

EU slaps trade sanctions against Faroes in herring spat

August 20 2013



A fishing boat leaves the harbor of Vestmanna village on October 14, 2012 in the Faroe Islands. The European Commission adopted a package of trade sanctions against the Faroe Islands on Tuesday in a row over herring fisheries it says are being massively over-exploited.

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"The EU is determined to use all the tools at its disposal to protect the long-term sustainability of stocks," said the EU's Fisheries Commissioner Maria Damanaki.

The measures include the ban of imports of herring and mackerel from the north-east Atlantic, or Atlanto-Scandian, stocks caught under the control of the Faroe Islands as well as fishery products containing or made of such fish. Trade sanctions also include restrictions on the use of EU ports by vessels fishing for the herring and mackerel stocks under the control of the Faroe Islands, meaning some Faroese vessels will not be allowed to dock in EU ports, except in cases of emergency. "The imposition of such measures is always done as a very last resort," Damanaki said in a statement. "The Faroese could have put a stop to their unsustainable fishing but decided not to do so."

The measures will come into force seven days after publication in the Official Journal, the Commission said.

The row centres on the Faroes' decision to more than treble its herring [quota](#), which the Commission said "jeopardises the long term sustainability of the stock (and) ... constitutes a unilateral [disruption](#) of the joint management of a crucial fishery stock."

The Atlanto-Scandian herring stock was until 2013 managed jointly by Norway, Russia, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and the EU through an agreed long-term management plan and pre-established catch quotas. But this year the Faroe Islands unilaterally decided to break out of this agreement and established an autonomous quota which more than trebled their previously agreed share.

The Faroe Islands and Iceland are locked in a similar dispute over [mackerel](#) and could face action too in due course.

The Faroes [archipelago](#) is home to just about 50,000 people, with fishing one of the mainstays of the economy. It is an autonomous Danish territory but is not a part of the EU.

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