

# Food aid policy: management of EC food aid and special operations in support of food security in developing countries

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**OBJECTIVE:** To restructure, update and adapt all the legal instruments of Community food aid policy and management with a view to their rationalization, including specific operations in support of food security such as the supply of inputs and seeds, storage programmes and early-warning systems. **COMMUNITY MEASURE:** Council Regulation (EC) No 1292/96 on food-aid policy and food-aid management and special operations in support of food security. **SUBSTANCE:** The Regulation covers food aid alone (serious food shortages, famine) to the explicit exclusion of humanitarian food aid, which comes under humanitarian aid legislation. In particular, the Regulation covers: (a) the objectives and general guidelines for food aid and operations in support of food security: . to promote food security; . to raise the standard of nutrition of the recipient population; . to ensure adequate water supplies; . to contribute towards economic and social development in the recipient countries; . to reduce their dependence on food aid; . to contribute to the initiatives to combat poverty. The aid shall be integrated into the development policies, particularly those on agriculture and agri-foodstuffs, and the food strategies of the countries concerned. - Food-aid operations: The products must reflect as closely as possible the dietary habits of the recipient population. Food aid shall primarily be allocated on the basis of an objective evaluation of the needs of the beneficiaries and shall be used only when it is the sole means of improving the food security of the population. The allocation criteria laid down include food shortages, the food situation measured using human development and nutritional indicators, and social and economic indicators. The granting of such aid shall be conditional on the implementation of short-term, multi-annual development projects which promote long-term food security. - Operations in support of food security: such operations shall take the form of financial and technical assistance and shall seek to support the formulation and implementation of local food strategies. They shall be implemented either directly or through NGOs. They may help to finance the supply of seed and inputs, rural credit support schemes targeted particularly at women, drinking water supplies, the marketing and distribution of agricultural products, etc. - Early-warning systems and storage programmes: the relevant measures are geared towards the gathering of data on trends in stocks and harvests and reducing food losses. (b) implementing procedures for food aid: the Regulation lists . the countries and organizations eligible for Community aid, with priority being given to the poorest sections of the population; an annex lists by alphabetical order the countries to which the aid shall be directed, as a function of their degree of poverty (LLDCs - least-developed countries; LICs - low per capita income countries; LMICs - low middle-income countries). The Council may amend this list, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission; . criteria for the granting of aid to NGOs: in particular, the Regulation stipulates that priority shall be given to NGOs which have genuine experience in this field and a sound administrative and financial management capacity; . rules governing the mobilization of products: products shall be mobilized on the Community market in the recipient country or in one of the developing countries belonging to the same geographical region (triangular procurement). The Community contribution may also take the form of a foreign-currency facility to be made available to the beneficiaries in cases where food products are partly or totally liberalized. . the costs covered by the Community in connection with food aid and the conditions for the allocation, mobilization and implementation of aid (with particular regard to invitations to tender and the award of contracts). (c) procedures for implementing food-aid operations: the Council, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the EP, shall determine the Community share of the overall amount of cereals aid laid down in the Food Aid Convention, while the Member States' share shall be determined jointly by the Member States and the Commission. In connection with the financing of operations, the Commission shall lay down rules for mobilizing and granting aid to NGOs. It shall be assisted in this task by a type IIb management committee (composed of representatives of the Member

States). With regard to monitoring procedures, the Commission shall undertake regular evaluations of food-aid operations and make regular reports on such evaluations to the committee. Each year, it shall submit a report on implementation of the Regulation to the EP and the Council. Three years after the Regulation's entry into force, an evaluation of the operations financed shall be carried out, and shall be accompanied by suggestions for a possible revision of the Regulation. ENTRY INTO FORCE: 08/07/1996 Regulations (EEC) Nos. 3972/86, 1755/84, 2507 and 2508/88 and 1420/87 shall be repealed.