

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1981 - 1982

3 December 1981

DOCUMENT 1-808/81

Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture

on the proposals from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 1-631/81)

for

- I. a regulation amending Regulation (EEC) N° 2358/71 on the common organization of the market in seeds Regulation (EEC) N° 2727/75 on the common organization of the market in cereals and Regulation (EEC) N° 950/68 on the Common Customs Tariff

- II. a regulation amending Regulation (EEC) N° 1660/81 fixing the amounts of aid granted for seeds in the 1982/83 and 1983/84 marketing years

Rapporteur: Mr W. VERNIMMEN

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 Treaty, to deliver an opinion on a proposal for a Council regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) N° 2358/71 on the common organization of the market in cereals and Regulation (EEC) N° 2727/75 on the common organization of the market in cereals and Regulation (EEC) N° 950/68 on the Common Customs Tariff, and a proposal for a Council regulation (EEC) amending Regulation (EEC) N° 1660/81 fixing the amounts of aid granted for seeds for the 1982/83 and 1983/84 marketing years.

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 20 October 1981 the Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr W. VERNIMMEN rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meeting of 24 and 25 November 1981 and unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution with one abstention.

Present: Mr Früh, vice-chairman and acting chairman; Mr Colleselli, vice-chairman; Mr Vernimmen, rapporteur; Mr Barbagli (deputizing for Mr Helms), Mr Clinton, Mr Cronin (deputizing for Mr Fanton), Mr Dalsass, Mr Davern, Mrs Desouches (deputizing for Mr Thareau), Mr De Keersmaecker (deputizing for Mr Tolman), Mr Diana, Mr d'Ormesson, Lord Douro (deputizing for Mr Provan), Mr Eyraud, Mr Maher, Mrs Martin (deputizing for Mr Delatte), Mr Papaefstratiou, Mr Pranchère and Mr Vgenopoulos.

The opinion of the Committee on Budgets will be distributed separately.

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A

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 proposals from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council
for

- I. a regulation amending Regulation (EEC) N° 2358/71 on the common organization of the market in seeds, Regulation (EEC) N° 2727/75 on the common organization of the market in cereals and Regulation (EEC) N° 950/68 on the Common Customs Tariff
- II. a regulation amending Regulation (EEC) N° 1660/81 fixing the amounts of aid granted for seeds in the 1982/83 and 1983/84 marketing years.

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (COM(81) 508 fin.)¹;
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty (Doc. 1-631/81);
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 1-808/81);
 - having regard to the specific climatic and soil factors in certain areas, as a result of which only spelt can be cultivated;
1. Approves the proposal to provide Community aid for the production of spelt seed;
 2. Urges that the amounts of aid granted be adjusted if, as a result of these measures, seed producers increase the output of certified spelt seed;
 3. Requests the Commission to consider whether additional measures might not be necessary so as to encourage spelt growers to use more certified seed with a view to improving quality;
 4. Regrets that the European Parliament has been requested to deliver an opinion on these measures only after the Council has already taken a decision of principle, so that its opinion is a mere formality;
 5. Protests at this way of proceeding;
 6. Requests the Commission to examine the possibility of providing direct and specific aid to farmers who breed animals or grow crops threatened with extinction or disappearance.

¹OJ N° C 262 of 14 October 1981, pp. 6 and 10

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Spelt (in Latin: *Triticum spelta*) is a species of wheat generally cultivated in areas with a severe climate, high rainfall and a thin layer of soil. In the Community spelt is cultivated only in the Ardennes (approx. 8,000 hectares) and in the German state of Baden-Württemberg (in 1980 approx. 40 hectares)

Spelt is used primarily as cattle fodder (approximately 95% of the spelt yield is consumed on the holding). However, it is also used for breadmaking and in spelt soup, 'Grünkernsuppe'.

Although spelt seed is sown 30% more densely than winter wheat, the average yield is 25% lower than that of winter wheat cultivated in the same areas.

2. Since spelt seed is not generally produced in the regions where the crop is grown, it is in competition with other high-value crops. The area under seed spelt in 1980 was 165 hectares, yielding 465 tonnes of seed, sufficient to meet 28% of the certified seed requirement.

Spelt seed is more expensive to prepare using machinery than winter wheat seed, and it is harder to sell the rejects from dressing. For this reason spelt seed costs over 300 Bfrs more per 100 kg.

3. The objective of the Commission's proposals is to encourage the production of certified seed in order to ensure that output is sufficient to satisfy demand for quality seed. To this end it proposes that aid of 10 ECU per 100 kg be granted as from the 1982 harvest, pursuant to Article 3 of Regulation No. 2358/71. Consequently Regulation No. 2727/75 on the common organization of the market in cereals also requires amendment. It will, in addition, be necessary to adjust the CCT and replace the levy with an autonomous duty of 20%.
4. Certified spelt seed accounts for less than 30% of the total quantity used and is considerably more costly to prepare than seed for high-value crops that compete with spelt. It would therefore seem essential to provide aid for the production of certified seed.

Seeing that the Commission's objective is to encourage the production of certified spelt seed, the question arises whether the granting of aid to cover simply the difference in production costs between spelt seed and seed for other competing crops will be sufficient to achieve this end.

For, if spelt growers are to be induced to use more certified seed, it would seem essential to reduce the price they must pay for it.

5. The rapporteur finds it strange that a proposal to encourage the production of certified seed in order to meet the demand for quality seed refers only to aid of 10 ECU per 100 kg of seed and omits all mention of possible measures to increase output. For the quality of spelt can scarcely be improved if only 30% of the seed used is certified seed. Nor is the replacement of the levy by an autonomous duty of 20% on seed imported into the Community likely to affect the quantity of certified spelt seed on the common market, since imports have always been less than 20 tonnes per year against a total requirement of over 1,500 tonnes.
6. Since the cultivation of spelt cannot be replaced by other crops because of the peculiarities of weather and soil, measures should be introduced to allow growers to go on farming.

It should here be recalled that Paragraph 15 of the report by Sir Henry Plumb on possible improvements to the agricultural policy (Doc. 1-250/81) states that the Committee on Agriculture considers it necessary to grant direct compensatory payments, provided they are paid in return for services which are necessary for regional policy, social policy and ecological reasons and are not generally carried over into the market price (e.g. maintenance of farming activity in mountain and other less-favoured areas).

In the opinion of your rapporteur, spelt production is a case in point since the conditions relating to regional policy, social policy and ecological factors are fulfilled.

7. Having touched on the problems facing spelt growers, your rapporteur also wishes to draw the Commission's attention to other animals and crops which are threatened with extinction or disappearance (e.g. certain breeds of dairy cattle in the United Kingdom and France). The question arises whether in future it may not be necessary to grant special aid to farmers who ensure the continued existence of these threatened species.
8. If your rapporteur's information is correct, when the Council adopted its decision on the overall price package, it also adopted a decision of principle on the granting of aid to spelt seed producers. The opinion to be delivered by the European Parliament on these proposals will therefore simply serve to cast the Council's decision of principle into what is, formally, an impeccable legal mould. The Committee on Agriculture strongly protests at this procedure, since no account whatsoever will be taken of its opinion when the Council officially takes its final decision.

