

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(82) 490 final

Brussels, 28 July 1982

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

on responsibility for travel expenses of the Member States' delegates to
agricultural Management Committees and similar committees set up under the
common agricultural policy

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EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. The appropriations available under Article 251 of the current General Budget, for the expenditure on meetings, make necessary a number of special measures to cut down such expenditure. One such measure already decided upon is that henceforth expenses will not be paid for more than two representatives per Member State on most working groups called together by the Directorate-General for Agriculture.

2. The case of the agricultural Management Committees and similar committees set up under the agricultural policy is somewhat different in that the Council, as long ago as 1962, examined the question of how many members each delegation might include.

Although the Council did not discuss responsibility for the expenses of members of these committees, so that the Commission is therefore in no way bound as to what decision it takes, the major role played by these committees in managing the common agricultural policy makes it desirable that the Council be informed that, for these committees also, the Commission wishes henceforth to limit its financial contribution to the travel expenses of two delegates only per Member State.

3. That is the purpose of this communication, which also specifies that the measure in no way limits the freedom of Member States to send up to five members in their delegations.

4. The Commission is invited to approve the draft communication annexed hereto and to decide upon its transmission to the Council.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

1. The Member States are able to send a delegation of up to five members to meetings of agricultural Management Committees or other similar committees set up to manage the common agricultural policy (the Fund Committee, Standing Committees, Committees on Rules, etc.).

This is usually laid down in the rules of procedure of these committees (1) and, in a single case, in the actual text of the Council Regulation instituting the committee (the Fund Committee (2)).

This rule is the result of an agreement in the Council at its 76th meeting on 23 and 24 July 1962, the minutes of which state: "In addition the Council decided upon the composition of the Management Committees set up by the regulations on the common agricultural policy and fixed the number of members of Management Committees at five per delegation".

Each time another Management Committee or committee with similar powers has been set up, the same rule has been adopted.

2. As part of the implementation of this rule, the Commission decided to accept responsibility for the travel expenses of the representatives of Member States present at each meeting, up to this maximum of five members. This, however, was a purely internal measure.
3. The budgetary allowance now imposed on the Commission in exercising some of its tasks no longer allow it to continue this practice, and it has to choose either to reduce the frequency with which the committees concerned meet or to make other financial arrangements to cover the travel expenses of their members.

(1) "The delegation of each Member State is limited to five officials, each under the sole authority of a Minister"

(2) Regulation (EEC) No 729/70, Article 12(1).

4. The Commission has taken internal measures to rationalize as far as possible the meetings to be called. Thus, the number of meetings during the current year may remain steady or even fall, despite new work, and this will also reduce the subsistence expenses of national civil servants to be defrayed by the Member States.

However, it is not possible to go further than this without jeopardizing the very valuable role of these committees in managing the common agricultural policy. Twenty years' experience in running these committees shows that they are the forum where there is the most efficient exchange of information and the closest cooperation between the Member States and the Commission, this being indispensable for the proper management of the markets. The Commission therefore considers that reducing the frequency of meetings for purely budgetary reasons would be prejudicial to the proper operation of the common agricultural policy. While it does not consider that current practice should be modified the Commission is nonetheless constrained to limit its financing of the travel expenses of members of these committees to two representatives per Member State.

The travel expenses of other members of each delegation will have to be borne by the Member State concerned.

5. This decision by the Commission in no way alters the rules concerning the representation of Member States on the committees: as in the past each delegation may consist of up to five members. Past experience leads the Commission to consider that the continuation of the present rules is justified as, without jeopardizing the proper conduct of meetings, they enable each Member State to freely adapt the composition of its delegation both to the realities of its own administrative structures and to the need for particular experts to be present.

