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NIS 20

DECLASSIFICATION

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Subject: Russia: Recommendation for a Council Decision to authorize the Commission to negotiate a Fisheries Co-operation Agreement with the Russian Federation

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

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



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 28 January 2000 (28.01)
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RESTREINT

**PECHE 12
NIS 20**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

from :	Working Party on External Fisheries Policy
dated :	20 January 2000
No. prev. doc.:	10188/98 PECHE 253 NIS 64
No. Cion prop.:	14085/99 PECHE 267 NIS 136 (RESTREINT)
Subject :	Russia: Recommendation for a Council Decision to authorize the Commission to negotiate a Fisheries Co-operation Agreement with the Russian Federation

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission representative presented the recommendation for a negotiation mandate which had been submitted to the Council by the Commission in December 1999.
2. The mandate was based on the results of the fact-finding mission which had been conducted in Russia in October 1997 in order to determine possibilities for co-operation in the field of fisheries and which had clearly shown that the Russian Federation had no interest in concluding a traditional fisheries agreement, but was anxious, in the first place, to develop and modernize all sectors of its fishing industry.
3. The mandate thus aimed at concluding a comprehensive fisheries co-operation agreement comprising the following elements, in particular:
 - Traditional elements such as co-operation on conservation (including international waters), control and research and exchange of fishing possibilities, the latter being limited to the Baltic Sea;

- assistance, including action to facilitate investments, in establishing joint ventures and enterprises in all sectors of the Russian fishing industry, using TACIS facilities and EBRD loan mechanisms;
 - generally, the promotion of trade in fisheries products.
4. The agreement would be concluded within the framework of the existing partnership and co-operation agreement (PCA) EC-Russia. It would be managed by a specific "fisheries body" to be set up as part of the sub-committee on agriculture, fisheries and consumer protection of the PCA.
 5. The TACIS aspect was of utmost importance for Russia. The TACIS offices concerned in Russia were those in Murmansk, Kaliningrad and Moscow, where "fisheries desks" would be opened. However, no additional funds would be made available for fisheries purposes in the framework of TACIS.
 6. The financial envelope for the agreement would amount to 8 million Euro/year.
 7. The Russian Federation had conveyed to the Commission its interest in entering negotiations at the earliest possible date.

B. DISCUSSION IN THE WORKING PARTY

a) Political aspect

8. Against the background of the general political context with respect to Russia, in particular the war in Chechnya, and in the light of the declaration adopted by the European Council of Helsinki on 10/11 December 1999, delegations showed reluctance to enter negotiations on an agreement with Russia at the present stage.
9. In their view, launching a negotiation process in the current situation would not be appropriate, and any steps in such a direction were subject to political decisions to be taken at Council level, bearing in mind that the General Affairs Council would discuss the item "relations with Russia" on 24 January next.

b) Technical aspect

10. As far as the contents was concerned, however, delegations, subject to scrutiny underway in capitals, generally welcomed the proposed mandate, expressing interest in the conclusion of a fisheries co-operation agreement with Russia. They also showed readiness to carrying out already an examination at technical level, pending relevant decisions at political level.
11. In this context, attention was drawn to the following points of particular concern/interest:
 - Geographical limitation for the exchange of fishing possibilities: Russian vessels must not be granted access to Community waters in the Atlantic (E, IRL, P, in particular);
 - access to the Barents Sea for EC vessels (E, P);
 - establishment of joint ventures/enterprises (E, P, in particular);
 - access to the Russian zone in the Baltic Sea for vessels from other Member States than Finland and Sweden (DK);
 - integration of existing bilateral agreements in the new comprehensive agreement (S);
 - ensuring a balanced exchange of quotas in the Baltic Sea (FIN).

C. CONCLUSIONS

12. Recalling that the preparatory work for a new fisheries agreement with Russia had already started years ago, the Working Party agreed that:
 - the mandate could be examined technically in the Working Party, it being understood that this was a question of internal discussion at Community level for which strict confidentiality needed to be observed;
 - with regard to the current political context, no negotiation should be launched before the necessary clarification had taken place at the political level.