**The Impact of the EEC on Irish Fishing**

**Fishing in Ireland before it joined the EEC**

* Politicians of all parties had an image that the ideal fisherman used a Curach, fished in local waters and farmed a few acres of land
* 90 % of Irish people were catholic and associated eating fish with fasting on Friday. Most of our fish was exported to England
* Bord Iascaigh Mhara was set up in 1952 to develop Irish Fishing, 800 fishermen in Ireland. It dredged harbours, began building or extending piers, gave loans to fishermen to buy bigger boats ( in 1962 the government gave allowed them to give grants on 25 per cent to new boats), it arranged training for fishermen and did research into fish stocks
* **Treaty of Rome 1957**: Legislative basis for EEC (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands)

KEY CLAUSE: ALL member states could fish each other’s coasts

* In 1958 the First programme for Economic Expansion identified fishing as one of the areas suitable for economic development , especially with an eye to exports
* BIM continued to be involved and became more active in marketing fish to Irish people as well as to continental Europe
* By the 1970s the Irish fishing industry had come a long way since the 1950s but it was still underdeveloped compared to other countries
* 1971 World Fisheries Exhibition held in Dublin Patrick Hiilery Minister for Foreign Affairs made Ireland’s case to enter the EEC

**Negotiating to join the EEC and the issue of Fishing**

Under the terms the Irish State would for ten years

* Have a six mile fishing limit around all of it’s coast
* Keep a 12 mile limit along the west coast for some fish and for shell fish on the west coast
* After ten years these terms would be reviewed in light of the development of the coastal areas and the state of the fish stocks
* This was not as good as Hillery had hoped for but it was an improvement on the original offer
* The main advantage was that Ireland would be a member of the EEC when the terms came up for revision
* The disadvantage was that the terms under which the agreement would be reviewed after ten years were very vague
* Reaction among fishermen was mixed but the result of the Referendum was 83% for entry into the EEC. Ireland Britain and Denmark joined on January 1st 1973

**Impact of EEC membership on Irish fishing**

* Ireland had the smallest fleet in the EEC 2% of the total catch in 1973
* Ireland was recognised as underdeveloped and benefited from structural funds
* Money was provided for bigger boats, processing plants, improved roads so fish could be brought from the port
* Fishermen benefited from a guaranteed price for fish, this was achieved by dumping surplus fish. Before joining the EEC prices fell when catches were good
* These developments increased the number of people working in the fishing industry, between 1973 and 1989 the number of fishermen grew from 2,200 to almost 4,000. Fish processing and related businesses employed almost 3,000 people
* Being in the EEC helped Irish Fisheries to be less dependent on the UK. Markets were also found outside Europe
* Britain and Iceland became involved in a Cod War , Iceland claimed that the British were over fishing in their seas.
* In 1976 before an agreement was reached Iceland declared an Exclusive Economic Zone up to 200 miles around her coast, Canada and the USA suggested that they might do the same
* A new policy was needed

**THE HAGUE RESOLUTION**

* The community as a whole would have an exclusive zone of 200 miles
* Individual countries could control their own 12 miles of territorial waters
* To deal with over fishing a **TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH (TAC**) was to be decided for each species of fish, each country would be given a quota

**The Common Fisheries Policy 1983**

* Ireland got to keep her exclusive fishing rights in the 6-12 mile zone but the right to fish was limited to specific types of fish
* The quota of fish for each country was decided on what it had traditionally fished for this meant we had a generous quota for herring and mackerel but a less generous quota for more valuable white fish
* Ireland had hoped for a 50 mile limit but Brian Linehan, Minister for Fisheries 1977-79 opted to accept subsidies and quotas instead

**!986 Spain and Portugal Join**

* Under the terms of admission Spain were not allowed fish inside a 50 mile zone around Ireland in reality Spanish boats continued to fish illegally in Irish waters and were in direct competition with Irish fishermen for some species E. G Prawns

**Conclusion**

The impact of the EEC on Irish fishing was mixed . The growth that was evident before 1973 continued with the help of investment from the EEC structural fund. On the other hand Ireland no longer had control over the seas around its coast forced to share it with other EEC members. The quota system of deciding how much fish they could catch was widely seen as unfair.