Hops: common organisation of the market COM (amend. regul. 1696/71/EEC)

1997/0066(CNS) - 18/07/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report by Mr Xaver MAYER (PPE, D) on the proposal to amend the Regulation on the common organization of the market in hops. Whereas the Commission had proposed excluding from aid areas which have been cleared of hops, Parliament called for such aid to continue to be paid for a limited transitional period (provisional set-aside). At the end of the period, the producer would have to decide either to replant the hops or to withdraw the land from hop cultivation. This system would not entail any additional costs to the EAGGF. It should be noted that the aid may also be granted in respect of areas which are temporarily not planted with hops, provided that the following conditions are met: reusable hop-growing facilities are maintained in good condition, the areas are given permanent grass cover to improve soil fertility, and the areas under hops are not extended to include other farmland. On the other hand, Parliament proposed that, in order to attain common aims, producer groups should be able to use up to 40% of the aid (rather than 20% as proposed by the Commission), and that the remaining 60% should be redistributed to individual farmers. The proportion of the aid to producers withheld by producer groups could be cumulated over a period not exceeding five years. As regards ensuring the presence of Community hops on export markets, Parliament considered it necessary to do more than the Commission had proposed, particularly by means of the following measures: cultivation of markets by conducting publicity and sales promotion campaigns; stabilization of the market by means of selective buying-in operations; determination, safeguarding and improvement of quality; targeted research in the fields of production and marketing; authorization of plant protection products. Lastly, Parliament called for an increase in aid (from ECU 450 to ECU 500 per hectare per annum). It should be calculated on the basis of the average for the last three years rather than the last ten as proposed by the Commission.