Agenda 2000: oils and fats; common organisation of the markets COM, olive oil, aid for the production (amend. regul. 136/66/EEC, 2261/84 /EEC)

1998/0098(CNS) - 18/03/1998 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: to introduce a transitional scheme for the marketing years 1998/1999, 1999/2000 and 2000 /2001 prior to the entry into force of the reform of the olive oil sector in order to reduce the risks of the current scheme for operators, producers and the Community budget. SUBSTANCE: the modifications proposed by the Commission concern: - restricting the aid to oil produced from groves existing at 1 May 1998; - information regarding production (area, number of trees, yield); - the definition of categories of virgin olive oil; - the intervention arrangements; - consumption aid; - aid for small producers; - national breakdown of the maximum guaranteed quantity. To sum up, the measures proposed by the Commission for the 1998/99, 1999/2000 and 2000/1 marketing years will involve a 2.4% increase in the aid actually received by producers and a rise of 15.7% in the maximum guaranteed quantity. To control production more effectively, that maximum guaranteed quantity will be apportioned among the Member States and output from plantings after 1 May 1998 will no longer qualify for the aid. To improve monitoring of entitlement to aid, the small-producer scheme will be discontinued and cultivation declarations will be crosschecked with data from a GIS, with penalties being applied, where appropriate, to the aid. As for the market, the categories of olive oil will be defined more closely and consumption aid abolished. Prices will be managed via private storage contracts and not through public buying-in. In addition, in order to pave the way for the reform to come into force on 1 October 2001, the Commission intends improving the reliability of information on olive production, in particular of table olives, in the producer Member States; it also intends to give further consideration to a quality strategy and possible changes in trade with non-member countries. With respect to table olives the Commission will examine the possibilities for improving the competitive position of the sector in order to ensure the overall balance of the olive sector as a whole.