Resolution on the drought in Spain

2005/2560(RSP) - 12/05/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the drought in Spain, which has led to the destruction of numerous crops including fruit trees, olive groves, herbaceous plants and horticultural products and flowers, as well as causing substantial losses to stockbreeding and the processing industry. It noted that

the losses to producers will, by the next harvest period, stand at more than EUR 2 billion. Parliament expressed its solidarity with farmers and stockbreeders in Spain and in the Iberian peninsula as a whole, in view of the generally unfavourable climatic conditions they are facing.

Parliament welcomed the Commission's Communication on risk and crisis management in agriculture (COM(2005)0074). It called for an effective Community protection system to safeguard European farmers against risks and crises such as those arising from the current drought in Portugal and Spain.

Parliament went on to call for changes in the EU Solidarity Fund and eligibility conditions under the common agricultural policy:

-the Commission is asked to release resources from the EU Solidarity Fund with a view to alleviating the damage caused to the productive capacity of whole regions, given that the frost and drought have affected living conditions and economic stability in numerous areas;

-the eligibility criteria for the Fund should be reviewed as well as the measures that may be funded under the Solidarity Fund, so as to enable the fund to be used in response to situations of this kind;

-the Commission is asked to improve the eligibility conditions for aid under the common agricultural policy, by means of the following measures: greater flexibility in the set-aside regime; authorisation of grazing on set-aside land; exemption from the obligation to achieve flowering in order to receive Community aid for herbaceous crops; exemption from the general obligation regarding grain legume use in order to receive aid and the possibility of direct use of the arable land concerned for grazing; greater mobilisation of intervention cereals in order to meet livestock's feeding needs; greater mobilisation of intervention cereals in order to meet livestock's feeding needs; and bringing CAP aids forward to September.

-funding should be made available to ensure that effective preventive action may be taken against the escalation of forest fires that is another serious consequence of the lack of rain;

- the Commission needs to support measures, including measures to raise public awareness, in support of the more rational use of water, in particular in southern Europe.

Finally, Parliament welcomed the commitments made at the Brussels European Council to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% compared to their 1990 levels by 2020 and to keep the maximum increase in global temperatures to no more than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.