

European Communities

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

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7 December 1979

DOCUMENT 1-571/79

## Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture

**on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 1-253/79) for a regulation laying down conditions designed to render and keep the territory of the Community free from classical swine fever**

**Rapporteur: Mrs E. CRESSON**



By letter of 26 July 1979 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament to deliver an opinion on the proposal for a Council regulation (EEC) laying down conditions designed to render and keep the territory of the Community free from classical swine fever.

On 4 September 1979 the President of the European Parliament referred the proposal to the Committee on Agriculture.

On 2 October 1979 the Committee on Agriculture appointed Mrs Cresson rapporteur.

It considered the proposal at its meetings of 29/30 October 1979 and 28/29 November 1979.

At the latter meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement by 20 votes to 2, with 5 abstentions.

Present: Sir Henry Plumb, chairman; Mr Ligios, vice-chairman; Mrs Cresson, rapporteur; Miss Barbarella, Mr Battersby, Mr Bocklet, Mr Buchou, Mr Clinton, Mr Colleselli, Mr Curry, Mr Dalsass, Mr Delatte, Mr Früh, Mr Gatto, Mrs Herklotz, Mr Howell, Mr Kirk, Mr Maffre-Baugé, Mr Maher, Mrs Martin (deputizing for Mr Jürgens), Mr Brøndlund Nielsen, Mr d'Ormesson, Mr Pranchère, Mr Skovmand, Mr Sutra, Mr Tolman and Mr Vernimmen.

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION .....	5
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT .....	6

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 regulation laying down conditions designed to render and keep the territory of the Community free from classical swine fever

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. 1-253/79),
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture (Doc. 1-571/79),

1. Maintains its view that swine fever, which severely affects the profitability of pig farming and which is still not totally under control, must now be eradicated in the Community as a matter of priority;
2. Points out that the proposal is an amplification of the proposal for a regulation introducing Community measures for the prevention of classical swine fever;
3. Emphasizes that the total and final eradication of classical swine fever must be achieved before there can be free trade in this sector;
4. Approves the proposal.

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<sup>1</sup>OJ No. C 187, 25.7.1979, p.2

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

On 12 March 1968 the Council adopted a resolution laying down the basic objectives and fundamental principles of a Community policy on plant and animal health. These were total protection for human beings and animals within the Community, precise Community veterinary rules to bring down the barriers to trade in animals and animal products and measures to combat livestock diseases in order to reduce the losses which they cause to the Community's agricultural sector and to the public purse.

Since that time, although there has been no lack of Commission proposals for the gradual introduction of a coherent policy in this area, the Council of Ministers has consistently failed to summon the political will to make progress in introducing Community legislation on animal and plant health. While it is true that the introduction of greater uniformity into the widely divergent conditions prevalent in the various Member States is a particularly complicated and time-consuming task, this is nevertheless necessary in order to lay the foundations for a Community policy in this field.

The very varied health situation of livestock herds in the Member States and the differing methods of preventing, combating and controlling contagious livestock diseases laid down in very divergent legislative and administrative provisions constitute a considerable barrier to the harmonization of veterinary legislation at Community level. For example, the Member States employ different methods to combat diseases such as tuberculosis, brucellosis, foot-and-mouth disease and swine fever. Vaccination is practised in some Member States, but others consider this is wrong in the case of classical swine fever and have recourse to other methods.

The fact that the measures taken by the Member States to combat livestock diseases are very different is a barrier to intra-Community trade. This became particularly clear on the accession of the new Member States in 1973 when veterinary derogations had to be granted to them in order that they might retain their national provisions and regulations concerning the imports of live animals. Although it was intended that these derogations should be abolished in the shorter term, this problem

can only be resolved once true harmonization has taken place of national veterinary provisions at Community level to guarantee a high level of health protection in all the Member States.

Until such time as there is real harmonization of veterinary policy in the Community, it will, moreover, be impossible to implement the principle of free trade as laid down in the Treaty of Rome. Since freedom of trade is well established in other areas of the common market and, indeed, freedom of trade in agricultural products is the most important objective of the common organizations of the market, it is unacceptable for this principle, which has already been implemented in other sectors to be undermined, in the case of trade in animal and animal products, by the existence of barriers concerned with regulations on animal health and by divergent national legislation in the veterinary field.

Furthermore, the issues which this matter raises include not only the elimination of barriers to free trade within the Community but also the protection of public health and the Community's relations with third countries. This is because the Community has, on occasion, to take measures to control imports when the health of livestock in the Community is threatened by dangerous epizootics in third countries. The quality of animal products marketed in the Community is particularly dependent on the conditions of hygiene in which they are produced and the regulations governing them. Clearly, it is also in the interest of public health to have healthy livestock.

The health situation of the animals also has a considerable effect on the profitability of livestock farming. Until such time as a Community campaign against contagious livestock diseases has led to their final eradication, producers will continue to suffer great losses and the Member States will have to bear additional costs. There must therefore be an attempt to harmonize legislation on animal and vegetable health at Community level so as to provide the greatest possible protection for human and animal health and in order to render import restrictions, veterinary controls at frontiers and other barriers to trade redundant. As the health situation of the Community's livestock herd improves, the objective of the gradual elimination of barriers to trade will become all the easier to attain.

In its opinions on veterinary matters, the European Parliament has largely endorsed the policy conducted by the Commission and held the Council of Ministers responsible for the long delay in applying Community rules in the veterinary sector and the consequent difficulty in conducting an effective campaign against contagious livestock disease.

In its resolution in the report on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 240/76) for a directive amending Council Directives 64/432 of 26 June 1964, 72/461 of 12 December 1972 and 72/462 of 12 December 1972 on health and veterinary problems<sup>1</sup>, the European Parliament stated its opinion that only wide-ranging Community measures to combat contagious animal diseases could overcome the divergencies between the different national rules in the matter of the control and eradication of epizootic diseases. In order to make more tangible progress in the implementation of the objectives of the resolution of 12 March 1968, the Committee on Agriculture has repeatedly called for action on a wider scale to harmonize health policy particularly with regard to swine fever, foot-and-mouth disease, brucellosis and tuberculosis.

The proposal now submitted by the Commission contains a large number of provisions to free the Community of classical swine fever and follows on from an earlier proposal for Community measures for the prevention of classical swine fever. Classical swine fever is a particularly virulent and contagious disease which is very rapidly transmitted and leads to high mortality in the pig herd or, in less acute cases, a fall in the profitability of pig farming and great economic losses.

Swine fever has been eliminated in the three new Member States. Their animals are not vaccinated against the disease but a policy of slaughtering is scrupulously followed. In Belgium, France, and Italy the main element in the campaign against the disease is vaccination.

In the Community as a whole, the incidence of swine fever has diminished since the beginning of the 1960's. However, a serious epizootic still occurs in the original Member States at regular intervals of about 3 - 4 years. In these countries the risk of an outbreak of swine fever is greater in certain regions than in others and these therefore prove to be the source from which other areas are infected. On 30 December 1968 the Commission submitted a proposal to the Council on the means to combat classical swine fever and this is still under consideration by the Council. The proposal lays down diagnostic procedures for the confirmation of swine fever and precise instructions on what measures must be taken.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ No. C 6, 10.1.1977, p.141



To prevent an epidemic, the ~~Yoci~~ foci of infection have to be eliminated by slaughtering. At the same time harmonization of methods of diagnosis and monitoring measures is proposed and preventive vaccinations can be undertaken to complement the measures to combat the disease. Although the three new Member States have reservations about the effectiveness of vaccination, they might undertake preventive vaccinations as part of the Community campaign against swine fever. An important feature of the proposal are the guidelines, norms and criteria concerning the methods of diagnosing swine fever. This proposal was approved by the Committee on Agriculture<sup>1</sup>.

Following on from this proposal, which aims to harmonize measures to combat swine fever in the Community and make them more effective and forms the basis for Community action to achieve and maintain a common level of health with regard to swine fever throughout the Community, the Commission is now proposing measures to be taken in cooperation with the Member States which will gradually create areas which can be officially regarded as being free of swine fever so as to create a uniform situation within the Community by means of a continuous campaign in those areas threatened by swine fever. The aim is to maintain a high level of health protection in order to abolish the barriers to intra-Community trade in pigs which result from the differences in the health situation of the livestock herd in the various Member States and their regions. The draft regulation defines certain concepts to ensure the correct application of the measures and lays down numerous detailed provisions for the transport of pigs from a region free from swine fever to a vaccinated region and vice versa.

Finally, it lists the requirements which must be fulfilled to obtain the status of a holding officially free from swine fever and the conditions which disqualify a holding from having this status by reference to the measures outlined in the abovementioned proposal with regard to the means of combating and methods of diagnosing swine fever.

The present proposal is an extension of the earlier proposal for the introduction of Community measures for the prevention of classical swine fever on which the Committee on Agriculture has already delivered a favourable opinion.

<sup>1</sup> Report drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc.577/78) for a regulation introducing Community measures for the prevention of classical swine fever (Doc.33/79 of 6 April 1979).Rapporteur:Mr.C.Ney

The Committee on Agriculture considers that the Commission must state how much full implementation of both its first and second proposals will cost.

It is of course very important for the success of the total and final eradication of classical swine fever on the basis of the two Commission proposals to know whether the Member States will be able to bear these costs.

Since, as has been shown, pig farming and pigmeat production can only be made profitable and since a market policy and freedom of trade can only be realized in this sector if classical swine fever is eradicated throughout the Community, the Committee on Agriculture lends its full support to initiatives to prevent, combat and totally eradicate this disease.