

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES – TRADE DESCRIPTION OF SARDINES

Communication from the Chairman of the Panel

The following communication, dated 11 March 2002, addressed to the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB), is circulated in accordance with Article 12.9 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU).

Article 12.8 of the DSU stipulates that the period in which the panel shall conduct its examination, from the date that the composition and terms of reference of the panel have been agreed upon until the date the final report is issued to the parties to the dispute, shall, as a general rule, not exceed six months.

Article 12.9 of the DSU states that when the panel considers that it cannot issue its report within six months, it shall inform the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) in writing of the reasons for the delay together with an estimate of the period within which it will issue its report.

The Panel on "European Communities – Trade Description of Sardines" was established at the request of Peru by the DSB on 24 July 2001. On 11 September 2001, the Director-General determined the composition of the Panel at the request of Peru. I wish to inform you that, due to the complexity of the matter before it and scheduling constraints, the Panel will not be able to issue its report within six months.

The Panel expects to complete its work by end of April 2002.
