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### DECLASSIFICATION

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Subject: Madagascar: Preparation of first round of negotiations

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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 56

## OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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from: Working Party on External Fisheries Policy

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Subject : Madagascar: Preparation of first round of negotiations

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission representative recalled that the present tuna Agreement between the EU and Madagascar would expire on 20 May 1998. Procedures had therefore been put in place for fresh negotiations to take place with the Madagascar delegation on 3 - 6 March 1998 in Antananarivo.
1. A "fiche technique" was circulated. The coastal resources of Madagascar were quite substantial, including both tuna and shrimp, although at present the Community had access only to tuna. Exploitation of shrimp was by a private licence system, the management of which was not entirely satisfactory. In 1995, fish represented 7% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Madagascar and the estimated figure for 1998 was 14%; fish represented 20% of total exports.

1. The Commission would aim to renegotiate an Agreement for a further three years, maintaining a reference tonnage of 9000 t of tuna per annum in return for the same financial compensation. As regards the details of the Agreement, Member States were asked to send in their requests for numbers of licences for vessels to fish in the Madagascar area (only one request had been received to date). There should be harmonisation between the terms of this Agreement and that drawn up with the Comoros.

## DELEGATIONS' COMMENTS

1. The Commission's "fiche technique" was appreciated by all delegations.
1. The Austrian and German delegations entered general reservations. The Swedish delegation entered a scrutiny reservation.
1. The following initial requests for licences were made:  
  
Spain: 25-30 surface longliners; 20-24 tuna seines.  
  
France: 6-8 surface longliners; 20 tuna seines.  
  
Portugal: 5 surface longliners.  
  
Italy: Number and type of licences to be specified.
1. The above delegations undertook to send in more detailed requests following discussion with the industry.

1. The French delegation was anxious to maintain an Agreement with Madagascar, given the satisfactory rate of utilisation of the previous fisheries Agreement and the role of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese delegation explained that there was enormous pressure on the tuna fisheries in the Northern area of the South Atlantic and Portugal was obliged to send part of its fleet elsewhere; tuna-fishing possibilities in the Indian Ocean would be welcome.
  
1. The Portuguese delegation, noting the importance of shrimps to the Community, urged that access to this species be explored further. Portugal had, in the past, tried to obtain shrimp licences, but without success. The French delegation considered that the possible inclusion of shrimp in the Agreement required further study.
  
1. The Austrian, Danish, German, Netherlands, Swedish and United Kingdom delegations, however, questioned the incorporation of shrimp or other new elements in the Agreement, arguing that any increase in fishing opportunities would very likely involve a corresponding increase in cost, which should be avoided given present financial constraints.
  
1. The Netherlands delegation considered that allocation of the breakdown of the financial compensation paid by the Community to Madagascar should be reevaluated. This delegation, together with the Austrian, Danish, German, Swedish and United Kingdom delegations, was particularly anxious that the distribution of costs between tuna vessel owners and the Community be rebalanced in the light of the Council Conclusions of October 1997; the general view of these delegations was that the private licensing system for tuna was a profitable enterprise and that the shipowners, who were the main beneficiaries, were not paying enough.

1. The Spanish delegation urged the Commission to initiate negotiations in Madagascar on the basis of the same financial compensation as that in the existing Agreement.
1. The Danish, French and Netherlands delegations endorsed the Commission's position regarding coherence between fisheries, development and other policies.

## CONCLUSION

1. In the light of the contributions from delegations, the Commission representative summarised the Commission's position:
  - it would open negotiations with Madagascar on the basis of the costs of the present Agreement;
  - it would discuss the allocation of the breakdown of financial compensation with Madagascar with a view to directing more of these funds toward development projects, including their social dimension;
  - the time was ripe to begin implementation of the Council Conclusions of October 1997 by progressively rebalancing the breakdown of payments made by tuna vessels owners and the Community (lowering the cost to the Community) over a period of time;
  - while the shrimp sector was considered to have major development potential by international monetary institutions involved in the development of Madagascar, it was too early to make a request for fishing possibilities for this species; the Commission would confine itself to gathering information on this resource for the present.