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OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Draftsman: Mr H. AIGNER

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By letter of 16 October 1973 the President of the Council of the European Communities consulted the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 43 of the Treaty, on a proposal for a regulation extending for the years 1972, 1973 and 1974 certain time limits for granting aid from the Guidance Section of the EAGGF (Doc. 198/73).

On 16 October 1973 Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets for its opinion.

At its meeting of 17 October 1973 the Committee on Budgets appointed Mr AIGNER draftsman.

The Committee on Budgets adopted the draft opinion unanimously at its meeting of 12 November 1973.

The following were present: Mr SPENALE, chairman; Mr ARTZINGER, Lord BESSBOROUGH, Mr GERLACH, Mr MEMMEL, Mr NOTENBOOM, Mr PETRE, Mr POUNDER, Sir Brandon RHYS-WILLIAMS, Mr SCHMIDT, Mr WALKOFF (deputizing for Mr MUELLER).

1. This proposal for a regulation is submitted annually to the Parliament very shortly before the time limits to be extended expire.

In last year's resolution, drawn up by the Committee on Agriculture following a favourable opinion from the Committee on Budgets, Parliament rejected the Commission's proposal. This rejection came after Parliament had for many years accepted - though not without reservations - the Commission's systematic requests for an extension of time limits.

The main reason for Parliament's rejection was that, since the first year of implementation of Regulation No. 17 of 1964, the dates for introducing requests for aid from the Guidance Section of the EAGGF and the dates for decisions on these requests have regularly been postponed.

2. A structural agricultural policy hardly exists. Further, the hopes which were raised in 1964 by the introduction of a system of financing for individual projects have been largely disappointed by structural deficiencies which have always prompted the Commission to ask for an extension of the time limits for introducing and deciding on requests for aid.

The Committee on Budgets considers that the Commission is largely to blame for this situation and cannot exonerate itself even partially by advancing the usual argument about the shortage of staff in the Directorate-general responsible.

Conclusion

For the same reasons as it has given for several years (which can be found, for example, in the Opinion given one year ago on the same matter - Doc. 96/72, pages 9 et seq.), the Commission on Budgets calls on the Committee on Agriculture as the Committee responsible, to submit to the European Parliament a report restating last year's position, i.e. the rejection of the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities.