

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

1981 - 1982

---

3 December 1981

DOCUMENT 1-807/81

REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee  
on Agriculture

on the proposal from the Commission of the  
European Communities to the Council (doc. 1-628/81)  
for a regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 315/68  
fixing quality standards for flowering bulbs, corms  
and tubers

Rapporteur : Lord DOURO



By letter of 15 October 1981, the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty, to deliver an opinion on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 315/68 fixing quality standards for flowering bulbs, corms and tubers.

The President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible.

The Committee on Agriculture appointed Lord Douro rapporteur.

The Committee on Agriculture considered this proposal at its meeting of 24/25 November 1981 and at the same meeting adopted the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement by five votes to three with eight abstentions.

Present: Mr Früh, vice-chairman and acting chairman; Mr Colleselli, vice-chairman; Lord Douro, rapporteur; Mr Dalsass, Mr Diana, Mr Eyraud, Mr Gatto, Mrs Herklotz, Mr Ligios, Mr Maffre-Baugé, Mr Maher, Mr d'Ormesson, Mr Papaefstratiou, Mr Pranchère, Mr Sutra and Mr Vgenopoulos.

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
A MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION .....	5
B EXPLANATORY STATEMENT .....	6
Annex .....	7

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 amending Regulation (EEC) No 315/68 fixing quality standards for flowering bulbs, corms and tubers

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (COM(81) 470 final),<sup>1</sup>
  - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty (Doc. 1-628/81),
  - having regard to Council Regulation No 234/68 on the establishment of a common organization of the market in live trees and other plants, bulbs, roots and the like, cut flowers and ornamental foliage, which provides for common quality standards for such products,
  - having regard to Council Regulation No 315/68 of 12 March 1968 fixing quality standards for flowering bulbs, corms and tubers,
  - having regard to Council Regulation No 3280/75 of 16 December 1975 laying down detailed rules for applying protective measures in the market in live trees and other plants, bulbs, roots and the like, cut flowers and ornamental foliage,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture (Doc.1-807/81 ),
1. Recognizes the desirability of extending the intervention system to flower bulbs intended for reproduction, by establishing quality standards for bulbs smaller than the present minimum size requirement; this would help to bring about further stability on the flower bulb market;
  2. Agrees that this measure will involve no charge on the Community budget and that the funding will be through producers' organizations in the Member States;
  3. Believes that this amendment to the original regulation should not create a precedent for other sectors of agriculture, without very full prior consideration;
  4. Approves the Commission's proposal.

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ No. C266, 17.10.81, p.4

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. In 1968, the Council laid down, in implementing Regulation 234/68, certain standards of quality for plants, bulbs, roots etc. There had already been introduced in Holland a system of national professional intervention, with the approval of the Commission, for the purchase of surplus flower bulbs, in order to stabilize the market. The system is financed by a levy on producers, and there is no cost to the national or Community budget. In practice, it has been found that it is more efficient to purchase smaller bulbs which are used for propagation, rather than withdrawing from the market bulbs of a commercial size. However, the European Court of Justice has ruled<sup>1</sup> that the intervention system may not purchase bulbs that do not comply with the standards of size contained in the 1968 regulation.

2. As a result, the Commission in September 1981 proposed an amendment to the 1968 regulation, allowing for the purchase of smaller bulbs. In the Council, however, a number of delegations could not agree to this proposal and it has now been withdrawn.

3. The Commission now seeks to achieve the same objective by different means. Instead of providing for derogation to Regulation 234/68 so as to allow for intervention, the Commission proposes that the quality standards themselves be modified so as to allow smaller bulbs intended for reproduction to qualify.

4. This amendment will not require the introduction of an intervention system in any country. It simply seeks to adapt and complete a system already in existence in Holland, which has been found to be satisfactory in that country.

---

<sup>1</sup> Case 51/1974

SUBJECT: Information on the proposal for a regulation on flower bulbs following the questions raised by the Committee on Agriculture of the European Parliament at its meeting of 22 April 1981

The reproduction of live trees and other plants, bulbs, roots and the like, cut flowers and ornamental foliage is of great importance and accounts for about 3% of final production in the agricultural economy of certain regions of the Community. Flower bulbs are included in this category of products, as are the other agricultural products listed in Annex II to the EEC Treaty.

These considerations led in 1968 to the establishment of a very simple common organization with no financial consequences for the Community, its principal activities being the introduction of quality standards and the standardization of national import systems.

On the basis of the standards laid down in Regulation (EEC) No 234/68 (Articles 2 and 12), the Commission's proposal seeks to provide quality standards for bulbs intended for reproduction, with a view firstly to facilitating trade in these products and secondly to allow the Member States, in accordance with the decisions of the Court of Justice, to carry out intervention in these products so that the market may be better stabilized.

Intervention in respect of seed would have the effect of halting the expansion of the area under cultivation and would thus help to achieve a better stabilization of the market in flower bulbs, which are mainly grown in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The economic development of this sector has shown that intervention in respect of flower bulbs smaller than required by the standards is more effective and less costly because, in times of surplus, it makes it possible for certain quantities of bulbs to be withdrawn at lower prices than would be necessary where larger products were concerned.

With regard to the matter of national aid mentioned by certain Members, it should be pointed out that the intervention system represents an effort by the producers concerned to stabilize the market. Intervention operations will be financed by a fund set up under private law, resources for which are derived from a trade levy, it being understood that, under Articles 92 and 93 of the Treaty, the Commission may at any time check the granting of national aid and prohibit it where appropriate.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the stabilization of the market will have no negative consequences for the consumer, who will be able to look forward to a fairer price as a result of this intervention.

Flowers and ornamental plants  
(1,000 ha.)

	Eur 9	Germany	France	Italy	Nether-lands	Belgium	Luxem-bourg	United Kingdom	Ire-land	Den-mark
1977	50.9	8.5	6.6	7.6	17.2	1.3	0.0	8.2	0.4	1.1
1979	:	7.0	6.7	8.0	18.8	:	0.0	7.1	:	: