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DECLASSIFICATION

of document: 9626/97 RESTREINT

dated: 7 July 1997

new status: Public

Subject: Cape Verde
-Preparation of negotiations for a new fisheries Protocol

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

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

9626/97

RESTREINT

PECHE 211

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of: Working Party on External Fisheries Policy

dated: 30 June 1997

Subject: Cape Verde
-Preparation of negotiations for a new fisheries Protocol

1. Recalling that the current Protocol would expire at the end of September 1997, the Commission representative sought delegations' views on the nature of the new Protocol to be negotiated.

In this context, he drew attention to the low utilization rate of fishing possibilities⁽¹⁾ under the current Protocol, which would appear to justify a reduction in the reference tonnage and thus in the financial compensation. However, requests for fishing possibilities from interested Member States were more than double those of the current Protocol, the overall cost was relatively modest (+/- 500,000 ECUs/year) and Cape Verde was a poor country. Nevertheless, the Commission was proposing to start the negotiations with a reduced offer of financial compensation but awaited delegations' observations.

1. The Portuguese and Spanish delegations were opposed to any reduction in the reference tonnage. They argued that interest was high among vessel owners, hence the request for increased fishing possibilities, notably in longliners; that the Cape Verde authorities would no doubt reject any reduction in the financial compensation; and that, in the case of Spanish vessels, the take-up rate, particularly over the last year, had been considerably higher than the figures quoted by the

(1) Average catch of tuna = 15% of reference tonnage; longliners never used.

Commission. Furthermore, the Portuguese delegation reported that, according to its information, swordfish were moving into the Cape Verde EEZ. The French delegation, which had initially not ruled out a slight reduction in the reference tonnage, was sensitive to this information. Finally all these delegations underlined the migratory nature of tuna and swordfish - which explained the often high level of fishing requests and low level of take-up - the modest financial costs of the Protocol and the low level of economic development in Cape Verde.

1. The German and United Kingdom delegations, on the other hand, argued in favour of a reduction in the reference tonnage to bring it closer into line with the actual rate of utilization. At the same time, these delegations were sensitive to the needs of Cape Verde as an impoverished country for which the financial compensation, though modest for the European Union, was important. They therefore urged the Commission to seek a balanced result in the negotiation.

1. In conclusion, the Commission undertook to conduct the negotiations with Cape Verde in full awareness of delegations' positions, notably on the question of the level of the reference tonnage and the financial compensation.

1. Finally, the Working Party noted that a coordination meeting would take place at 09h00 on 8 July 1997 in Praia, Cape Verde.