Outermost regions: specific measures for agriculture

2010/0256(COD) - 24/09/2010 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to lay down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: no impact assessment was carried out.

LEGAL BASE: Article 42 and Article 43(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

CONTENT: in view of the fact that since it was adopted on 30 January 2006, Council Regulation (EC) No 247/2006 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union has been the subject of several amendments, it is proposed that it be recast in the interests of clarity.

Furthermore, changes in Community legislation and the practical implementation of this Regulation that have occurred since it was adopted, make it necessary to modify certain provisions and to restructure the legislative text so that it reflects more effectively the reality of the POSEI agricultural scheme. The main amendments are as follows:

Subject: the Regulation lays down specific measures for agriculture to mitigate the difficulties caused by extreme remoteness, specifically remoteness, isolation, small surface areas, terrain, difficult climate and economic dependence on a limited number of products of the outermost regions.

Objectives: the proposal is more explicit in setting out the scheme’s main objectives:

The specific measures shall help to meet the following objectives:

- guaranteed supply to the outermost regions of products essential for human consumption or for processing and as agricultural inputs by mitigating the additional costs due to extreme remoteness;
- preservation and development of agricultural activities in the outermost regions, including the production, processing and the sale of local products.

These objectives shall be implemented by means of the measures referred to in Chapters III, IV and V.

Structure: the new structure highlights the central role played by the Programmes of Options Specifically Relating to the Remoteness and Insularity (POSEI programmes) which have now been defined for each outermost region at the most appropriate level and coordinated by the relevant Member States. These programmes relate to the two fundamental POSEI elements, namely the specific supply arrangements and the specific measures in favour of local production.

POSEI: the measures provided for are defined for each outermost region by a POSEI Programme which shall comprise: a) specific supply arrangements and b) specific measures to assist local agricultural production.

The POSEI programme shall be established at the geographical level which the Member State concerned deems most appropriate. It shall be prepared by the competent authorities designated by the said Member State, which shall submit it to the Commission for approval after the competent authorities and

organisations at the appropriate regional level have been consulted. A single POSEI programme may be submitted for each Member State in respect of its outermost regions.

Other amendments: minor amendments have been made to the wording of the Regulation, in particular:

- the procedure for submitting programmes and amendments for approval to the Commission has been specified to make it more consistent with current practice and in view of the need for greater flexibility and efficiency as regards the process of adapting programmes to meet the actual needs of agriculture and the supply of products essential for the outermost regions;
- it has been specified that the specific supply arrangements should be designed for each region in accordance with local agricultural production, the development of which should not be limited by aid for supply which is too excessive for products which are also produced locally. This provision is considered to be necessary to make it compulsory for the two POSEI instruments to be compatible with each other;
- the possibility of re-dispatching products which have been processed locally using basic products which have benefited from the specific supply arrangements, without the benefit being reimbursed, which was restricted to products dispatched from the Azores to Madeira or vice versa, or from Madeira to the Canary Islands or vice versa, will also now apply to the French overseas departments;
- in the interests of sound budgetary management, Member States must indicate in their programmes the list of aid constituting direct payments;
- it is also helpful to indicate how the aid amounts for measures to assist local agricultural products are defined, which was previously not indicated in the basic act;
- lastly, the financial allocation for each national programme selected is that which corresponds to the 2011 financial year and subsequent years. However, the ceiling for financing for the specific supply arrangements for France and Portugal has increased by 20%, in the light of the conclusions of the first report on the impact of the 2006 POSEI reform, submitted to the European Parliament and the Council in 2010.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: the proposal does not affect the sources of financing or the “intensity of Community support.”