

Fruit and vegetables: common organisation of the market COM

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This report from the Commission concerns the state of the implementation of Regulation 2200/96/EC on the common organisation of the market in fruit and vegetables. Most recently, on 12 July 2000 the European Commission adopted a proposal to amend the common organisation of the market for fruit and vegetables. This proposal was aimed at providing solutions to shortcomings that had to be addressed urgently, with a view to possible amendments to the market organisation being implemented from the 2001/02 marketing year. This report aims to describe the current situation. It is intended as a background for policy proposals that might be made at a later stage, depending on the outcome of the debate that will take place in the Council, within the sector and more broadly in society. It is a first step in answering the Council's request of October 1996 to examine the situation of the sector and to come forward with new proposals if necessary. Against this background, the main conclusions of the report are the following: - fruit and vegetables occupy around 4% of the EU Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) and the relative importance of the sector is extremely variable from one Member State to another; - standardisation has played a crucial role for forty years as a classification system for fresh fruit and vegetables, contributing to market transparency and development; - taste quality standards have been timidly introduced into some marketing standards regulations. Some progress has been made on possible criteria for organoleptic standards even if analytical methods are still under scrutiny; - the question of the possible insertion of SPS (food safety) standards into the common organisation of the market standards is implicitly raised; - to face a growing concentration of demand, it is necessary to strengthen the position of producers in the market by increasing the grouping of supply; - as far as the economic dimension of Producer Organisations (POs) is concerned, an important share of the overall production marketed through POs is concentrated on a small number of POs; - regional analysis sheds light on the present weaknesses of the organisation of fruit and vegetable production; - it is not possible to make any direct link between the regional importance of Fruit and Vegetables production and the degree of production organisation; - the 1996 reform has not led to any substantial and global increase in the economic dimension of POs; - interbranch organisations were recognised by the 1996 Regulation. They are defined as legal entities made up of representatives of economic activities linked to the production and/or trade and/or processing of Fruit and Vegetables.