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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.

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RESTREINT

PECHE 209

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

from:	Working Party on External Fisheries Policy
dated:	30 June 1997
No. prev. doc.:	8734/97 PECHE 172
Subject:	EC/Argentina Fisheries Agreement: Preparation of the Joint Committee Meeting, 1-2 July 1997

1. The Commission representative referred to the issues for discussion during the 6th meeting of the Joint Committee EU/Argentina to be held on 1-2 July 1997 in Brussels. He mainly concentrated on the following themes:
 - a) Assessment of the Agreement
 - b) Evaluation of new projects of joint enterprises
 - c) New Argentinian legislation
 - d) Cooperation in the South Atlantic

a) Assessment of the Agreement

2. The Commission representative referred to information according to which vessels operating under existing joint enterprises within the framework of the Agreement - which in principle should mainly target surplus stocks - had been reported to shift their activities towards non-surplus stocks, which are already under heavy pressure. He emphasized that it was the view of the Argentinian authorities that this development ran counter to the spirit of the Agreement. The Commission representative added that the Commission had been pressing for the holding of the Joint Committee, in particular in order to elicit more information on this issue which might help to clarify the situation. The Commission representative nevertheless expressed his satisfaction at the functioning of the Agreement, notably regarding the number of projects which had been approved, and the scientific and technical cooperation taking place between the two parties.

b) Evaluation of new projects

3. The Commission representative indicated that, regarding the eight new projects which had been submitted for evaluation, the Argentinian party had expressed doubts about the viability of certain projects, due to the age of the vessels involved (over 30 years old)⁽¹⁾. In another case, the capacity of the vessel was deemed excessive. Furthermore, the Argentinian party had expressed its intention not to proceed with the approval of new projects pending the outcome of the investigation concerning the nature and impact of the activities of the joint enterprises as referred to above.

⁽¹⁾ He added that the Argentinian authorities are generally opposed to projects involving a replacement by vessels over 30 years of age.

c) New Argentinian legislation

4. The Commission representative referred to the information he had received on two new Argentinian draft laws currently under examination in the Argentinian Parliament.

The first draft law would make it compulsory for all crew on board vessels fishing in Argentinian waters to be of Argentinian nationality. The second one, concerning the segmentation of the fleet, would result in a 20% cut in the fishing effort of the hake fishery through the prohibition of fishing in certain areas to protect juvenile stocks and through the reduction of the number of fishing days. This approach was *inter alia* the result of consultations with the industry.

5. In that connection, the Commission representative indicated that he intended to remind the Argentinian party that they had the obligation to consult with the Community before launching such initiatives which could prejudice the operability of the joint enterprises established within the framework of the Agreement.

d) Cooperation in the South Atlantic

6. The Commission representative, having recalled that, at this stage, there was no Council mandate to allow for discussion of this particular issue with the Argentinian party, insisted that, because of the concern over the state of stocks, there was a need to agree, as soon as possible, on the adoption of appropriate conservation measures in that area (i.a. zones adjacent to the CCAMLR area). Against this background, the Commission intended to submit to Council a revised version of the draft negotiating directive in order to be able to initiate consultations with Argentina on this issue, in September 1997.
