

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1979 - 1980

5 December 1979

DOCUMENT 1-553/79

Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 1-391/79) for a regulation on the granting of assistance for the exportation of agricultural products which may benefit from a special import treatment in a third country

Rapporteur: Mr H.J. BUCHOU

By letter of 8 October 1979, the President of the Council of the European Communities consulted Parliament on a proposal for a Council regulation (EEC) on the granting of assistance for the exportation of agricultural products which may benefit from a special import treatment in a third country.

On 17 October 1979 the President of Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible and to the Committee on External Economic Relations for its opinion.

On 30 October 1979 the Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr Buchou rapporteur.

It considered the proposal for a regulation at its meeting of 19/20 November 1979 and adopted the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement unanimously at the same meeting.

Present: Sir Henry Plumb, chairman; Mr Davern (deputizing for the rapporteur, Mr Buchou), Mr Arfe (deputizing for Mr Hauenschild), Mr Battersby, Mr Bocklet, Mrs Castle, Mr de Courcy Ling (deputizing for Mr Kirk), Mr Curry, Mr Dalsass, Mr Delatte, Mr Fröh, Mr Gatto, Mrs Herklotz, Mr Howell, Mr Jürgens, Mrs Martin (deputizing for Mr Maher), Mr Brøndlund-Nielsen, Mr Provan, Mr Skormand, Mr Sutra, Mr Tolman and Mr Woltjer.

The opinion of the Committee on External Economic Relations is attached.

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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 regulation on the granting of assistance for the exportation of agricultural products which may benefit from a special import treatment in a third country

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council¹,
- having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (Doc. 1-391/79),
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and to the opinion of the Committee on External Economic Relations (Doc. 1-553/79),

Approves the Commission's proposal.

¹ OJ No C 252, 6.10.1979, page 5

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. In the context of GATT the Community has negotiated an agreement with the United States facilitating Community cheese exports to that country. To benefit under the agreement, cheese produced in the Community must comply with certain specifications and price conditions.

2. First, the cheese must satisfy certain criteria relating to fat and water content. This applies to the types of cheese which the Americans call 'soft cheese' and which are already imported into the United States without quantitative restriction, an arrangement confirmed by the agreement concluded with the United States. A new aspect, however, concerns the quality control of the cheese, which will no longer be carried out at the time of its importation into the United States, but in the Community by authorities appointed by the Member States.

3. A system of this kind is already in operation for Community cheese exports to Austria and Spain. The control is carried out by the relevant Member State, either at the place where the cheese is manufactured, or by sampling at the time of its exportation.

4. With regard to price conditions, the Community must ensure that manufacturers do not disrupt the American cheese market by 'undercutting' practices. The Community will therefore have to draw exporters' attention where necessary, to the risks of setting prices too low, since the United States could retaliate by imposing quantitative restrictions or compensatory tariffs. Obviously, neither the United States nor the Community wish to see the cheese war flare up again.

5. While this system is at present confined to cheese, it could be extended to other products, and to countries other than the United States. When it drew up this proposal for a regulation, the Commission wanted to keep these options open and it accordingly established the widest possible legal basis for facilitating Community exports of farm products in the future.

6. In view of the importance of agricultural exports to the Community at a time when agriculture must become the 'green oil' of Europe, the Committee on Agriculture recommends Parliament to approve this proposal.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Letter from the committee chairman to Sir Henry PLUMB,
chairman of the Committee on Agriculture

Brussels, 29 November 1979

Dear Sir Henry,

At its meeting of 29 November 1979, the Committee on External Economic Relations considered the proposal on the granting of assistance for the exportation of agricultural products which may benefit from a special import treatment in a third country (Doc. 1-391/79).

In view of the fact that the proposal concerns a measure which will greatly help to facilitate international trade, at a time when exports are particularly vital and farm surpluses difficult to dispose of, the committee has unanimously approved the proposal and has instructed me to inform you of this decision.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Fred CATHERWOOD

Present: Sir Fred Catherwood, chairman; Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul and Mr van Aerssen, vice-chairmen; Mrs Agnelli, Mr Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Lenz, Mr Louwes, Mr Majonica, Mr Martinet, Mr Ripa di Meana, Mr Schmitt, Mr Seeler and Mr Welsh.

