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FRAME SOCIAL

ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL, 2 MARCH
FRENCH ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE

SUMMARY

1. DISCUSSION BY MINISTERS OVER LUNCH AND IN RESTRICTED SESSION HIGHLY CRITICAL OF FRENCH/DUTCH BEHAVIOUR IN AT TIMES ILL TEMPERED EXCHANGES. OPPOSITION ALSO FROM ITALY, GERMANY, DENMARK, PORTUGAL, IRELAND AND LUXEMBOURG. LAME DUTCH/FRENCH RESPONSE. UK EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANT POINTS OF PRINCIPLE INVOLVED. SATISFACTORY CONCLUSIONS AND STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE COUNCIL (SEE MIFT).

DETAIL

ANTI-HAGUE

2. SAENZ (PRESIDENCY) INTRODUCED DISCUSSION OVER LUNCH ON THE BASIS OF A DRAFT COUNCIL STATEMENT (WRITTEN, IT EMERGED, BY THE COMMISSION) WELCOMING IN PRINCIPLE ATTENTION TO GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND NOTING COMMUNITY COMPETENCE. THE FRENCH TABLED THEIR OWN SHORT ANODYNE DRAFT WHICH SANK WITHOUT TRACE. SMET (BELGIUM) LED THE ATTACK ON WHAT SHE DESCRIBED AS AN UNWELCOME INITIATIVE BY THE FRENCH AND DUTCH. SHE WANTED A DETAILED STATEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY'S VIEW. KTANAS (GREECE) SAID THE HAGUE CONFERENCE WAS QUITE WRONG AND AN ATTEMPT TO SPLIT THE COMMUNITY ON NORTH/SOUTH LINES. NO STATEMENT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE. VALENTE (PORTUGAL) AND STOLL (LUXEMBOURG) QUESTIONED THE EXCLUSION OF SOME COMMUNITY COUNTRIES FROM THE HAGUE.

3. DYBKJAER (DENMARK) HAD STRONG RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE INITIATIVE. TOPFER (FRG) WAS DISAPPOINTED. THIS WAS NOT THE CORRECT WAY TO FOLLOW UP RHODES. BUT HE ARGUED FOR LOOKING FORWARD AND AGAINST RECRIMINATION: A STATEMENT MIGHT BE UNDESIRABLE. LORD CAITHNESS (UK) SAID THAT MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE WERE INVOLVED. WE HAD TO CONSIDER THE RIGHT INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CARRYING FORWARD WORK ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE. WE HAD BEEN INVITED TO THE

CONFERENCE, BUT HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE TACTICS AND STRATEGY TO BE ADOPTED. RUFFOLO (ITALY) SAID THE INITIATIVE WAS EMBARRASSING AND INAPPROPRIATE, BECAUSE OF COMMUNITY COMPETENCE. FLYNN (IRELAND) DESCRIBED IT AS A BOTCHED JOB.

PRO-HAGUE

4. LALONDE (FRANCE) DEFENDED THE PROPOSAL FOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION. THE CONFERENCE WAS A BADLY NEEDED ATTEMPT TO BRIDGE THE NORTH/SOUTH DIVIDE. IT WOULD BE A BRAINSTORMING SESSION, WITH NO FIRM COMMITMENTS ENVISAGED. HE CONCEDED THAT HE HAD NEITHER BEEN CONSULTED ABOUT THE CONFERENCE NOR WAS INVITED TO ATTEND IT. NIJPELS (NETHERLANDS) SAID HE HAD ALSO BEEN EXCLUDED FROM PREPARATORY DISCUSSION, BUT SUPPORTED THE CALL FOR A NEW INSTITUTION AND SUGGESTED THAT THE INITIATIVE WOULD LIE WITH THE COMMISSION TO TAKE MATTERS FORWARD WITHIN THE EC AFTER THE HAGUE MEETING. THE RESULT COULD BE TO BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO UNEP. HE EXTENDED TO RIPA DI MEANA (COMMISSION) AN INVITATION TO DELORS TO ATTEND. RIPA RESPONDED CAUTIOUSLY. IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION THE CONSENSUS FAVOURED A BRIEF STATEMENT.

CONCLUSION

5. FOLLOWING LENGTHY NEGOTIATION A TEXT (SEE MIFT) WAS AGREED NOTING COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND THE FACT THAT NO COMMITMENTS EFFECTING THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE WILL BE ENTERED INTO AT THE HAGUE.

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