

By letter of 21 June 1973 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 a proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a directive amending the directive of 9 April 1968 concerning the marketing of vegetative propagation material of the vine.

At its sitting of 3 July 1973 the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture.

The Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr Vals rapporteur.

It discussed the proposed directive at its meeting of 22 and 23 November 1973 and unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution.

The following were present: Mr Houdet, chairman; Mr Vals, rapporteur; Mr Brugger, Mr Creed, Mr Frehsee, Mr Früh, Mr Héger, Mr Lemoine, Mr Ligios, Mr Liogier, Mr Martens and Mr Scott-Hopkins.

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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 directive modifying the Directive of 9 April 1968 concerning the marketing of vegetative propagation material of the vine

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council;¹
- having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the Treaty establishing the EEC (Doc.111/73 - II);
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture (Doc. 248/73),

1. Approves the Commission's proposal;
2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the report of its committee to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.

¹ OJ No. C 90, 26 October 1973, p.84

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Council Directive No.68/193/EEC of 9 April 1968¹ laid down Community rules for the wood and plants of the vine, i.e. the propagation material of the vine, since successful viticulture depends to a large extent on the use of suitable plants.

2. It should be noted that the quality and yield of agricultural plants cannot be improved unless seeds and plants of high quality are used. Plants are propagated by:

- a) seeds,
- b) vegetative propagation.

Vegetative propagation is effected by grafting and cuttings. The material used is always taken from selected parent plants which have often come from a single base plant of high quality (this method is known as 'clonal selection').

3. The above Directive, which is in force throughout the Community, applies to all vines intended for the production of wines and table grapes, not ornamental vines.

The Directive has provided for the gradual alignment of the provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in the Member States, in order to eliminate barriers to intra-Community trade in the wood and plants of the vine.

The essential principle embodied in this Directive is that only propagation material of uniform authenticity and varietal purity may be marketed in the Community and that official inspections must be carried out to ensure these characteristics and exterior quality.

However, such rigorous harmonization measures have proved, in practice, to create certain difficulties.

Viticulture and, consequently, the marketing of vegetative propagation material is far less important in some Member States than in others. Thus, in the Netherlands, its importance is minimal and there is no import and export trade.

Certain difficulties have, moreover, arisen from certain local features.

¹ OJ No.L 93, 17 April 1968 and report by Mr Mauk on behalf of Committee on Agriculture (Doc.68 of 20.6.1967).

For these reasons, the proposal for a directive now being considered is designed to make the provisions of the Directive of 9 April 1973 more flexible on certain points. The modifications proposed relate essentially to four points.

5. The first modification adds to Article 3, paragraph 4, a sub-section authorizing Member States to reduce the minimum lengths of propagation material if this is justified by the particular growing conditions.

The exemption relates to the material listed in Annex II part III of the Directive, point 1/B (nursery cuttings) and point 2/B (understock and other roots). It was introduced to take account of particular conditions in certain regions of France and Italy. The reduction does not affect the quality of the reproductive material in any way.

6. The second proposed modification relates to Article 11 of the 1968 Directive, which stipulates that the Member States must ensure that the identity of the propagation material is officially checked and take all necessary steps to ensure official control at the time of marketing.

The Commission proposes standardization of the information to be supplied in future at the time of importing the material from another Member State or third country, namely: species - variety - category - nature of the propagation material - country of production and controlling authority - country of dispatch - name of importer - quantity of the material.

7. A third modification indicates the procedure for deciding modifications to the content of the Annexes (Article 17 a).

The Directive of 9 April 1968, modified by the Directive of 22 March 1971¹ provides that the Council should, on a proposal from the Commission, and taking account of the development of scientific knowledge or techniques, decide the modifications to be made to the Annexes.

In future, these modifications would be left to the Commission assisted by the Standing Committee on seeds and agricultural, horticultural and forest plants set up by Council decision of 14 June 1966.

8. Finally the Commission, observing that viticulture and the marketing of propagation material may be of minimal economic importance in certain Member States (this refers in particular to the Netherlands as mentioned earlier), proposes that a Member State may be granted exemption from the obligation to apply most of the provisions of the Directive.

¹ OJ No. L 71, 25 March 1971

This exemption would, in particular, relieve a Member State of the need to set up administrative machinery to control the quality of the material. Such machinery is pointless in a country where there is practically no marketing of the material concerned.

9. The Committee on Agriculture has no objections to this proposal for a directive and recommends its adoption by the Parliament.