Interim assessment of reform of the common organisation market COM under Agenda 2000

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Francesco FIORI (EPP-ED, I) on the mid-term review of the reform of the common organisations of the market (COMs) in the context of Agenda 2000. The committee was opposed to any change which could undermine the principles and objectives of the common agricultural policy or which would make the application of that policy in all the Member States less uniform. However, it acknowledged the need to reform the CAP in view of certain market instabilities, the financing of enlargement, the WTO negotiations, and the need for market orientation as well as sustainable production systems. The CAP must, it said, meet society's expectations for high-quality, safe foodstuffs as well as guaranteeing environmental protection and preservation of the landscape, rural communities and small family farms. To achieve this, the CAP must provide the basis for the practical application of a European model for sustainable, multifunctional farming. The committee warned, however, that steps should be taken to prevent this from resulting in a "renationalisation" of the CAP. The report called for more resources to be shifted from market support to rural development. Moreover, in order to stem the fall in the number of young people choosing farming as a career, it wanted existing start-up measures to be made compulsory and said that the Commission should give priority to young farmers in any future project. The report further advocated a push towards extensive farming, with an area-based premium for farmers to discourage single-crop farming, and area-based livestock farming. The committee also wanted to see more compulsory co-financing by the Member States of measures taken under the CAP. Lastly, the report repeated Parliament's previous demands for more support for the fruit and vegetables sector and a permanent aid system for nuts and warned against hasty decisions in the dairy sector or olive oil market organisation.