

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

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In adopting the report by Mr Wilfried TELKÄMPER (Verts, D), the European Parliament approved this proposal for a regulation with the following amendments: - food aid interventions of a short-term nature in disaster areas are explicitly excluded from the scope of this regulation and should be reinstated under humanitarian aid (in the case of major crises, all instruments of Community policy should intervene with a view to the aid being coordinated); - food aid should only be allocated where this seems the only appropriate way of enhancing the food security of groups without the ways and means to cope with a food shortfall themselves; - aid should be granted as a matter of priority to the most needy groups. It should promote access to a balanced diet and improve their supply of drinking water; - to evaluate food aid needs, various indicators may be used to measure the nutritional status of beneficiaries, such as infant mortality rate and weight at birth); - the granting of food aid should also be conditional on the implementation of development projects to promote sustainable long-term food security (notably, projects to produce fertilisers and support for local food aid structures); - the role of the NGOs in supplying food aid and in carrying out medium-term operations should be strengthened. (To this end, Parliament insists that the Community's role in the aid field must be made more visible). The NGOs should guarantee the successful implementation of aid on the basis of their presence; - food products should be mobilized in the first instance in the recipient country or in a developing country belonging to the same geographical region. If this is impossible, aid should be mobilized in another developing country, and it is only if none of these alternatives is possible that products should come from the Community market. Parliament also insists that steps must be taken to ensure that purchases of food in a developing country threaten neither to disrupt that country's market nor to affect adversely the local production or its supply to their inhabitants; - measures to monitor the transport of aid should be strengthened (record of receipt and use of funds to be kept by the beneficiary countries, who are also required to render account thereof). As to the Community, each quarter the Commission should draw up and forward to the budgetary authority a review of the position regarding contracts and payments. Also, an annual report should be forwarded to the budgetary authority, and every three years beginning in 1998, this report should be replaced by an interim report. Continuation of the funding would depend on the results of these reports; - With regard to commitology, Parliament should choose an advisory-type committee in preference to that proposed by the Commission. Every effort should be made to ensure coherence and complementarity with local aid operations.