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## DECLASSIFICATION

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Subject: Recommendation for a Council Decision authorizing the Commission to negotiate fisheries agreements with certain Mediterranean countries

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

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

10501/96

RESTREINT

PECHE 377  
MED 60

**OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

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of : Working Party on External Fisheries Policy

dated: 23 September 1996 and 11 October 1996

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N° Cion prop.: 9777/96 PECHE 324 - SEC(96) 1407

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Subject: **Recommendation for a Council Decision authorizing the Commission to negotiate fisheries agreements with certain Mediterranean countries**

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**1. Presentation by the Commission**

The Commission representative explained that the general approach of the Commission was not to conclude "classical" Fisheries Agreements, nor to conclude Agreements with all Mediterranean countries.

**2. Objectives of the Recommendation**

- Promoting a stable and effective partnership in the area;

Complementing the multilateral approach defined at the Diplomatic Conference in Crete, which should be confirmed by the 2nd Diplomatic Conference in Venice in November 1996.

### 3. Scope of the Recommendation

The Commission aims at including all sectors of fisheries cooperation in the Mediterranean: this could be adapted, depending on the specific requests of individual countries and/or subregions.

### 4. Procedure to be followed

The Commission intends to identify the interests of Member States and consult with the professional organizations concerned, and then engage in exploratory talks with certain countries, chosen on a selective basis, before engaging in negotiations.

### 5. Adoption

The Commission is particularly anxious to ensure adoption of the negotiating directive well in advance of the Venice Diplomatic Conference on 27 November 1996.

### 6. Delegations' reactions

Delegations voiced numerous reservations as to the general thrust of the Commission's approach. The main misgivings relate to the following issues:

- uncertainty was expressed as regards the proposed scope, in particular in relation to the competences of regional organizations in the area, such as GCFM and ICCAT, inter alia from the viewpoint of possible Community cooperation with those organizations;

- the advisability of concluding joint ventures and temporary associations with some countries facing political difficulties was questioned;
- as regards the negotiating approach, several delegations favoured an individual, country by country approach rather than simultaneously negotiating Agreements with several countries in the area; they considered the draft directive too general and imprecise in that respect;
- delegations made reservations as to the cost as well as the source of financing.

#### **Specific observations**

7. The French delegation insisted on the need to liaise with the Council Working Parties dealing with the Mediterranean basin (ex-Yugoslavia, Mediterranean). It also underlined that it would not welcome the granting of tariff concessions, given the market problems encountered in respect of a number of species. The Italian and Portuguese delegations shared this last view.
8. The Danish and United Kingdom delegations queried the financial consequences of the Commission approach, both in terms of methodology, and of the cooperation model envisaged alongside multilateral management in the area; both delegations maintained Parliamentary scrutiny reservations; they also suggested the setting of a ceiling on the cost of the envisaged arrangements.

9. The Dutch delegation shared those concerns and insisted on the need to clarify the sources of financing of the various types of cooperation, in particular in the follow-up to the Barcelona Conference on the Mediterranean.
10. The Spanish delegation referred to the obligations which flow from participation in the regional organizations in the area; in its view, an effort should be undertaken to coordinate the approaches already developed within those organizations in order to apply them to Mediterranean countries which are not members of those bodies. This harmonization effort should precede any development of relations with third countries in the fisheries field.
11. The Portuguese delegation, whilst indicating that the traditional approach of obtaining licences should not be abandoned, pointed to the need to develop relations with the Northern African countries.
12. The German delegation also queried the absence of the possibility for mutual access with potential Mediterranean partners to fishery resources in the area.
13. The Greek delegation maintained an overall scrutiny reservation.
14. The Italian delegation noted that while the main priority of the Community approach should be to enhance scientific cooperation, the draft negotiating directive went well beyond this. Further discussion should await the outcome of the Venice Conference in November.

15. The Commission representative responded that:

- the draft negotiating directive aims at allowing the Commission to dispose of the necessary flexibility in order to be in a position to address each particular situation during the initial phase of the negotiations; with a view to assuaging delegations' concerns, it could perhaps identify the potential countries or group of countries of interest; priority would be given to the Adriatic area and the North African coastline; in that context, a subregional grouping of countries with common interests might take precedence over the individual country approach;
- the cost of the arrangements would be discussed during the negotiations proper;
- coordination meetings and Working Party discussions would ensure that the definition of Community interests was adequately prepared with Member States;
- a number of drafting changes were agreed in order to clarify some points and meet delegations' concerns.

#### 16. Conclusion

The Working Party agreed to revert to the issue at one of its forthcoming meetings.