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PECHE 29

DECLASSIFICATION

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Subject: Recommendation for a Council Decision authorizing the Commission to negotiate a Fisheries Agreement with New Zealand

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

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

5745/97

RESTREINT

PECHE 29

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of: Working Party on External Fisheries Policy

dated: 31 January 1997

Cion Prop. n°: 11523/96 PECHE 428

Subject: Recommendation for a Council Decision authorizing the Commission to negotiate a Fisheries Agreement with New Zealand

1. Recalling earlier contacts with the New Zealand authorities in March 1996⁽¹⁾, the Commission representative informed the Working Party that exploratory discussions had moved forward subsequently. The prospects for improved relations with New Zealand in the fisheries sector were good and the Commission was seeking authorization from the Council to negotiate a Fisheries Agreement with that country. The Commission representative outlined what he perceived to be the advantage for the Community of such an Agreement, highlighting the availability of resources, such as hoki and squid, for the Community fleet, and the dynamic and developed nature of New Zealand's commercial cooperation with third countries. On the New Zealand side, too, considerable interest had been shown in concluding a Fisheries Agreement with the Community.
1. Delegations' reactions to the Commission's request for a negotiating mandate differed.
1. A number of delegations, notably the French, German⁽²⁾ and United Kingdom delegations expressed serious reservations. Their concerns covered, inter alia,

(1) Cf. doc. 8368/96 PECHE 242.

(2) The German delegation did not, however, entirely rule out the possibility of a Fisheries Agreement with New Zealand.

- the budgetary implications of such a new Agreement at a time when the Community was subject to budget constraints;
 - the lack of precise information regarding cost and funding - a concern shared by the Irish delegation;
 - the probable lack of interest of Community fleets, either in terms of access to the New Zealand EEZ, bearing in mind its geographical position, or in joint ventures;
 - the use of Community funds in the fleet modernization of a prosperous country such as New Zealand;
 - the potential risk to Community producers that would result from the commercial concessions sought by New Zealand.
1. Other delegations, however, in particular the Italian, Portuguese⁽³⁾ and Spanish delegations, expressed interest in a possible Fisheries Agreement with New Zealand, although the Spanish delegation also sought further information on all the implications, not merely the budgetary implications, of such an Agreement.
 1. The Danish, Finnish, Greek, Netherlands and Swedish delegations entered scrutiny reservations, and, in the case of the Danish delegation, also a Parliamentary scrutiny reservation.
 1. Taking note of delegations' observations, particularly as regards budgetary questions, the Commission representative undertook to respond to them at a future meeting. In the meantime exploratory talks would continue with the New Zealand authorities.

(3) The Portuguese delegation informed the Working Party that a New Zealand delegation had recently visited Lisbon to discuss a Fisheries Agreement and Portuguese ship owners had indicated their interest in fishing in the New Zealand EEZ and in diversifying their fleet.