Honey: improving production and marketing (implem. Regulation (EC) No 1211/97). Report

2001/2156(COS) - 13/12/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report by Mrs Astrid LULLING (EPP-ED, L). The resolution notes that the programmes cofinanced by the EU under Regulation 1221/97/EC have qualitative and quantitative shortcomings and have proved incapable of preventing the deterioration of the situation facing European bee-keepers as markets open up and become more global. It also expresses concern at the fact that the production and marketing of honey in the Union are hampered by long-standing structural deficiencies, while the pollination of plants by bees, which must continue in all areas in order to obviate any adverse effects on the environment and rural development, is under threat. Urgent action should be taken to enable the sector to cope financially with the genuine crisis which it is currently experiencing, involving for example a more flexible interpretation of Regulation 1221/97/EC, which would allow programmes which meet the need to ensure the sector's survival to be cofinanced. On the other hand, the Parliament condemns the US trade authorities' imposition of anti-dumping duties on imports of honey from Argentina and China - the EU's main suppliers - which is resulting in greater pressure from such products on the Community market, leading to falling prices and lower income levels for European bee-keepers. Equally, it deplores the fact that the Commission sees no need to alter Council Regulation 1221/97/EC or Commission Regulation 2300/97/EC and that the only proposal put forward in report COM(2001) 70, subsequently implemented under Regulation 704/2001/EC, is to simplify the management of the existing budgetary framework. There is also a call for honey to be incorporated into veterinary policy, particularly as regards the appropriations allocated to combating varroasis. The Parliament considers that the budget resources allocated to bee-keeping under Regulation 1221/97/EC fall short of what is required and it believes that the overall budget must gradually be increased both to finance new measures and to raise the percentage of Community funding and enable measures to be implemented more consistently and fairly.