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Subject: Ivory Coast: Preparation of the second round of negotiations for a new fisheries Protocol (Abidjan, 28 and 30 June 1997)

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

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

9195/97

RESTREINT

PECHE 189

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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| of: | Working Party on External Fisheries Policy |
| dated: | 23 June 1997 |
| Subject: | Ivory Coast: Preparation of the second round of negotiations for a new fisheries Protocol (Abidjan, 28 and 30 June 1997) |

1. The Commission representative, in his introductory remarks, recalled that the first round of negotiations for a new⁽¹⁾ fisheries Protocol with the Ivory Coast, which took place in Abidjan in the week of 27 May 1997, had been unsuccessful mainly because of the divergence of views between parties regarding the level of the financial compensation to be paid by the Community in respect of the new Protocol. This first round had nevertheless enabled a number of improvements to be made to the text of the Protocol and its annexes; these amendments, whilst not yet formally agreed, had been incorporated in a working document which was circulated at the time of negotiations in Abidjan. In these circumstances, work in the forthcoming round of negotiations should above all focus on the financial aspects of the future Protocol.

(1) The current Protocol expires on 30 June 1997.

1. In this respect, because the elements underlying the Community's financial offer presented in the first round had not changed, the Community - in an overall context of budgetary austerity - could accept no more than an increase in the present level of the financial compensation proportionate to the increase in the quantitative fishing possibilities identified in the Protocol (i.e. the tonnage reference for catches for the tuna fisheries and the limit on vessels as expressed in GRT in respect of the trawler fisheries). The Commission representative, therefore, expressed doubt as to the chances of reaching agreement in the forthcoming round. He wondered whether, in the event of a breakdown in negotiations, Member States could accept a temporary suspension of the Community fleets' fishing activities or whether Member States wished the Commission to seek transitional arrangements (in principle the extension of the present Protocol) pending the conclusion of a new Protocol.
1. Delegations directly concerned expressed the hope that this second round would lead to the initialling of a new Protocol. However, if this proved impossible, a number of delegations felt that it was more appropriate to accept a temporary suspension of fishing activities rather than seek an extension of existing arrangements for a limited period. The Spanish delegation, on the contrary, was in favour of seeking a temporary extension of the Protocol, during which time negotiations for a new one would be continued. It added that forthcoming negotiations should aim at improving a number of operational aspects of the Protocol, particularly in respect of the trawler fleet fishing activities.
1. The Commission representative noted the majority view in favour of the suspension approach, without excluding however that in some specific circumstances it might be appropriate to work towards a temporary extension of present arrangements. Furthermore, he noted that the following overall framework for the forthcoming negotiations had emerged from the Working Party's discussions:

- In terms of fishing possibilities
 - = an increase in the fishing opportunities for the trawler component of the Protocol up to a maximum of 800 GRT can be sought: the actual figure will depend on the level of interest shown by the Member States concerned and will be decided at the coordination meeting in situ;
 - = the reference tonnage of catches for the tuna fisheries could be set at a maximum of 8500 tonnes per annum (to be compared with the present level of 7500 tonnes per annum); this increase of 1000 tonnes would duly reflect the possible impact of the increase in the number of vessels in this fishery;
- in terms of the financial compensation
 - = an offer of maximum 3MECU corresponding to a Protocol of three years (not four years as requested by one delegation) can be made. This figure would reflect the proportional increase in the share of trawler fishery in the total Community contribution (in relation to the increased possibilities) and also the proportional increase corresponding to the increase in the tonnage reference of catches for the tuna fisheries (from 7500 to 8500 tonnes per annum).

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