Olive oil: aid scheme. Special report 11/2000 Court of Auditors

2001/2001(COS) - 17/05/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament approved the report by Mr Paulo CASACA (EPP/ED, P) which calls for a reliable management control system to tackle fraud in the olive oil sector. The adopted resolution affirms the Parliament's support for the present system as a means of guaranteeing fair incomes for producers and improving quality. Firstly, the resolution invites the Commission, in the context of the transitional measures proposed on 21 December 2000, to implement a regime based on reliable data with regard to quantities of olives processed and quantities of oil produced in mills. The Commission is also asked to clarify in what way the decision of 21 December 2000 to extend the current aid schemes for the olive oil sector addresses the findings by the Court of Auditors in its special report No 11/2000 and takes account of its recommendatons. The Parliament stresses that it is important for some important objectives to be taken in consideration in the new COM, such as promoting environmental protection, rural life and communities, the historical and patrimonial value of olive oil trees, the need to priviledge the income of small farmers and rurally depressed regions, the aim of market balance, promoting quality by fighting fraud, effective protection for Community products, and an appropriate type of institutional promotion in order to increase consumption. The Parliament regrets the Commission's decision to apply decreased financial corrections under the clearance of accounts procedure to some Member States. It also notes that considerable unduly paid amounts have yet to be recovered by national authorities for the 1985-1998 period. Therefore the Commission is urged to propose an integrated strategy for improved recovery of unduly paid amounts. Other measures are included in order to give the highest priority to and treat as a matter of urgency, the fight against olive oil fraud, in particular with regard to the unlawful addition of hazelnut oil to olive oil. These measures include: - presenting legislation proposals to stiffen the rules against falsification of olive oil as soon as possible; - give the highest priority in European research and development to new methods of detecting falsification of olive oil, namely through the addition of hazelnut oil; - create a pan-European black list of any economic agent involved in the falisifaction of olive oil and other food products and to cancel immediately any financial support to them. The Parliament invites the Court of Auditors to produce a special report on this issue. The Commission is also asked to prohibit, in the framework of the current revision of Regulation 2815/98/EC, the placing on the market of olive oil with out a label, and to provide for the product's origin to be determined not by the place where it is produced but the place where it is harvested. The Parliament expresses its surprise at the Commission's reply as to the reliability of the International Olive Oil Council's statistics, and asks the Commission for details of the new elements that permitted changing production and stocks at the eighteenth session of the IOOC and it is also surprisedthat the resulting from these stock corrections did not have any effect on either the markets or intervention.