

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

1995/0160(SYN) - 05/09/2001 - Follow-up document

AIM: Evaluation and future orientation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1292/96 on food-aid policy and food-aid management and special operations in support of food security. CONTENT: In accordance with Article 32 of Regulation (EC) No 1292/96, the Commission made an overall evaluation of the operations financed by the Community under the said Regulation. The primary purpose of this communication was to present the findings of this evaluation and to make proposals regarding the future of the Regulation. On the basis of its evaluation, the Commission concluded that there was no need to alter the content of the Regulation. There was, however, a need to clarify the role of the Regulation in the context of the priorities outlined in the development policy of the Communities and of the progress made towards the development of a comprehensive framework for the reduction of poverty. According to the Commission's communication, the following points required clarification: · the role of the Regulation and its consistency with the other policies and instruments of the Commission; · the objectives and specific applications of the various instruments within the Regulation; · measures required to improve the efficiency and the quality of programme management at all stages of the programming and project cycle. The external evaluation of the Regulation served to highlight the close link between the absence of food security and the prevalence of poverty. The evaluators concluded that the impact of the programme was difficult to assess at this relatively early stage. Nevertheless, they considered that the policy and programme design offered grounds for optimism, although unresolved operational problems could jeopardise the successful completion of several projects. In general terms, the evaluation report recommended that the Commission should: - preserve the Regulation because it served to reduce poverty; - undertake a further evaluation in two to three years when the implementation of the 1996 Regulation had progressed sufficiently to provide conclusive results; - develop specific criteria and verifiable indicators for all projects and programmes; there was a need to carry out systematic monitoring and assessment in the field to make information available for project and programme evaluation; - ensure that the adequacy of implementation procedures and the capacity of the EC and the recipient countries to absorb resources matched the availability of resources and commitments; until this was done, there was little point in increasing commitments; - ensure that, where not already implemented, country strategies would cover all instruments (not just food aid) for a specific country in a coherent and complementary way; - encourage local purchases and triangular transactions; - shorten the chain of command from Brussels to the field teams; - establish a more detailed mandate for RESAL within each recipient country; - strengthen the role of the Food Aid and Food Security Committee by focusing it more on strategic and sectoral issues; - earmark budgetary funds to support the pursuit of food-security objectives, both as a counterpart to the currency facility in the event of a food shortage and as a stand-alone instrument supporting sectoral programmes.