do so peacefully and legally. We will stand by our industry. Equally, they must play fair by us and abide strictly by the rules. We have shown that we enforce the rules properly. This means that there can be no possible reason for our fishermen to be harassed or attacked while on the fishing grounds...

Meanwhile, we shall continue to provide increased practical support for our tuna fishermen. First, we shall ensure that there is a Royal Navy presence in the tuna fishery from the outset. The fishery protection presence is to perform the dual role of ensuring that there is no question of our rules being broken; and of taking the necessary action to prevent harassment of our people.

Second, we will be operating a voluntary scheme with the fishermen to measure their nets before they set off for the fishery. I would encourage them all to use this scheme. Finally, the Government will continue to press for a resolution of the well-founded claims for damage by Spanish fishing vessels during the 1994 fishery.

¹⁵ Independent Section Two, 16 June 1995

¹⁶ MAFF News Release 9 June 1995

The European Commission has suggested a complete ban on the use of drift nets in EU waters, whether used for tuna or other species. However, there is strong opposition to the idea and the environmental case for such a ban does not seem to have been made¹⁷.

F How much EU subsidy do Spanish fishermen receive ?

The answer to a recent PQ provided figures for EU financial assistance to the Spanish fishing fleet¹⁸. The 1992 and 1993 figures relate only to certain parts of fisheries guidance expenditure. From 1994 onwards, the financial instrument for fisheries guidance came into force, amalgamating the various fisheries structures and marketing and processing regulations. The figures in the table show the amount of Community funding available for the fishery investment set out in the relevant Spanish programmes for objectives 1 and 5a of the EU Structural Fund. In addition, Spain is eligible to benefit from certain payments relating to third country fishery agreements, although detailed information about the allocation between member states is not available.

Elements of European Community financial assistance to the Spanish fishing industry (fisheries guidance only)

Year	Mecu	£m
1992	11.20	7.93
1993	12.80	10.06
1994	154.131	19.07
1995	165.281	33.41
1996	175.921	46.11
1997	186.921	55.25
1998	201.641	67.48

¹⁷ House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities, Regulation of Drift Net Fishing, 1993/94 HL 77

¹⁸ HC Deb 6 June 1995 c.6w

G Conclusion

There is a sense in which the Spanish fishermen seem doomed. Their large industry is not supported by a correspondingly large body of water in which they have preferential access. The limited access granted in EU waters from 1996 will not be enough to satisfy their fleet. If they really do break the rules, this will further deplete the fish stock and lose the goodwill needed in any post-2003 settlement. On the other hand, the scope for finding new fishing grounds is also limited. The clash with Canada shows that restrictions are increasing, even beyond 200-mile limits. Currently the EU has even failed to make an arrangement with Morocco for Spanish access, so much of the Spanish fleet is idle. It is likely that it will become harder to make deals with poorer countries for access to their waters, as depletion of fish stocks becomes more of a problem and their local fishermen suffer.

Despite their reputation for breaking rules, the Spanish fishermen look as much like victims as aggressors.