

School Fruit Scheme

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The Council held a **policy debate** on a proposal designed to allow co-financing of a scheme to distribute free fruit and vegetables in schools.

All delegations endorsed this educational and nutritional approach, but Ministers wanted to clarify some political aspects of the proposal, on the basis of a questionnaire drawn up by the Presidency.

As regards the finance and budget related aspects of the proposed scheme, a large number of delegations would prefer a more generous budget, in particular to cover ancillary costs (costs of administration and transport). They wanted the utmost flexibility as regards the choice of target populations or eligible products, which some Ministers thought could be made at regional or local level.

The principle of additionality and the ability to continue with national schemes begun before the application of the new Regulation were also recurrent concerns.

Lastly, as regards the origin of the products covered by the scheme, the vast majority of delegations wanted to give preference to Community origin, along the lines of the school milk scheme. However, some delegations and the Commission representative were open-minded on this question, in particular in order to take account of the seasonal or geographical availability of certain fruit (bananas).