

EU urges quick fix to Iceland 'mackerel war'

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European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso (R) welcomes Prime Minister of Iceland Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson before their meeting at the EU Headquarters in Brussels on July 16, 2013.

European Commission head Jose Manuel Barroso used a first meeting Tuesday with new Icelandic Prime Minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson to urge an end to the David & Goliath "mackerel war" pitting the EU against its north Atlantic neighbour.

As Iceland slows its path towards greater integration with the EU pending a referendum, Gunnlaugsson said that Iceland would maintain a "positive approach" to a dispute triggered when Reykjavik unilaterally

hiked up quotas.

That decision, going back to 2010, has angered neighbouring Atlantic fishing strongholds in Ireland and Scotland and key fleets in Spain and France.

But Iceland has consistently argued that the raised quota was a result of climate change boosting northerly migration, and insists that decades of prudent stock management prove its right to maintain its catch ceiling.

According to the Commission earlier this year, Iceland awards itself almost a quarter (23 percent) of the entire scientifically justified quota for the North Atlantic [mackerel](#) stock.

Barroso said that Iceland needed to take "constructive and rapid action" on the fishing dispute, alongside the next phase in an EU accession process opened in 2009 but stalled since Iceland's recovery from a banking meltdown.

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