

Advertising and sponsorship of tobacco products

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After lengthy discussions, the Council reached political agreement by qualified majority, with the Danish and Swedish delegations voting against and the United Kingdom delegation abstaining, on a proposal for a Regulation concerning the tobacco sector (14521/01) as amended on the basis of a Presidency compromise suggestion adopted by the Commission. This compromise was accompanied by a Commission statement for the minutes, which the German, Netherlands and United Kingdom delegations supported. The Regulation sets premiums and guarantee thresholds for tobacco for the 2002, 2003 and 2004 harvests by variety group and Member State. The main points of the Presidency compromise suggestion are as follows: - Inclusion of a reference in Recital (5) to Article 152 of the Treaty - requirement for a high level of public health protection - and of a reference in Recital (6) to the Community Tobacco Fund's activities and financing; - Community Tobacco Fund: the deduction to finance the Fund is set at 2% of the premium for the 2002 harvest, and 3% for the 2003 harvest; the deduction may be increased to 5% for the 2004 harvest on the basis of a Commission report to be presented by 31 December 2003 on the use of the Fund's appropriations, accompanied if necessary by a proposal to that effect; - auction system: the scheme may apply to the contracts of producer groups that wish to take part in it; - national quota reserve: producer Member States will be able to create a national quota reserve. The Regulation will be formally adopted without debate at a forthcoming Council.