

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 645/78) for a decision granting financial aid from the Community for the eradication of African swine fever in Malta

Rapporteur: Mr F. ALBERTINI

12.4

By letter of 28 February 1979 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 decision granting financial aid from the Community for the eradication of African swine fever in Malta.

The President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets for its opinion on 9 March 1979.

On 22 March 1979 the Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr ALBERTINI rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meeting of 4 and 5 April 1979 and unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution at the same meeting.

Present: Mr Liogier, vice-chairman and acting chairman; Mr Ligios, vice-chairman; Mr Albertini, rapporteur; Mrs Dunwoody, Mr l'Estrange, Mr Fuchs (deputizing for Mr Früh), Mr Hansen, Mr Klinker, Mr W. Müller, Mr Nielsen, Mr Pisoni and Mr Tolman.

The opinion of the Committee on Budgets 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 decision granting financial aid from the Community for the eradication of African swine fever in Malta

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (COM(79) 35 final),
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty (Dcc. 645/78),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 73/79),
1. Approves the Commission proposal to make a 50% financial contribution to the eradication of African swine fever in Malta;
 2. Stresses that the granting of this aid shall be subject to the presentation and approval of a programme established by the responsible Maltese authorities, and that a procedure for providing information and monitoring the development of the health situation in Malta is necessary to ensure the successful implementation of the programme for eradicating African swine fever.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The Commission has proposed that the Community should make a financial contribution to the eradication of African swine fever in Malta.

African swine fever is an extremely contagious disease which has affected areas of the Community on several occasions in the past, particularly in France and Italy (it still occurs in Sardinia).

As no vaccine against this disease exists at present, the sole remedy is large-scale slaughtering and the total elimination of the island's pig herd, with a view to the reconstitution, under strict veterinary control, of a herd free of any contamination.

The eradication plan for Malta provides for rigorous measures including the slaughtering of all pigs (see Article 3 of the proposed decision).

It is true that, unlike Spain, the country in question, the island of Malta, does not border directly on Community territory.

Nevertheless, as the disease spreads extremely quickly, particularly in transportation, in trade in pigs and pigmeat products, the protection zones at the Community's frontiers should be extended both to Malta, as the Commission proposes here, and to Spain and Portugal, in respect of which similar measures have been proposed.

The contribution envisaged by the Commission to assist Malta in implementing the programme concerned amounts to 5 m EUA, i.e. 50% of the overall cost of the action, spread over a period of three years in annual instalments from 1979 to 1981.

The Committee on Agriculture insists on the need for a system ensuring that the implementation of the programme and the evolution of the health situation in Malta are effectively monitored.

It is also important to establish whether the infrastructure in Malta provides effective scope for all the veterinary and health measures necessary to ensure the success of the proposed action.

Provided that the Commission is given the means for monitoring the utilization of the funds placed at Malta's disposal through a procedure for regular information, the Committee on Agriculture is in favour of the proposed decision.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the vice-chairman to Mr CAILLAVET, chairman of
the Committee on Agriculture

10 April 1979

Opinion of the Committee on Budgets on the proposal from the
Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a
decision granting financial aid from the Community for the
eradication of African swine fever in Malta

Dear Mr Caillavet,

At its meeting of 4 April 1979 the Committee on Budgets discussed
the above-mentioned proposal for a Council decision¹. The committee
noted the threat to pig herds as a result of the very contagious disease
of African swine fever and that the spread of this disease in Malta
represents a serious and permanent danger for the Community's pig
population. It therefore concluded that the eradication of swine fever
in adjoining areas, including Malta, would be a positive step in the
protection of the Community's livestock.

The committee considered Malta's plan to eradicate the disease in
Malta by slaughtering all pigs there and reconstituting a herd free of any
contamination.

The committee noted that the Maltese authorities have applied to the
Community for a contribution to the costs involved in the programme and
that total expenditure from the Community budget will amount to about
5m EUA to be paid in annual instalments over the three years 1979 to 1981.

The Committee on Budgets noted that, to monitor the programme, the
Commission is considering the possibility of on-the-spot inspections. It
would seem desirable that the Commission make a greater effort to supervise
the use of Community funds.

¹ Present: Mr Bangemann, vice-chairman and acting chairman;
Mr Cointat, vice-chairman; Lord Bruce of Donington, Mr Dankert,
Mr Krieg (deputizing for Mr Yeats), Mr Notenboom,
Mr Ripamonti, Mr Schreiber and Mr Shaw

The committee appreciates that the decontamination measures, the construction or renovation of piggeries and the expansion of the veterinary control services will raise technical problems justifying the involvement of the body of experts known as the Standing Veterinary Committee. The Committee on Budgets did, however, feel that this body should not concern itself with budgetary or financial questions, since, where the implementation of the budget is concerned, the Commission is responsible for such matters. To clarify this aspect, the Committee on Budgets feels that the following paragraph 5 should be added to Article 5 of the proposed decision:

'5. The Standing Veterinary Committee shall give only an advisory opinion on budgetary and financial questions.'

The Committee on Budgets requests the Committee on Agriculture to incorporate this amendment in its report.

Subject to this amendment to the proposal for a decision and to the introduction of adequate monitoring, the Committee on Budgets approves the proposal.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) Martin BANGEMANN