

Food distribution to the most deprived persons in the Community

2008/0183(COD) - 17/02/2009

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development adopted the report drawn up by Czesaw Adam SIEKIERSKI (EPP-DE, PL) amending, under the consultation procedure, the proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 on the financing of the common agricultural policy and Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation) as regards food distribution to the most deprived persons in the Community.

The main amendments are as follows:

Maintain the programme in the framework of the CAP: the new European food aid scheme for the most deprived persons has to continue guaranteeing the aims of the CAP and to help achieve cohesion objectives by ensuring balanced, harmonious sustainable development for all regions. According to MEPs, it would be useful for the programme to target the less developed regions as a matter of priority, since they are in greater need of food distribution.

Product of Community origin only: MEPs call for preference to be given to locally-produced fresh food products purchased on the local markets. This will contribute to the sustainable production, processing, distribution and consumption of food.

Full Community financing: given recent financial difficulties experienced by the Member States, MEPs are against the introduction of a national financial participation and proposes that full EU financing be maintained. The Commission had proposed that Community co-financing rates would be 75% and 85% in Cohesion Member States for the 2010/12 plan. Subsequently, as of the 2013/15 plan, the Community co-financing rates would be, respectively 50% and 75%.

Eligible costs: costs of transport and storage of food products and administrative costs for the designated organisations directly linked with the implementation of the scheme may be considered eligible. Member States shall set a ceiling, corresponding to the percentage of products purchased or bartered, for all transport, storage and administrative costs (including communication costs), taking account of local conditions where necessary. The financial provision shall be divided by the Member States between these three items of expenditure. All

appropriations not used under this provision may be reallocated to the purchase of food.

Marking products: MEPs consider that the system of marking products should be scrapped. Attaching the European logo to products causes added expense. It is therefore proposed that designated organisations shall display an information panel at distribution points, or attach a sticker to mobile distribution units, indicating that the association is a recipient of the European food aid programme.

A three-year review plan: in exceptional circumstances and where the numbers of those in need have increased beyond what was forecast, Member States may ask the Commission to revise the plans.

Report: MEPs ask the Commission to present a report by 31 December 2011 (as opposed to 31 December 2012). The report should be presented with a proposal for a decision on continuation of the scheme after the current financing period and any other appropriate proposals necessary.

