

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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**PROGRAMME FOR THE COMMISSION'S PLANNED MEASURES
TO PROMOTE OLIVE OIL CONSUMPTION IN THE
COMMUNITY DURING THE 1980/81 MARKETING YEAR**

(Communication from the Commission to the Council)

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COMMISSION COMMUNICATION TO THE COUNCIL

PROGRAMME FOR THE COMMISSION'S PLANNED MEASURES TO PROMOTE OLIVE OIL
CONSUMPTION IN THE COMMUNITY DURING THE 1980/81 MARKETING YEAR

1. Article 11(3) of Regulation No. 136/66/EEC¹ on the establishment of a common organisation of the market in oils and fats provides that a percentage of the consumption aid is to be employed for information campaigns and other measures to promote olive oil consumption in the Community. The Council has fixed this percentage at 6%, 4.5% and 3% for the 1978/79, 1979/80 and 1980/81 marketing years respectively; the sum available from these percentages of the total aid figure is 4.6 million ECU at 31 July 1980. Out of this amount, the following expenditure has been incurred,:

- film on the olive tree	107,000 ECU
- Community contribution to the International Olive Oil Council's Propaganda Fund(1980)	69,000 ECU
- Other measures (medical symposium)	15,000 ECU

2. By Regulation (EEC) No. 1970/80², the Council laid down the measures which could be taken for promotion of olive oil consumption within the Community; this Regulation also provides for the Commission to communicate each year to the Council, not later than 31 October, the planned action programme for the following marketing year.

The object of this communication is to transmit to the Council the programme for campaigns to promote consumption envisaged by the Commission for the 1980/81 marketing year.

¹ OJ No. 172, 30.9.1966

² OJ No L 192, 26.7.1980

3. Research into the nutritional aspects of olive oil

The Commission feels that it is of major importance to encourage and guide research work to provide objective conclusions on the biological value of olive oil. As this work is intended to provide a scientific basis for any worthwhile consumer information programme, a decision in this respect must be taken as soon as possible, in view of the time required to carry out this work.

A symposium attended by some twenty personalities, largely drawn from University medical circles, was accordingly held on the Commission's initiative in Brussels on 24 October 1980, with the object of assessing existing research work and drawing up a basis for fruitful cooperation between the Commission and scientific circles. This cooperation should pinpoint the work which is to be encouraged as being likely to provide, in the relatively short term, results which could be directly publicised or used as a basis for publicity, thereby having a direct and considerable motivating impact on the consumer.

4. Publication of existing knowledge in respect of the qualities of olive oil

The Commission feels that an effort should also be made to publish existing knowledge on the qualities of olive oil. Scientists have already studied the biological value of olive oil and have drawn certain conclusions in this respect, which were put forward during the Congress on biological value of olive oil, in Crete in September 1980. However, if this is to have a positive effect on consumption, it is essential that existing knowledge be systematically disseminated to the medical profession and to the press, which is the best way to ensure that the body of consumers is subsequently fully informed. Priority should be given to programmes of this kind in Italy and France where, firstly, the public is already familiar with the product and will therefore be more greatly influenced by scientific arguments emphasising the qualities of olive oil and where, secondly, the product is already widely distributed.

5. Market studies to broaden the market for olive oil within the Community

The first step in the Member States which are not yet traditional consumers, before envisaging any other measure, is to undertake a market survey and a motivational study.

A survey of this kind, is to be carried out at the first stage in Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom, where it seems that there is the best potential outside the traditional consumer Member States, should show up the degree of acceptance for the product in the prospective markets and constitute an essential basis for selecting promotional campaigns properly so-called, which could subsequently be envisaged. It would be premature to undertake information or publicity campaigns in these Member States at this stage without knowledge of the probable reaction of potential consumers to any one form of inducement nor the inherent obstacles in the structure of the market in question which are to be overcome.

6. Publicity and promotional campaigns for consumption of olive oil

In France and Italy, two Member States which are producers and traditional consumers of olive oil, but where consumption shows no signs of an upswing, publicity and promotional campaigns in favour of olive oil consumption should be undertaken without delay.

In these two Member States, the market for the product and the consumer psychology are sufficiently clearly understood to allow selection of the measures which could be carried out to the greatest possible effect.

These actions should avoid any unnecessary confrontation with substitute products but should underline the biological advantages of olive oil; within these campaigns, special attention would be paid to emphasising the flavour characteristics of virgin olive oil, the only oil available for consumption produced by pressing the fruit without recourse to any chemical process.

7. Special sales

The Commission feels that special sales at reduced prices to some categories of consumers in order to encourage them to consume olive oil should not be undertaken at this stage, particularly as there is not sufficient money available to cover the very high expenditure involved. Such sales might be organised subsequently.

8. In view of the above and since the promotion campaign for 1980/81 cannot really commence before Spring 1981, 3 million ECU should be enough to finance the measures envisaged. It is not possible to give a final breakdown of this amount amongst the measures provided for, on account of the difficulty in making any exact assessment at this stage of the amounts required for each. For this reason, maximum indicative amounts have been drawn up for the various measures and the Commission will be able to review the breakdown of the total sum available at the time the detailed programme is drawn up and the measures to be carried out chosen on the basis of the projects put forward by those concerned; the Council would of course, if necessary, be informed at once of any substantial alteration in the respective amounts allotted to the various categories.

The maximum indicative amounts provided for the various categories are as follows:

A. Research work	0.8 million ECU
B. Dissemination of existing knowledge	0.4 million ECU
C. Market and motivational survey, marketing hypothesis	0.1 million ECU
D. Publicity and promotional campaigns	1.7 million ECU

In respect of category B, it is anticipated that 75% of the sums available will be used in Italy and 25% in France; for category D, the proportions would be 90% in Italy and 10% in France.

9. The EEC contribution to the International Olive Oil Council Propoganda Fund for 1981 should be added to the amount given in paragraph 8. In this respect, the Commission intends to ensure the necessary coordination between action to be undertaken by the Propoganda Fund and action under the programme set out in this document.