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DECLASSIFICATION

of document: 9802/97 RESTREINT
dated: 16 July 1997
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Subject: CE/Comoros
- Preparation of negotiations for the renewal of the Fisheries Protocol
(Comoros, 15-17 July 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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PECHE 223

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of: Working Party on External Fisheries Policy

dated: 30 June 1997

Subject: CE/Comoros

- Preparation of negotiations for the renewal of the Fisheries Protocol (Comoros, 15-17 July 1997)
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1. The Commission representative pointed out that although the utilization rate under the current Protocol was relatively good (average catch +/- 3,000t/year: reference tonnage 4,500t/year), the Commission envisaged starting the negotiations by proposing a reduction in the reference tonnage. This would probably lead the Comorian authorities to ask for compensation for such a reduction in the form of increased advance payments from vessel owners. On a more general level, he noted that the operation of the current Protocol had not given rise to any problems.
2. On the question of a possible reduction in the reference tonnage, delegations were divided.

The French, Italian and Spanish delegations argued in favour of maintaining the current level bearing in mind the increased catches.

The German and United Kingdom delegations, on the other hand, supported the line sketched out by the Commission. They voiced the view that this was a small, well-utilized fisheries Protocol for which vessel owners should be asked to bear more of the financial cost and thereby enable a reduction to be made in the Community's financial compensation through a reduced reference tonnage.

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3. With regard to requests for fishing possibilities,

the French delegation confirmed its request for 21 tuna seiners;

the Spanish delegation sought licences for 18 surface longliners⁽¹⁾ and urged the Commission to obtain the same number of licences as in the Protocols with the Seychelles and Madagascar. In addition this delegation argued for maintaining the advance payments for tuna seiners and for setting advance payments for surface longliners at 500 ECUs per vessel/year;

the Italian delegation requested one licence for a tuna seiner.

4. Taking note of these positions, the Commission representative undertook to negotiate the best possible Protocol, bearing in mind the economic situation prevailing in the Comoros.
5. In conclusion, the Working Party noted that an initial coordination meeting had been scheduled for 15 July 1997 (09h00) in situ.

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(1) In coordination in Moroni, the Spanish delegation confirmed a request for 22 licences for tuna seiners.