Agricultural products and foodstuffs: designations of origin, geographical indications (amend. Regul. 2081/92/EEC)

1996/0159(CNS) - 17/01/1997

Presenting his report, Mr Fantuzzi (PSE, IT) expressed his concern about the application of Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs. While recognising the need to extend the transitional period following major delays in the registration of names, the rapporteur objected to the Commission's proposal (that the five-year transitional period should run from the registration of names) which would give the impression of wanting to delay even further the establishment of the exclusivity of original names. In addition, such a proposal would contradict the principles of equal treatment of producers and legal certainty. According to Mr Fantuzzi, it would be incomprehensible if the European Union failed to capitalise on its wealth of unique products on the international market, due to an accumulation of delays, by using the protection afforded for the first time by the TRIP agreement on intellectual property. Finally, the rapporteur stressed the importance of this regulation in terms of re-establishing consumer confidence in agricultural products following the BSE crisis. Commissioner Oreja justified the Commission's proposal by the fact that, if Parliament's counter-proposal were accepted, producers would not have a long enough period to adapt to the new regulations. Therefore, Amendments Nos 1 and 5 had to be rejected. He then stated that Amendments Nos 3 and 9 could be accepted as too could the aims of Amendments Nos 4 and 11, first part. However, the Commission could not accept Amendments Nos 2 and 8 for formal reasons or Amendments Nos 6, 7 (because they were superfluous), 11, second part, and 12.