Bananas: common organisation of the market COM

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Non-binding amendments seeking to prevent multinationals gaining a monopoly of the common organization of the market (COM) in bananas were tabled in a report by Giacomo SANTINI (UPE, I) for the Committee (Chairman: Christian JACOB, UPE, F) adopted under the consultation procedure. The Commission proposal is not too far from the EP's position, according to Mr SANTINI, but the amendments should go some way towards helping a market which he considers multinationals are trying to dominate. The banana COM was introduced in July 1993 (Reg 404/93) by the Community of Twelve to establish a balanced and flexible market organization replacing the various national schemes. It now needs to brought into line with the needs of an EU of fifteen Member States. EU banana suppliers are: - countries in Latin America - the dollar zone; - traditional ACP suppliers (including Somalia), - EU territories such as, Martinique, the Canaries, Madeira and Crete. Bananas from non-member countries are subject to a tariff quota and import levy. EU banana producers also receive compensatory aid. The report's main proposals are: - a tariff quota should be opened each year for imports of bananas from non-member countries and non-traditional ACP suppliers, with 90 000 tonnes of quota reserved for non-traditional ACP bananas. The Commission proposes a quota of 2 235 000 tonnes and the Agriculture Committee wants it raised by 65 000 tonnes to 2.3 million. - a new breakdown of the tariff quota for non-member countries: . bananas from non-member countries (category A operators) - the Commission proposes 70.5%, the Agriculture Committee 66.5%, . EU bananas and/or traditional ACP bananas (category B), the Commission proposes 26%, the Agriculture Committee 30%, . category C operators (EU importers of bananas from non-member countries operating since 1 January 1992) have been allocated 3.5% by the Commission; this figure is unchanged. - category C importers are authorized to transfer to category A; it would be unreasonable to prevent operators who have joined the market since 1 January 1992 from expanding and increasing their market share. - introduction of a scheme to compensate operators for exceptional circumstances which have led to a fall in their reference quantity. To ensure greater openness, the Agriculture Committee does not want the Commission alone to determine what constitute 'exceptional' or 'unforeseen' circumstances'; it therefore proposes that Somalia should benefit from the scheme.