Nut sector: quality and marketing improvement, extension of plans for one year (Regulation (EEC) No 1035/72)

2000/0252(CNS) - 05/10/2000 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to extend for a period up to one year the financing of certain quality and marketing improvement plans approved under Title IIa of Regulation 1035/72/EEC. CONTENT : in 1989, Regulation 1035/72/EEC (Title IIa) introduced a specific measures for the nut sector, in order to make good the inadequacy of production and marketing faciltities. These measures cover five products: almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, pistachios and locust beans. The principal measure is the financing of 10-year quality and marketing improvement plans, presented by producer organisations. Plans qualify for 55% public funding (of which EU: 45%; Member State: 10%), subject to a maximum amount per hectare. Financing of the measure is intended to be temporary and degressive in the maximum level of aid paid. The measures were repealed by Regulation 2200/96/EC. However, existing plans may continue to term: the last will expire in 2006. EU expenditure on these specific measures from 1990-1999 was EUR 725 million. Expenditure for plans that have not expired is budgeted from 2000 to 2006 to be a further EUR 250 million. A number of plans expired in 2000. EU nut production via producer organisations (whether or not in existing plans) is eligible for other additional support measures: - operational fund scheme of Regulation 2200/96/EC (general support mechanism for fruit and vegetables); - structural measures of Regulation 1257/1999/EC (rural development plans). As a result of the Council of 17 July invited the Commission to propose that the payments to nut growers be continued within the budget for 2001 for those programmes which would otherwise expire in 2000. In the light of the above, this draft proposes that: - producer organisations whose plans expire in 2000 may request continued financing for a further period of up to one year; - continued financing be requested only until 15.06.2001 latest, in order to fall within the 2001 budget; - public aid be limited at the most to those areas receiving aid in the 10th year of the plan and to a maximum of EUR 241,50 per hectare. This draft simplifies arrangements in that producer organisations are not required to submit a new plan extension and the existing provisions in the implementing Regulation 2159/89/EEC apply mututis mutandis. The Commission will study the situation of the nut sector in the context of the report which it will submit on the fruit and vegetables regime before the end of 2000. Until such time, this draft provides an interim solution for those producer organisations whose improvement plans expire in 2000 and would not be within the budget for 2001.