Imports of rice originating from Bangladesh: aligning the Regulation with the TFEU; Commission delegated and implementing powers

2012/0085(COD) - 10/12/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted **amendments** to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on imports of rice originating in Bangladesh.

The matter was referred back to the committee responsible. The vote on the legislative resolution was postponed.

The main amendments adopted by Parliament concerned the following issues:

Right to a decent income: Parliament called for this Regulation to recognises the right of small farmers and rural workers to a decent income and to a safe and healthy working environment and regarded respect for that right as fundamental in relation to achieving the general objectives of granting trade preferences to developing countries and, in particular, to least developed countries.

In this regard, Members introduced a recital stressing that this Regulation must be consistent with the **objectives of the Union policy in the field of development cooperation as set out in Article 208 of the Treaty**, in particular the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development and good governance in the developing countries.

Respect for ILO Conventions: only rice that is produced, harvested and processed in accordance with the International Labour Organisation Conventions and in particular with Conventions on: (i) Forced Labour, (ii) Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, (iii) the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, (iv) Equal Remuneration, (v) Abolition of Forced Labour, (vi) Discrimination, (vii) and on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, should be covered under this Regulation.

Export tax: in the Commission proposal, explicit reference is made to an export tax of an amount corresponding to the reduction of the import duty which should be collected by the exporting country as an export requirement to the EU. Members stated that this is a decision to be made by the political legislators in Bangladesh and not by the European institutions.

Therefore, they deleted the references and provisions to this effect.

Suspension of the preferential import arrangement: the Commission should adopt an implementing act suspending the application of the preferential import arrangement once it ascertains that, during the year in progress, imports qualifying under the said arrangement have reached the quantity indicated in the Regulation. That implementing act should be adopted without applying the Committee procedure.

Delegated acts: Parliament suggested limiting the empowerment of delegated acts on the Commission to a period of **five years** that may be tacitly extended for periods of an identical duration.

The delay to formulate an objection to the delegated act should be **four months** as opposed to two as suggested by the Commission.

Committee procedure: Parliament suggested including in the Regulation a provision on the Committee procedure. The Committee should be assisted by the Committee for the Common Organisation of the Agricultural Markets. This Committee should be a committee within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011.