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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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"A" ITEM NOTE

from: General Secretariat

to: COUNCIL

Subject: Recommendation for a Council Decision concerning the participation of the Community to the 18th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Strasbourg, 30.11- 4.12.98)

1. The Commission forwarded to the Council on 10 September 1998 the above mentioned recommendation.
2. The Working Party on the Environment agreed on the attached draft Council conclusions.

It was also concluded that detailed consideration of three Mediterranean marine species to be included in Annex III of the Convention should be deferred to the Working Party on Fisheries. This examination took place on 24 November and it was concluded that there was no qualified majority in favour of the inclusion of these species in Annex III of the Convention. The outcome of this examination will therefore have to be reported to the Community co-ordination meeting in Strasbourg.

3. The Permanent Representatives Committee could suggest that Council adopt as an "A" item the text of the conclusions as given in the Annex to this note.

**Draft Council conclusions concerning the participation of
the Community to the 18th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention**

The Council adopts the following conclusions:

With regard to matters within the Community's field of competence, the Community will participate, within the framework of the Bern Convention, in the negotiations within the framework of the 18th meeting of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.

The Commission will conduct these negotiations in consultation with a committee of representatives of the Member States in Brussels or on the spot within the framework of the following negotiating directives.

With regard to matters under the Convention which falls partly within the jurisdiction of the Community and partly within the jurisdiction of the Member States, the Presidency, the Commission and the Member States should by means of coordination in Brussels or on the spot ensure close cooperation during the negotiating process.

Negotiating directives

1. The Commission shall ensure that the decisions of the committee are consistent with relevant Community legislation and with relevant international rules to which the Community is engaged.
2. The Commission shall report to the Council on the outcome of the negotiations and, where appropriate, on any problem that may arise during the negotiations.