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Subject: Fisheries consultations with the Russian Federation: Sweden/Russia arrangements for 1998; Finland /Russia arrangements for 1998; Finland /Russia arrangements for 1998; EC/Russia global agreement - fact-finding mission (Moscow, 2-10 October 1997)

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 280
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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of: Working Party on External Fisheries Policy

dated: 29 September 1997

Subject: Fisheries consultations with the Russian Federation : Sweden/Russia arrangements for 1998; Finland /Russia arrangements for 1998; EC/Russia global agreement - fact-finding mission (Moscow, 2-10 October 1997)

SWEDEN / RUSSIA AGREEMENT

1. In response to a request from the Commission representative, the Swedish delegation confirmed that as there had been no arrangements between the two parties in 1996, Sweden had caught no fish in the Russian zone, nor had Russia caught anything in the Swedish zone last year.
1. In 1997 Sweden had caught some cod in the Russian zone but had now stopped fishing there. The sprat fishery was limited to 2,000 tonnes for Sweden (of which it had caught 70 tonnes to date) and 4,000 tonnes for Russia.
1. In the arrangements for 1998 Sweden was anxious to secure quotas for cod and herring in an exchange of quotas arrangement balanced by financial compensation, if necessary.
1. Sweden had no problems with the list of vessels which was a basic but flexible one; indeed, it would be happy with the establishment of such a list in other Agreements in the Baltic.

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FINLAND / RUSSIA AGREEMENT

1. The Commission representative pointed out that last year Russia had refused to enter into fisheries arrangements with Finland on the basis that Finnish waters were too small in area and that it considered that there was no provision for financial compensation in its original Agreement with that country.
1. The Finnish delegation indicated that the kind of arrangement it was seeking for 1998 was similar to that it had envisaged for 1997, viz.
 - it was seeking salmon and cod quotas in the Kaliningrad area in exchange for herring and sprat, south of 59°30N;
 - it was also interested in salmon and herring quotas in the Gulf of Finland.

General comments

1. The Danish delegation considered that any new arrangements between Sweden and Russia or Finland and Russia should be limited to a roll-over of existing provisions; no new or expanded elements should be provided for. In its view the main priority for the Community should be to secure a global EC / Russia Agreement.
1. The Commission representative pointed out that continuation of these traditional neighbourhood Baltic agreements with Russia would not jeopardise a global EC / Russia Agreement which was not only the priority of the Community but also that of Russia.

FACT-FINDING MISSION (6-10 October)

1. The Commission representative explained that in the course of consultations in January this year the Russian delegation had produced an outline for an EU / Russia Agreement. This outline had proved unacceptable to the Community delegation as it went beyond the mandate issued to the Commission for negotiating an agreement with Russia, and included elements which were beyond the fisheries domain.
1. However, with a view to maintaining cordial relations with Russia and to exploring the possibility of a fisheries agreement, the Community delegation had agreed to visit Russia on a fact-finding mission. The main purpose of the mission was to afford Member States the opportunity to evaluate the utility and benefits any such Agreement for the Community.
1. However, the Commission representative feared that participation by Member States in this mission might be so low as to render its usefulness questionable.

1. The President pointed out that the decision to undertake this mission and the arrangements for its occurrence had been agreed with Russia some time ago: a refusal by the Community to participate at this late state might jeopardise any possibility of reaching a fisheries agreement and might well lead to bad relations with Russia.
1. The Danish, Spanish, German, Netherlands, Finnish and Swedish delegations confirmed that they would participate in this mission either by sending a representative from their capitals or from their Russian embassies. The Irish and Portuguese delegations regretted that they were unable to participate and went on to stress that this did not indicate a lack of interest on their part in concluding an agreement with Russia. The United Kingdom delegation stated that it would investigate the possibility of sending a representative; the French delegation could not confirm at this point that it would participate in the mission.
1. The Commission representative explained that the Commission had sent a list of enquiries to Russia on various aspects of its fisheries policy and its fishing industry. An agenda for the meeting had also been established. Both documents would be circulated to Member States.
1. Under the first point of the agenda - access of Russian vessels to EC waters - the Commission intended to give a summary of the Common Fisheries Policy, explain the quota system, and finally the biological state of the stocks, all of which would lead to the fact that there was no possibility of Russia fishing in EC waters.
1. Under the second point - access of EC vessels to Russian waters - it was expected that the Russian delegation would confirm that they could not fish the full catchment of fish in their waters. There were two reasons for this expectation: the Russian fleet was in a bad condition, and Russia had recently signed an Agreement with Iceland, giving Iceland quotas in Russian waters, but not the converse.
1. The Commission representative would adopt a cautious approach if trade related issues, licenses or sanitary matters were mentioned, as under Community law these lay outside the fisheries domain and other departments in the Commission would have to be consulted.