

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

501st meeting of the Council

- Agriculture -

Brussels, 13 and 14 February 1978

President: Mr Poul DAISAGER
Minister for Agriculture
of the Kingdom of Denmark



14.II.1978

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Antoine HUMBLET Minister for Agriculture and
Small Firms and Trades

Denmark:

Mr Poul DALSAER Minister for Agriculture

Mr Hans Jørgen KRISTENSEN State Secretary,
Ministry for Agriculture

Germany:

Mr Joseph ERTL Federal Minister for Agriculture

Mr Hans-Jürgen ROHR State Secretary,
Federal Ministry of Agriculture

France:

Mr Pierre MEHAIGNERIE Minister for Agriculture

Ireland:

Mr Jim GIBBONS Minister for Agriculture

Italy:

Mr Giovanni MARCORA Minister for Agriculture

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean HAMILIUS Minister for Agriculture
and Viticulture

Mr Albert BERCHEM State Secretary,
Ministry for Agriculture

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Netherlands:

Mr A.P.L.M.M. van der STEE Minister for Agriculture and
Fisheries

United Kingdom

Mr John SILKIN Minister for Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food

Commission:

Mr Finn Olav GUNDELACH Vice-President

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN REGIONS - MEASURES RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

The Council heard a report on the progress of work in the Special Committee on Agriculture concerning the Commission communication on guidelines for the development of the Mediterranean regions of the Community and the accompanying proposals relating to agriculture, covering both market organization and structural measures. In this connection, it also heard an introductory statement by Vice-President GUNDELACH on the new specific proposals on wine which the Commission recently submitted to the Council in addition to its general communication (European Joint-Trade Table-Wine organization, possibility of blocking wine held by producers, incentives for groupings which improve quality, floor price in the event of serious crises, etc.).

On the basis of this information, the Council held a wide-ranging policy debate on the organization of markets, in particular on the measures proposed for olive oil, fresh and processed fruit and vegetables and wine and, as regards structural measures, on the improvement of wine-growing structures in Languedoc-Roussillon, the improvement of rural infrastructure and irrigation in the Mezzogiorno.

The Council instructed the Special Committee on Agriculture to continue its work on the matter, bearing in mind the views expressed, with a view to expediting the Council's subsequent discussions on these matters.

AGRICULTURAL PRICES AND RELATED MEASURES

The Council took note of the progress made regarding the financial implications of the Commission proposal on the fixing of agricultural prices for 1978/1979 and related measures. It exchanged views on specific matters concerning the products which were not examined at the previous Council meeting, namely, sugar, oilseeds, protein, tobacco, seeds and pigmeat.

The Council noted that the Commission intended to put forward certain additional proposals together in the near future, particularly for milk products, sugar, starches and mutton and lamb.

Finally, the Council agreed to return at its meeting scheduled for 6 and 7 March 1978 to all major issues concerning the fixing of agricultural prices and related measures for the next marketing year, while the Special Committee on Agriculture would diligently continue its examination in the light of the guidelines which emerged from the Council's discussions.

IMPORTS OF TOMATOES FROM THE ACP STATES

Pending the Opinion of the European Parliament, the Council stated that it was in principle sympathetic to the proposal that the CCT duty on fresh or refrigerated tomatoes be reduced by 60% during the period from 15 November to 15 April for a tariff quota of 1,000 tonnes for the benefit of the ACP States, and particularly of Senegal (on the understanding, however, that the minimum duty, i.e. 2 UA/100 kg, for this product would continue to apply).

The Council will decide on the Regulation in question once it receives the Opinion, which is expected at the end of the week.

PRODUCER GROUPS

The Council had before it an interim report by the Special Committee on Agriculture on progress with work on the Regulation concerning producer groups and unions thereof as an instrument to improve the marketing structures for agricultural products in certain regions where this is particularly desirable.

On the basis of this report the Council held an exchange of views in particular on the question of which regions should benefit from the arrangements under examination. In this context and with regard to the other questions outstanding concerning the composition of the groups and aid for groups and unions thereof, the Council agreed to resume discussions at its next meeting on the basis of a comprehensive report.

AGRI-MONETARY QUESTIONS

The Council held an exchange of views on the considerations which prompted the proposal for a Regulation relating to the fixing of representative conversion rates in agriculture, the purpose of which is the progressive and to some extent automatic dismantling of monetary compensatory amounts. It agreed that the Special Committee on Agriculture should continue its examination of this matter in the light of today's discussions.

The Council took note of the Commission report on the economic effects of the agri-monetary system. The Members of the Council were asked in turn for their preliminary comments on the subject, and the Council subsequently instructed the Special Committee on Agriculture to conduct a more detailed examination of the report so that the Council could discuss it at a forthcoming meeting.

The Council also adopted in the official languages of the Communities the Regulation stipulating that the new representative rate for the Italian lira fixed by Regulation No 178/78 of 30 January 1978 is to apply to tomato concentrates from 20 February 1978. This Regulation also provides that the new rate for the pound sterling fixed by Regulation No 179/78 is to apply to isoglucose from 1 July 1978.

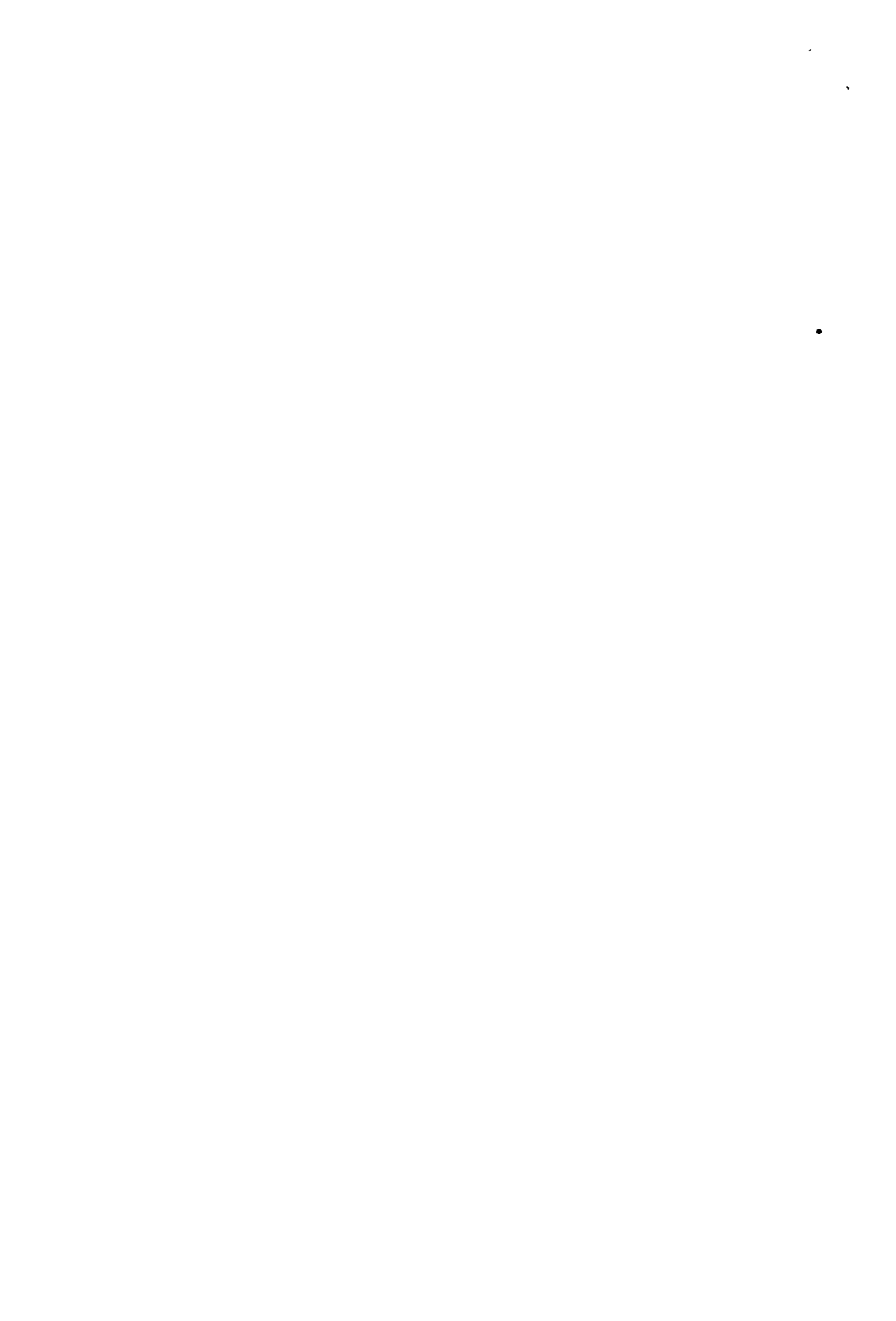
POTATOES

The Council examined the problem of the arrangements to be applied to early potatoes in the context of the future common organization of the market for the potato sector in general, with particular reference to the implications of these arrangements for the conclusion of negotiations with Cyprus on agricultural products.

The Council asked the Special Committee on Agriculture to study in detail all the questions outstanding in this area with a view to early resumption of discussions within the Council.

RICE FOR REUNION

Having received a proposal from the Commission intended to improve supplies of rice to the department of Réunion (by means of adjusting the levy system), the Council, pending receipt of the European Parliament's Opinion, stated that it was sympathetic to this Regulation in principle. It will take a final decision once it has received the Opinion requested.



MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Agricultural questions

The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities:

- the Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 2824/72 laying down general rules for the financing of interventions by the Guarantee Section of the EAGGF;
- the Regulation fixing, for the 1978/1979 milk year, the guideline figure for the fat content of standardized whole milk imported into Ireland and the United Kingdom;
- the Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 3331/74 on the allocation and alteration of the basic quotas for sugar.

Research

The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities the first programme of research projects in the field of medical and public health research, comprising concerted projects in the following three fields:

- registration of congenital abnormalities;
- cellular ageing and decreased functional capacity of organs;
- extracorporeal oxygenation.

Energy

In the context of the Community action programme for the rational use of energy (RUE), the Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities

- the Directive on the performance, maintenance and regulation of heat generators and the insulation of the heat distribution system in new buildings
[see Press Release 1476/77 (Presse 167) of the Council meeting on Energy on 13 December 1977].

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The Council gave its assent to financial aid pursuant to Article 55(2)(c) of the ECSC Treaty for a research project on the factors causing molten-metal/water explosions.

The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities the Directive concerning co-ordinated statistics on the business cycle in building and civil engineering.

On a proposal from the United Kingdom Government, the Council, pending the replacement of the Committee's members, appointed Mr G.R. WILSON alternate member of the Committee of the European Social Fund to replace Mr WINKETT, alternate member who has resigned.