Fish-canning industry

1997/2303(INI) - 19/06/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mr Daniel VARELA SUANZES-CARPEGNA (PPE, E) on the fish product canning industry in the European Union, the European Parliament called for a special plan of action and an overall support framework in order to protect the Community canning industry from global competition and make it more competitive. This plan should also take account of the new regional policy guidelines and make provision for ad hoc financial aid. It called on the Commission to draw up a study on the subject and carry out a detailed analysis of tariff law affecting fish product preserves with the aim of abolishing any advantages in access that are no longer justified. It also considered that when the Union's external policy required maintaining certain imports that involve market access on terms that mean unfair competition for Community preserves, the products in question should be declared sensitive products and compensatory aid should be allocated to Community preserves. It also called for: - inspections of products from third countries to be stepped up, in accordance with Directive 493/91/EEC laying down the health conditions for the production and placing on the market of fishery products; - the creation of a Community-level reference laboratory to safeguard the quality of products from third countries marketed on Union territory and their compliance with technical and health standards; - clear and accurate labelling; - the promotion of quality products, including raw materials that can be added to canning preparations (olive oil etc.); - promotion campaigns for Community fish product preserves, advertising their origin, quality and high nutritional value; - financial support for new production systems, new products and the processing of species which have no commercial value; - the conclusion of long-term contracts between producers and their organisations and the processing companies, ensuring their supplies at reasonable prices and on reasonable terms; - a service specialising in fisheries to combat fraud. Declaring that the sardine industry was in a state of crisis, Parliament requested funds to assist restructuring of the industry and the establishment of a compensatory allowance. A campaign to promote the consumption of sardines should also be launched at Community level. With reference to the tuna canning industry (which represents 60% of total production of fish preserves in the European Union), Parliament noted the need to ensure a proper supply, giving priority to the Community fleet and opening new quotas for imports only when these are strictly needed for the Community industry. There was also a need to ensure that compensation granted to third countries was directed towards sustainable development or the fight against drugs. Third countries which enjoyed privileged access should not exercise social dumping on the Community market. Parliament also called for rigorous checks on the origin and quality of tuna in order to prevent consumer fraud and unfair competition for the Community industry. Finally, it called for Community preserves to be used as humanitarian food aid.