

Processed fruit and vegetable products: common organisation of the market COM

1995/0248(CNS) - 18/12/1995

At its meetings in October, November and December, the Council analysed the Commission proposal on the basis of the work carried out by the Special Committee on Agriculture and by the Working Party on Fruit and Vegetables. Today's debate and, in particular, the positive statements from the Commissioner, augur well for a rapid conclusion of this dossier. The Council congratulated the members of the SCA and the Working Party as well as the Commission services on the effort and devotion demonstrated, which have contributed to a clearer understanding of the scope of the Commission's proposal and to the identification of problems that this proposal raises at the delegations. No decisions can be reached in advance of the opinion of Parliament. It is, however, useful at this stage for the Presidency to set out the key issues on which compromises will be needed, as a means of targeting the technical work to be carried out in the Special Committee on Agriculture and its Working Group, and the Council's work under the Italian Presidency.

1. Contracts with producers' groups: the proposal to link processing to contracts between producers' groups and processors remains a subject of debate. The question arises as to whether the key problem here is one of adjustment that would be resolved by a period of transition.
2. Processed tomatoes: the Commission's proposal to provide for part of the processed tomatoes quota to be mobile between Member States, although itself designed to represent a compromise between the basic positions of producer Member States, remains very controversial. The question arises whether a compromise could be found that maintains the main features of the Commission proposal but increases the total quota without increasing total expenditure (as the Commissioner indeed emphasised) and provides a better safeguard for Member States whose initial quotas would be reduced by comparison with their recent performance and, at the same time, introduces some additional flexibility in relation to the utilisation of quota in a particular marketing year.
3. Other processed products: the possibility should be examined of creating a framework within which, without prejudice to fair conditions of competition, producers' groups could facilitate the sale of products not covered by Annex II to the processing industry.