Resolution on the mid-term review of the common agricultural policy CAP

2002/2598(RSP) - 07/11/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the mid-term review of the CAP by 315 votes for, 106 against, with 62 abstentions. It considered that a reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP) is necessary. In the enlarged Union, the European agricultural model, as a multifunctional form of agriculture, must be developed and protected against unfair external competition. In particular, the objectives of preventive consumer protection and fair incomes for farmers, as well as those of employment, protection of the environment, public health and animal welfare, should be more precisely defined. Multilateral agreements, including the non-trade-related aspects (SPS, TBT, TRIPS), must be renegotiated. Parliament supported the principle of introducing a new model of support based on a system of income support decoupled from production, with specific multifunctional supplements. It stressed that the transformation of the intervention schemes into outright safety nets is only possible if an adequate form of external protection is in place to secure the stability of a multifunctional European agricultural model. Aid that is partially decoupled from production should be paid to farmers in such a way that it does not result in an internal reduction of production prices by the recipients. Parliament went on to endorse the principle of conditionality in relation to the environment, food safety, and health and animal welfare for the payment of first-pillar aid. It accepted the principle of compulsory modulation but calls for flexible application, which took account of the differences between producers, sectors and areas. There should be tax-free allowances, which can be administered on a flexible basis according to income and employment. On rural development, Parliament asked for a special effort to preserve traditional family farms and support young farmers, particularly in less-favoured areas and the outermost regions, and to strengthen rural infrastructure. The Commission's proposals cannot be implemented under the current interinstitutional agreement. The financial perspective needs to be revised in order to re-allocate some of the funds from the first to the second pillar. Parliament stated that it should be given full responsibility for the budget. It called for the creation of annual reserves for emergencies, and rejected the systematic payment of national aid as it is contrary to the solidarity principle and creates further disparities between the regions. On revision of the CAP, Parliament considered, in view of the major structural differences between the applicant countries and the Member States and between the applicant countries themselves, that greater simplification be undertaken in the management of support for farms and rural infrastructure. It is imperative to introduce a simplified basic premium having a positive impact on income primarily for the benefit of small family farms in order to maintain jobs and income in the countryside. In relation to the WTO, Parliament noted that the USA's new internal support measures run counter to the WTO's call to phase out production-linked support. A partially decoupled aid scheme is workable only in conjunction with a special form of external protection and internal regulation of markets, if efforts to protect work, the environment and quality in a multifunctionalEuropean agriculture are to be successful.