

# Procedure file

## [Basic information](#)

1995/0160(SYN)

SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic)

Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries

Procedure  
completed

Amended by [2001/0005\(COD\)](#)

Repealed by [2004/0220\(COD\)](#)

## Subject

6.50 Emergency, food, humanitarian aid, aid to refugees, Emergency Aid Reserve

## [Key players](#)

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
DEVE Development and Cooperation	V <a href="#">TELKÄMPER Wilfried</a>	19/07/1995

Former committee responsible

DEVE Development and Cooperation	V <a href="#">TELKÄMPER Wilfried</a>	19/07/1995
----------------------------------	--------------------------------------	------------

## [European Parliament](#)



Former committee for opinion

BUDG Budgets	PSE <a href="#">TOMLINSON The Lord John E.</a>	07/09/1995
--------------	--	------------

AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	PSE <a href="#">SPIERS Shaun Mark</a>	31/10/1995
--	---------------------------------------	------------

	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
<a href="#">Council of the European Union</a>	Telecommunications	<a href="#">1941</a>	27/06/1996
	<a href="#">General Affairs</a>	<a href="#">1902</a>	29/01/1996
	Development	<a href="#">1897</a>	20/12/1995

### [Key events](#)

13/07/1995	Legislative proposal published	COM(1995)0283	<a href="#">Summary</a>
18/09/1995	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
13/11/1995	Vote in committee		<a href="#">Summary</a>
12/11/1995	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	<a href="#">A4-0285/1995</a>	
14/12/1995	Debate in Parliament		<a href="#">Summary</a>
15/12/1995	Decision by Parliament	T4-0651/1995	<a href="#">Summary</a>
28/01/1996	Council position published	<a href="#">12767/2/1995</a>	<a href="#">Summary</a>
15/02/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
24/04/1996	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		<a href="#">Summary</a>
23/04/1996	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	<a href="#">A4-0126/1996</a>	
20/05/1996	Debate in Parliament		<a href="#">Summary</a>
21/05/1996	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	T4-0227/1996	<a href="#">Summary</a>
03/06/1996	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1996)0250	<a href="#">Summary</a>
27/06/1996	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		<a href="#">Summary</a>
27/06/1996	End of procedure in Parliament		
05/07/1996	Final act published in Official Journal		

### [Technical information](#)

Procedure reference	1995/0160(SYN)
Procedure type	SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
	Amended by <a href="#">2001/0005(COD)</a>
	Repealed by <a href="#">2004/0220(COD)</a>
Legal basis	EC before Amsterdam E 130W
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	DEVE/4/07521

### [Documentation gateway](#)

Legislative proposal	COM(1995)0283 <a href="#">OJ C 253 29.09.1995, p. 0010</a>	14/07/1995 EC	<a href="#">Summary</a>
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	<a href="#">A4-0285/1995</a> <a href="#">OJ C 339 18.12.1995, p. 0003</a>	13/11/1995 EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading	T4-0651/1995 <a href="#">OJ C 017 22.01.1996, p. 0419-0431</a>	15/12/1995 EP	<a href="#">Summary</a>
Council position	<a href="#">12767/2/1995</a> <a href="#">OJ C 087 25.03.1996, p. 0034</a>	29/01/1996 CSL	<a href="#">Summary</a>

Commission communication on Council's position	SEC(1996)0234	08/02/1996 EC	<a href="#">Summary</a>
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	<a href="#">A4-0126/1996</a> <a href="#">OJ C 152 27.05.1996, p. 0005</a>	24/04/1996 EP	
	T4-0227/1996		
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading	<a href="#">OJ C 166 10.06.1996, p. 0016-0024</a>	21/05/1996 EP	<a href="#">Summary</a>
Modified legislative proposal	COM(1996)0250	04/06/1996 EC	<a href="#">Summary</a>
Follow-up document	COM(2001)0473	05/09/2001 EC	<a href="#">Summary</a>
	RCC0002/2003		
Court of Auditors: opinion, report	<a href="#">OJ C 093 17.04.2003, p. 0001-0031</a>	13/02/2003 CofA	<a href="#">Summary</a>

### [Additional information](#)

European Commission

[EUR-Lex](#)

[Final act](#)

[Regulation 1996/1292](#)

[OJ L 166 05.07.1996, p. 0001](#) [Summary](#)

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

**OBJECTIVE:** to restructure, update and adapt all the legal instruments of Community food aid policy and management with a view to their rationalization, including specific operations in support of food security, such as the supply of inputs, seeds, storage programmes and early-warning systems. **CONTENT:** this proposal covers food aid alone (famine or imminent risk of famine, not humanitarian food aid) and is based on three main lines of approach: . adapting the legal basis in order to strengthen food aid as an essential element of long-term food security: - concentrating on purchasing food on the market of recipient countries (local and triangular procurement), - improving the integration of food aid into agricultural and agro-foodstuffs development policies in recipient countries (programming and implementing food aid operations taking account of individual development policies in developing countries relating to the fight against poverty, nutrition, family planning, environmental protection and continuity once emergency aid stops); - strengthening food security support operations in countries with a structural food deficit by avoiding using this type of operation as a substitute for rural development operations; . adapting the legal basis to important geo-political changes in certain countries by updating the list of countries in receipt of this aid (especially for the countries of the former Soviet Union): the countries concerned are classified in the order established by the Development Aid Committee of the OECD and are limited to the 3 least favoured groups (annex to the regulation): - LDC (least developed countries); - LIC (low per capita income countries); - LMIC (low middle-income countries). The regulation also makes provision for a flexible procedure for amending this list (the Commission amends the list after consulting the food aid committee, not by proposing regulations which are adopted by the Council); . grouping all the instruments into a single regulation which includes all the food aid policy and management provisions and specific support operations with a view to rationalization (consequently, regulations (EEC) nos. 3972/86, 1755/84, 2507 and 2508/88 and 1420/87 have been repealed). At the same time, and in order to avoid any competition or net loss of external aid justified by a food deficit, the Commission proposes creating a new mode of intervention which provides, in certain circumstances, for aid in the form of a foreign currency facility for private operators so that they can import staples. As far as decision-making is concerned, the procedure recommended by the Commission is more flexible, especially in the case of minor decisions, in order to respond to the need for administrative flexibility and flexible planning. The European Parliament and the Council will receive information on food aid management on a regular basis, mainly in the form of progress reports on the various operations during each financial year.?

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

The committee adopted the report by Mr Wilfried TELK?MPER (V, D) on the proposal concerning food aid policy and food aid management and specific operations in support of food security. The objective of this proposal is to provide a response to food shortages by integrating various measures within the framework of a long-term development strategy and improving the coordination of food aid measures in the European Union. The amendments adopted seek mainly to ensure that food aid is only allocated when it appears to be the sole means of improving the

food security of populations who do not have the means to deal with food shortages themselves; priority should be given to the poorest sections of the population. The granting of food aid should also be conditional upon the implementation of development projects which promote sustainable food security in the long term. Similarly, the report calls for products to be mobilized in the first instance in the recipient country or in a developing country in the same geographical region. If this is impossible, aid should be mobilized in another developing country and only if none of these alternatives proves possible should products come from the Community market. This method should increase food security in the country in which the food is purchased, which is why the report also calls for care to be taken to ensure that food purchases in a developing country do not upset the market in that country or adversely affect local production or the food supply to the local populace.?

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

Commissioner PINHEIRO stated that aid should be more flexible and that there should be a better balance between traditional aid measures and support for production. The new political framework for food aid therefore placed particular emphasis on the need to combine structural food aid, triangular operations and operations on the ground. It was also important to provide support for the rehabilitation of agricultural products and to facilitate access by the poorest groups to production centres. The Commission and Parliament were in agreement on the main points. However, the Commission could not take over Amendments Nos 25 (on commercial food imports), 29 (doing away with preparatory studies and training schemes for staff in the developing countries in question), 31, 32 and 33 (as the Commission felt that triangular operations were more effective than bilateral operations), and 48 (as the Commission felt the evaluation report should be sent to the Council rather than the Food Aid Committee). The Commission also rejected Amendment No 50 because a more flexible management system was required, and Amendment No 51 because the information it covered had already been provided.

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

In adopting the report by Mr Wilfried TELKÄMPER (Verts, D), the European Parliament approved this proposal for a regulation with the following amendments: - food aid interventions of a short-term nature in disaster areas are explicitly excluded from the scope of this regulation and should be reinstated under humanitarian aid (in the case of major crises, all instruments of Community policy should intervene with a view to the aid being coordinated); - food aid should only be allocated where this seems the only appropriate way of enhancing the food security of groups without the ways and means to cope with a food shortfall themselves; - aid should be granted as a matter of priority to the most needy groups. It should promote access to a balanced diet and improve their supply of drinking water; - to evaluate food aid needs, various indicators may be used to measure the nutritional status of beneficiaries, such as infant mortality rate and weight at birth); - the granting of food aid should also be conditional on the implementation of development projects to promote sustainable long-term food security (notably, projects to produce fertilisers and support for local food aid structures); - the role of the NGOs in supplying food aid and in carrying out medium-term operations should be strengthened. (To this end, Parliament insists that the Community's role in the aid field must be made more visible). The NGOs should guarantee the successful implementation of aid on the basis of their presence; - food products should be mobilized in the first instance in the recipient country or in a developing country belonging to the same geographical region. If this is impossible, aid should be mobilized in another developing country, and it is only if none of these alternatives is possible that products should come from the Community market. Parliament also insists that steps must be taken to ensure that purchases of food in a developing country threaten neither to disrupt that country's market nor to affect adversely the local production or its supply to their inhabitants; - measures to monitor the transport of aid should be strengthened (record of receipt and use of funds to be kept by the beneficiary countries, who are also required to render account thereof). As to the Community, each quarter the Commission should draw up and forward to the budgetary authority a review of the position regarding contracts and payments. Also, an annual report should be forwarded to the budgetary authority, and every three years beginning in 1998, this report should be replaced by an interim report. Continuation of the funding would depend on the results of these reports; - With regard to committee, Parliament should choose an advisory-type committee in preference to that proposed by the Commission. Every effort should be made to ensure coherence and complementarity with local aid operations. ?

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

The Council incorporated into its common position a significant number of the amendments adopted by the EP at first reading, either as they stood or in an amended form. The main amendments sought to: - enhance the role of food security as a weapon against poverty; - ensure that food aid/security operations fit in with other Community development aid instruments and that they are compatible with other sectors such as the common agricultural policy; - expand the role of women and collective groups in food security programmes; - target the poorest sections of the population; - support training in the field. However, the common position did not include amendments covering: - the provision of drinking water supplies; - stepping up triangular operations and giving priority to buying food in the beneficiary countries; - setting up a consultative committee; - the submission to Parliament of a quarterly report on the implementation of food aid/security operations. The Council also inserted new provisions covering: - amendment of the list of eligible countries and organizations, in respect of which the Council felt that it should be responsible for amending the list and not the Commission; - triangular procurement: the Council felt that products should be mobilized on the Community market, in the recipient country or in one of the developing countries of the region, and that no supplier should be given priority; - division of responsibility for cereals aids under the International Food Aid Convention: for reasons relating to the legal basis, the Council will determine only that part of cereal food aid for which the Community is responsible, while that for which the Member States are responsible will be determined jointly by the Member States and the Commission; - revision clause: the Council called for an evaluation of the food aid operations financed to be carried out three years after the Regulation's entry into force, together with suggestions and proposals for modifying the Regulation (the Commission was opposed to a fixed-term Regulation); - committee: for all projects in excess of ECU 2 million the Council provided for the Commission to be assisted by a type IIb management committee (composed of representatives of the Member States), which was already in place.

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

The Commission pointed out in its opinion on the Council's common position that it did not support the text adopted by the Council because it did not accept that Council alone could amend the list of recipient countries and bodies for reasons of procedural expediency or for administrative reasons.

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

The Committee on Development and Cooperation adopted the report by Mr Wilfried TELKÄMPER (V, D) calling for food strategies geared to alleviating poverty and making food aid superfluous. According to the Committee on Development and Cooperation, food aid actions should be designed to promote food security in favour of the peoples of developing regions, to raise the standard of nutrition of the recipient population and promote their access to balanced nutrition, to improve supplies of drinking water, to encourage them to be independent in food and to reduce their dependence on food imports. It called for food aid to be allocated on the basis of following criteria: fundamental food shortages, nutritional status measured against indicators of human and nutritional development (child death rate, average weight on birth, anaemia rates, life expectancy, percentage of population with access to clean water etc.). It asked for operations in support of food security to help finance the supply of seed, tools and other factors needed for the production of food crops, rural credit support schemes, with special emphasis on women, operations to supply drinking water, operations in support of those concerned with the marketing, transport, distribution or processing of agricultural and food products, projects to develop the environmentally acceptable production of food crops, technical assistance and field training operations, in particular for women and producer organizations, projects for producing fertilizers from raw materials and primary products in recipient countries, measures to support local food-aid structures, including on-the-spot training actions. The Committee on Development and Cooperation called for products to be mobilized in the first instance in the recipient country or in a developing country belonging to the same geographical region. If that were not possible, aid should be mobilized in another developing country or on the Community market.?

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

The rapporteur, Mr TELKÄMPER (Greens, D), said that it was necessary to re-examine the reasons behind the food aid policy and to begin by converting industrialised society to a new way of thinking. The new regulation was aimed at promoting self-sufficiency in food supply. Mr Telkämper stressed that the reconstruction of a subsistence economy had to be stimulated at local level and that the existing programmes were in need of reform. He also focused on the

important role that women had to play in the area of food security. The Commissioner, Mrs BONINO, thought that this sector had undergone numerous changes, including those of a macro-economic nature, and that the problems in this area had got worse since the 1980s. She believed that the FAO summit had been a turning point for food security. The Commission accepted most of the amendments, including those relating to greater respect for environmental requirements, improved water supplies, positive discrimination in favour of small and medium-sized private undertakings and the greater involvement of women and local communities in food security. The Commission was prepared to accept the content of Amendments Nos 4, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 14, but wanted their wording to be revised. However, it was not prepared to accept Amendment No 16, as this would reduce the scope of the food aid; Amendment No 21, because the funding was for all operations and not just individual persons; No 25, because while it agreed with the 'triangular procurement' approach the Commission was opposed to establishing a hierarchy of the three possible options; and Amendments Nos 32, 33 and 39. Mrs Bonino concluded by stating that the common objective was to help transform the recipients of Community aid into active participants in their own future.

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

Adopting the recommendation for second reading by Mr Wilfried TELKÄMPER (V, D), Parliament approved the common position of the Council with the following amendments: - it called for the introduction of food strategies geared to alleviating poverty and making food aid superfluous; - it called again for food aid actions in catastrophe areas not to fall within the scope of this regulation and that, in the event of serious crises, all Community mechanisms should be implemented to alleviate these specific situations; - it insisted that food aid actions should be designed to promote food security in favour of the peoples of developing regions, to raise the standard of nutrition of the recipient population and promote their access to balanced nutrition, to improve supplies of drinking water, to encourage them to be independent in food and to reduce their dependence on food imports; - it laid particular emphasis on respect for the role of women and local communities in food security efforts and the drawing up of food programmes; - it called for food aid to be allocated on the basis of following criteria: fundamental food shortages, nutritional status measured against indicators of human and nutritional development (child death rate, average weight on birth, anaemia rates, life expectancy, percentage of population with access to clean water etc.); - it called for measures to strengthen regional approaches to food security, - it asked for operations in support of food security to help finance, inter alia, rural credit support schemes, with special emphasis on women, operations to supply drinking water, operations in support of those concerned with the marketing, transport, distribution or processing of agricultural and food products, projects to develop the environmentally acceptable production of food crops, technical assistance and field training operations, in particular for women and producer organizations, projects for producing fertilizers from raw materials and primary products in recipient countries, measures to support local food-aid structures, including on-the-spot training actions; - it called for products in the first instance to be mobilized in the recipient country or in a developing country belonging to the same geographical region. If that were not possible, aid should be mobilized in another of the developing countries or on the Community market; - regarding the allocation of food aid, it strengthened the role both of the non-governmental organizations participating in food aid programmes and that of the recipient population. Recipients must prove appropriate use of appropriations made available and, in the allocation of aid, priority must be given to small and medium-sized private undertakings. The Commission must, for its part, step up its work of coordination and the Council, after consulting the European Parliament, must allocate the aid in cereals between measures by the Community and by individual Member States. Finally, the Commission must assess the complementarity of actions in the area of food security with other EU policies.?

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

The Commission's amended proposal incorporated, in full or in part, 39 of the 46 amendments adopted by the European Parliament at second reading. The most important amendments retained in the Commission proposal sought to: - implement food strategies designed to alleviate poverty and make food aid superfluous; - provide humanitarian food aid under the regulation provided for the purpose, rather than under the present regulation; - step up food aid to people in developing regions and improve the drinking water supplies; - take account of the role of women and communities in food security efforts; - allocate aid on the basis of specific criteria (mainly against objective indicators of human and nutritional such as infant mortality rate, average weight at birth etc.); - finance rural credit support schemes targeted particularly at women, drinking water supplies, the marketing and processing of agricultural or food products, environmentally-friendly development projects etc.; - strengthen the role of NGOs involved in aid programmes and the role of the beneficiary populations, which needed to prove that they had

experience and were efficient in distributing aid. However, the Commission rejected amendments which sought to: - reduce the dependence of beneficiary countries on food imports; - insist that the inability of beneficiaries to cope with food shortages themselves or the present of basic deficits would be the sole criterion for allocating aid; - strengthen funding for "persons in charge" of the marketing, transportation and distribution of aid; - mobilize products on the markets of developing countries (triangular procurement); - improve the Commission's coordination of its various services; - set the share of cereal aid between the Commission and the Member States; - include national aid in the monitoring carried out by the Food Aid Committee; - have the Commission draft an assessment report (to be sent to the European Parliament once a year) and evaluate the complementarity of food aid actions and other European Union policies. ?

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

**OBJECTIVE:** To restructure, update and adapt all the legal instruments of Community food aid policy and management with a view to their rationalization, including specific operations in support of food security such as the supply of inputs and seeds, storage programmes and early-warning systems. **COMMUNITY MEASURE:** Council Regulation (EC) No 1292/96 on food-aid policy and food-aid management and special operations in support of food security. **SUBSTANCE:** The Regulation covers food aid alone (serious food shortages, famine) to the explicit exclusion of humanitarian food aid, which comes under humanitarian aid legislation. In particular, the Regulation covers: (a) the objectives and general guidelines for food aid and operations in support of food security: . to promote food security; . to raise the standard of nutrition of the recipient population; . to ensure adequate water supplies; . to contribute towards economic and social development in the recipient countries; . to reduce their dependence on food aid; . to contribute to the initiatives to combat poverty. The aid shall be integrated into the development policies, particularly those on agriculture and agri-foodstuffs, and the food strategies of the countries concerned. - Food-aid operations: The products must reflect as closely as possible the dietary habits of the recipient population. Food aid shall primarily be allocated on the basis of an objective evaluation of the needs of the beneficiaries and shall be used only when it is the sole means of improving the food security of the population. The allocation criteria laid down include food shortages, the food situation measured using human development and nutritional indicators, and social and economic indicators. The granting of such aid shall be conditional on the implementation of short-term, multi-annual development projects which promote long-term food security. - Operations in support of food security: such operations shall take the form of financial and technical assistance and shall seek to support the formulation and implementation of local food strategies. They shall be implemented either directly or through NGOs. They may help to finance the supply of seed and inputs, rural credit support schemes targeted particularly at women, drinking water supplies, the marketing and distribution of agricultural products, etc. - Early-warning systems and storage programmes: the relevant measures are geared towards the gathering of data on trends in stocks and harvests and reducing food losses. (b) implementing procedures for food aid: the Regulation lists . the countries and organizations eligible for Community aid, with priority being given to the poorest sections of the population; an annex lists by alphabetical order the countries to which the aid shall be directed, as a function of their degree of poverty (LLDCs - least-developed countries; LICs - low per capita income countries; LMICs - low middle-income countries). The Council may amend this list, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission; . criteria for the granting of aid to NGOs: in particular, the Regulation stipulates that priority shall be given to NGOs which have genuine experience in this field and a sound administrative and financial management capacity; . rules governing the mobilization of products: products shall be mobilized on the Community market in the recipient country or in one of the developing countries belonging to the same geographical region (triangular procurement). The Community contribution may also take the form of a foreign-currency facility to be made available to the beneficiaries in cases where food products are partly or totally liberalized. . the costs covered by the Community in connection with food aid and the conditions for the allocation, mobilization and implementation of aid (with particular regard to invitations to tender and the award of contracts). (c) procedures for implementing food-aid operations: the Council, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the EP, shall determine the Community share of the overall amount of cereals aid laid down in the Food Aid Convention, while the Member States' share shall be determined jointly by the Member States and the Commission. In connection with the financing of operations, the Commission shall lay down rules for mobilizing and granting aid to NGOs. It shall be assisted in this task by a type IIb management committee (composed of representatives of the Member States). With regard to monitoring procedures, the Commission shall undertake regular evaluations of food-aid operations and make regular reports on such evaluations to the committee. Each year, it shall submit a report on implementation of the Regulation to the EP and the Council. Three years after the Regulation's entry into force, an evaluation of the operations financed shall be carried out, and shall be accompanied by suggestions for a possible revision of the Regulation. **ENTRY INTO FORCE:** 08/07/1996 Regulations (EEC) Nos. 3972/86, 1755/84, 2507 and 2508/88 and 1420/87 shall be repealed. ?

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

The Council formally adopted the Regulation, following the conclusion of the cooperation procedure.

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

AIM: Evaluation and future orientation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1292/96 on food-aid policy and food-aid management and special operations in support of food security. CONTENT: In accordance with Article 32 of Regulation (EC) No 1292/96, the Commission made an overall evaluation of the operations financed by the Community under the said Regulation. The primary purpose of this communication was to present the findings of this evaluation and to make proposals regarding the future of the Regulation. On the basis of its evaluation, the Commission concluded that there was no need to alter the content of the Regulation. There was, however, a need to clarify the role of the Regulation in the context of the priorities outlined in the development policy of the Communities and of the progress made towards the development of a comprehensive framework for the reduction of poverty. According to the Commission's communication, the following points required clarification: · the role of the Regulation and its consistency with the other policies and instruments of the Commission; · the objectives and specific applications of the various instruments within the Regulation; · measures required to improve the efficiency and the quality of programme management at all stages of the programming and project cycle. The external evaluation of the Regulation served to highlight the close link between the absence of food security and the prevalence of poverty. The evaluators concluded that the impact of the programme was difficult to assess at this relatively early stage. Nevertheless, they considered that the policy and programme design offered grounds for optimism, although unresolved operational problems could jeopardise the successful completion of several projects. In general terms, the evaluation report recommended that the Commission should: - preserve the Regulation because it served to reduce poverty; - undertake a further evaluation in two to three years when the implementation of the 1996 Regulation had progressed sufficiently to provide conclusive results; - develop specific criteria and verifiable indicators for all projects and programmes; there was a need to carry out systematic monitoring and assessment in the field to make information available for project and programme evaluation; - ensure that the adequacy of implementation procedures and the capacity of the EC and the recipient countries to absorb resources matched the availability of resources and commitments; until this was done, there was little point in increasing commitments; - ensure that, where not already implemented, country strategies would cover all instruments (not just food aid) for a specific country in a coherent and complementary way; - encourage local purchases and triangular transactions; - shorten the chain of command from Brussels to the field teams; - establish a more detailed mandate for RESAL within each recipient country; - strengthen the role of the Food Aid and Food Security Committee by focusing it more on strategic and sectoral issues; - earmark budgetary funds to support the pursuit of food-security objectives, both as a counterpart to the currency facility in the event of a food shortage and as a stand-alone instrument supporting sectoral programmes.

## **Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries**

PURPOSE : to present the Court of Auditors Special Report No 2/2003 on the implementation of the food security policy in developing countries financed by the general budget of the European Union. CONTENT : following the debates on a world scale at the end of the 1980's, the Heads of State and Government, at the World Food Summit in Rome in November 1996, committed themselves to halving the number of undernourished people from 800 million to 400 million, by 2015. The focus should move from food aid towards more long-term development aid to improve the food security situations. At about the same time, Council Regulation 1292/96/EC was adopted with the aim of enhancing food security and reducing the recipient countries' dependence on food aid. The Court's audit focused on the steps taken by all parties involved to achieve the food security objectives set out in the Council Regulation, i.e. the formulation of countries' strategies, the management of actions, the adequacy of information and co-ordination with other donors. Regulation 1292/96/EC introduced a long-term development approach on food security, thus moving away from short-term food aid. However, as the causes of food insecurity are broad, this problem can only effectively be dealt with in the context of an overall comprehensive development policy. The report also states that food security strategies in a number of recipient countries were not integrated in coherent national development strategies, and programmes on food security were executed as development programmes separate from the mainstream programmes. Reliable base-line information on the situation of food security was not available in the countries visited by the Court, and the production of statistics by the national services was in most of the cases



inadequate. The evaluation required by Regulation 1292/96/EC identified a number of important problems but concluded that it was too early to assess the impact and effectiveness of the Regulation. The Court also points out that the Commission's structure complicates the co-ordination between its services in respect of food security operations. Moreover, at the Commission's services in Brussels information was not readily available on the status of the implementation of the programmes. The report highlights that the identification of projects was unstructured in many countries, with no formal procedures for the selection of projects on the basis of clear priorities and criteria. The local population was hardly involved in proposing and selecting projects. Structures to support local communities to manage projects are rarely in place. Most of the central government's services had delegated the management of food security programmes to specific (parastatal) bodies, which hinders the integration of development actions in sustainable structures. Very few evaluations have been carried out. Audits are undertaken but are not done on an annual basis. Co-ordination between the Commission and the other donors (in particular EU Member States) was at best limited to an exchange of information in most of the countries. On the basis of its observations, the Court recommends that: - the concept of food security should be integrated in the Commission's overall development policy, and single overall strategies and programmes should be developed for and by the recipient countries; - consideration should be given, in the context of the new evaluation of food security support, to discontinuing Regulation No 1292/96 in its present form and to integrating all development actions, including those on food security, in a limited number of comprehensive Regulations. Consequently, the structure of the budget headings under B-7 (external actions) should be modified; - as long as separate food security programmes are developed, they should be multi-annual; - the Commission should consider supporting developing countries to ensure that reliable base-line information is produced on socio-economic household situations. Indicators on food security should be developed with other donors; - there should be a regular exchange of financial information between the Commission's central services and its Delegations; - the Commission should continue to focus its efforts on capacity building and institutional support to beneficiary countries' central and local services. ?