

EUROPEAN UNION
THE COUNCIL

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09. Sep. 1996

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of: Working Party on External Fisheries Policy

dated: 15 July 1996

Subject: Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC): Location of the headquarters of the organisation

1. The Commission representative informed delegations that following the recent entry into force of the Agreement for the establishment of the IOTC an extraordinary session of that body is to be convened for the second half of September 1996⁽¹⁾. On that occasion, it is expected that a decision will be taken regarding the future seat of the IOTC. The Commission, with that in view, felt that it was appropriate for the Community to agree on a "common position" on that matter as soon as practicable.
2. Two States, Sri Lanka and the Seychelles, had presented to date, via the usual diplomatic channels, their candidature for the seat of the IOTC to be located in their capitals (Colombo and Victoria respectively). Both countries had solicited the support of the European Commission⁽²⁾ to that effect.

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(1) In the meantime this session has been postponed until the first half of December 1996.

(2) The text of the notes was circulated to delegations.

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3. The Commission representative, having stated that the Commission itself had not reached firm views on the matter yet, set out the main features of the two locations. In respect of Sri Lanka, it was noted that one of its main assets was that the new organisation (IOTC) should inherit the existing technical and scientific infrastructures which were already available to the Indo Pacific Tuna Programme (IPTP), which is the forerunner of the IOTC. Regarding the Seychelles he reminded delegations of the existence of the important tuna Agreement concluded between that country and the European Union.
4. The French and United Kingdom delegations, while stressing that they had not reached firm views yet on the matter, felt that the location in the Seychelles might be preferred given the stronger ties between the EU and that country. The German delegation on the contrary, but also on a preliminary basis, voiced its support for Sri Lanka.
5. At the close of this preliminary exchange of views, it was decided to revert to the matter at Working Party level at a later stage but well in advance of the session of the IOTC. On that occasion the procedural matters (of how to decide a "common position" on the matter at Community level) could also be addressed, as suggested by some delegations.

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