**Council of the
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DECLASSIFICATION

of document:	ST 9217/97 RESTREINT
dated:	18 June 1997
new status:	Public
Subject:	Negotiation of a customs cooperation and mutual assistance agreement with Hong Kong

Delegations will find attached the declassified version of the above document.

The text of this document is identical to the previous version.

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9217/97

RESTREINT

CID 38
UD 77
PVD 28 (ASIE)

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of:	**Working Party on Economic Questions**
on:	**17 June 1997**
Subject:	**Negotiation of a customs cooperation and mutual assistance agreement with Hong Kong**

1. On 17 June 1997, <u>the Working Party on Economic Questions</u> held a brief exchange of views on the question of the text of the draft agreement on customs cooperation and mutual assistance to be sent to Hong Kong as the Community's opening negotiating position.

   The Working Party regretted that it had not been possible to make available the standard texts for both customs cooperation and precursor draft agreements which are awaited following the meetings on 7 and 28 May 1997 of the special drafting Group established to draw up such texts.

2. In the circumstances, delegations felt that it was not appropriate to sent any text to Hong Kong until the Working Party has had the opportunity to verify and approve the standard texts. Given the importance of establishing bilateral contacts with the Hong Kong authorities before 30 June 1997, <u>the Working Party</u> agreed that the most appropriate course of action at this stage would be for the Commission to address a letter to Hong Kong

a) restating the Community's readiness and willingness to enter into negotiations with the Hong Kong authorities;

b) outlining the main themes which the Community would expect to see included in a customs cooperation and mutual assistance agreement;

c) indicating that the text of a draft agreement was being prepared and would be forwarded shortly.

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