

No deal on EC fleets fishing in Mozambican waters

BRUSSELS/ Mozambique and the EC are facing tough negotiations for the renewal of the bilateral fisheries agreement which expires at the end of this year.

The agreement was fully implemented last year, when France and Spain made use of the licences for their 44 tuna-fishing boats and for 16 Spanish shrimp-boats.

But this year, the entire European shrimp fishing operation in Mozambican waters has been paralysed.

Mozambique, which is wary about overfishing and foreign fleets' habit not to pay for all fish caught, proposed a reduction of the quota for high-sea

shrimps from 1,200 to 700 tonnes a year. The offer was rejected by the EC and Mozambique as a consequence was unable this year to cash most of the Ecu 5.9 million in EC financial compensation for fishing rights.

A Ecu950,000 scientific programme went ahead.

Officials of the DG 14 directorship for fisheries here are not too worried. They think the tough Mozambican attitude is mainly tactical, on the eve of negotiations for a new agreement.

Though Mozambique's position is weaker, it will be looking keenly at Namibia's experience in the EC.

[Own correspondent]