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Working Documents

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ORAL QUESTION (0-30/79)

with debate pursuant to Rule 47 of the
Rules of Procedure

by Mr DE PASQUALE, Mrs BARBARELLA, Mr PAPAPIETRO,
Mr FANTI and Mrs SQUARCIALUPI

to the Commission of the European Communities

Subject: Italo-Tunisian bilateral fisheries agreement

On 19 June 1979 the Italo-Tunisian bilateral fisheries agreement signed in 1976 expired, and failure to renew it is creating serious hardships and dangers for the Sicilian fishing fleet.

The extension of the Community's fishing zone in the Atlantic and in the North Sea to 200 miles has resulted in the transfer to the Community - from 1 January 1977 - of competence to regulate and guarantee the maintenance of the fishing rights of Community fishermen even in the waters of third countries.

1. Why did the Commission not initiate talks with the government of the Tunisian Republic in time to conclude EEC-Tunisian negotiations before

expiry of the bilateral agreement?

2. Is not this dilatoriness due to underestimation by the Commission of the vital importance of Sicilian fishing to the economy of Sicily and of Italy, especially by contrast with the zeal shown in concluding analogous agreements involving the interests of other countries of the Community?
3. What are the proposals which the Commission put to the Tunisian Government in the contacts initiated in December 1978?
4. What stage have the negotiations reached?
5. Does the Commission foresee a rapid conclusion of the negotiations, to put an end as early as possible to the harmful and extremely dangerous interruption of Sicilian fishery activities in Tunisian waters?
6. If the Commission is not in a position to conclude the agreement at once, does it consider it desirable to authorize the Italian Government to negotiate the renewal of the expired bilateral agreement directly with Tunisia, as was done with Yugoslavia?