Decentralized Community agencies: setting-up of a European Agency for veterinary and phytosanitory inspection

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According to the ESC, a strong and efficient authority for the monitoring and inspection of veterinary and phytosanitary matters was vital for the smooth functioning of the single market and for strengthening consumer protection. This authority should be invested with full powers that would enable it to verify that Community directives were being properly applied and to check that obligations towards third countries were being met. However, the Committee was not convinced of the need to convert the present office into an agency. It took the view that the office should be strengthened by a larger and permanent workforce, unless it could be demonstrated beyond doubt that the establishment of such an agency would yield clear benefits for public health and consumer protection and for the food industry in general. However, the Committee did accept the principles being proposed in respect of the powers and main areas of competence of such an agency, though was of the opinion that one of the conditions for setting-up such a body was that it should be funded by the budget. The authority responsible for the inspections had to be provided with sufficient resources to be able to operate in an efficient and effective manner.