

School Fruit Scheme

2008/0146(CNS) - 08/07/2008 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation) in order to set up a School Fruit Scheme (SFS).

PROPOSED ACT: Council Regulation.

BACKGROUND: the importance of fruit and vegetables consumption as part of a healthy diet is advocated by the Commission White Paper 'A strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity and related health issues' (see [INI/2007/2285](#)), which stresses the need for coherent action at European level and draws attention to the role the CAP could play in shaping the European diet, especially to combat obesity and overweight. When approving the CMO Fruit and Vegetables reform, the Council invited the Commission come forward with a proposal for a school fruit scheme as soon as possible based on an impact assessment of the benefits, practicability and administrative costs involved. The European Parliament, in its report on the EU's draft 2008 budget, also emphasised its strong commitment to the proper budgetary endowment of funds for school fruit and vegetables.

CONTENT: the School Fruit (and vegetables) Scheme at EU level aims to provide a policy and funding framework for Member State initiatives aimed at durably increasing the share of fruit and vegetables in the diets of children, at the stage when their eating habits are formed. This would represent an investment in the future, by helping to avoid or reduce health expenditure resulting from poor diet. Furthermore, the positive impact on consumption could contribute to meeting CAP objectives. As obesity tends to cluster in social disadvantaged groups, the School Fruit Scheme would also have a positive social impact, reducing health inequalities.

In this context the Commission proposes to set up a School Fruit Scheme which, for maximum effectiveness, brings together the three options in a mutually supportive package. It comprises the following elements:

- **free distribution of fruits and vegetables in schools:** Community aid should be granted to co-finance the supply of fruit and vegetables to pupils of the 6-10 core age group in educational establishments (schools), the related logistics and monitoring and evaluation. For this purpose, it is proposed to provide for a budgetary allocation of a total amount of **EUR 90 million per year** under Title I of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007. It would allow for the extension of existing SFS in some Member States, and the establishment of programmes in Member States without such programmes, often due to limited budgetary means. The Community co-financing rate would be at the level of 50% and 75% in convergence regions;
- **accompanying measures:** an obligation for Member States, at national or regional level, to develop a strategy in consultation with public health and education authorities, industry and interested stakeholders. The strategy should lay down in which manner a School Fruit Scheme could be best implemented and integrated into the school curriculum. As part of the implementation it would be an obligation to highlight the EU involvement. The accompanying measures would primarily be nationally financed;
- **networking activities,** in order to motivate the exchange of information and knowledge among SFS actors and stimulate public awareness. This allocation should amount to EUR 1.3 million;

- **promotion of agricultural products**, which could be supported in the framework of the EU promotion of agricultural products. In particular, Member States could use this framework to carry out the necessary accompanying measures aimed at raising awareness on the beneficial effects of fruit and vegetables consumption. The recent fruit and vegetables reform increased the indicative the indicative budget for the promotion of these products by EUR 6 million;
- **monitoring and evaluation**: with the purpose of establishing solid data for further research on the effectiveness of a School Fruit Scheme in its different variants and for the exchange of "best practices", monitoring and evaluation should form an integral part of an EU scheme.

All schemes would consequently include the three elements:

- 1) the free distribution of fruit (and/or vegetables) in educational establishments (schools),
- 2) a series of accompanying measures;
- 3) monitoring and evaluation.