

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

1979 - 1980

13 December 1979

DOCUMENT 1-595/79

## Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture

on the proposal from the Commission of  
the European Communities to the Council  
(Doc. 1-560/79) for a directive amending  
Directive 66/403/EEC on the marketing of  
seed potatoes

Rapporteur: Sir Henry PLUMB

1.2.1



By letter of 26 November 1979 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament to deliver an opinion on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a directive amending Directive 66/403/EEC on the marketing of seed potatoes.

The President of the European Parliament referred the proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible.

On 12 December 1979 the Committee on Agriculture appointed Sir Henry Plumb rapporteur and unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and the explanatory statement.

Present: Sir Henry Plumb, chairman and rapporteur; Mr Ligios, vice-chairman; Mrs Barbarella, Mr Battersby, Mr Bocklet, Mr Buchou, Mr Colleselli, Mrs Cresson, Mr Curry, Mr Dalsass, Mr Diana, Mr Früh, Mr Helms, Mrs Herklotz, Mr Kirk, Mr Maher, Mr Brøndlund Nielsen, Mr d'Ormesson, Mr Papapietro, Mr Provan, Mr Skovmand, Mr Sutra, Mr Tolman, Mr Vernimmen and Mr Woltjer.

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The Committee on Agriculture hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution, together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a directive amending Directive 66/403/EEC on the marketing of seed potatoes

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council<sup>1</sup>,
- having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty (Doc. 1-560/79),
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture (Doc. 1-595/79),

Approves the Commission's proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ No. C 303, 4.12.1979, p. 6

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Directive 66/403, of 14 June 1966, on the marketing of seed potatoes, lays down Community rules authorizing the importation into the Community of only those seed potatoes which the Council of Ministers has decided are equivalent as to their characteristics and the plant health controls to which they have been submitted to those of the Community. The Council has established such equivalence for three countries: Switzerland, Austria and Poland.

A transitional measure provided, however, that until 1 July 1975 the Member States were free to take such decisions themselves, while awaiting the final decision of the Council.

2. Subsequently, under a provision inserted in 1976 into the original Directive, the Member States were authorized, initially until 31 December 1976 and since then by subsequent extensions until 30 June 1979, to extend the validity of the national decisions taken before 1 July 1975.

3. The present Commission proposal aims to extend this possibility until 31 March 1980.

This measure only affects seed potatoes imported into Italy from Canada under a national decision on equivalence taken before the prescribed date of 1 July 1975. The Community has recently subjected these potatoes to a thorough technical and administrative analysis, which ascertained that they still presented, although to a somewhat lesser extent, some plant health problems.

The reason for the late presentation of the proposal now before us was precisely the need to wait for the outcome of this analysis.

4. On the other hand, a total or sudden ban on the importation of seed potatoes from Canada would also cause great harm to Italian producers, who had planned their sowing around the anticipated availability of the Canadian product.

A compromise has therefore been reached under which the authorization to import, for this year, the planned quantities of seed potatoes from Canada is subject to an undertaking by Italy not to request further derogations to the Community legislation until the plant health problems in Canada have been completely cleared up which is expected to take two or three years.

Furthermore, Community production of the Kennebec variety, which is imported for potato-growing in Italy, is still not sufficient to meet requirements in the Member State concerned. Nevertheless, production of this seed potato is increasing, especially in France and the Netherlands, and for this reason it is thought that in 1981 it will be possible to meet the requirements of Italy from Community production.

5. For these reasons, and particularly in view of the damage that would otherwise be caused to Italian producers, the Committee on Agriculture approves this proposal on the understanding that the plant health rules will continue to be respected absolutely so as to prevent the introduction of harmful organisms into Europe.

