Expenditure in the veterinary field: measures to combat avian influenza, Community financial assistance (amend. Decision 90/424/EEC)

2005/0063(CNS) - 14/11/2005

The committee adopted the report by Ilda FIGUEIREDO (GUE/NGL, PT) amending the proposal under the consultation procedure:

- whereas the Commission had proposed a Community co-financing rate of 50% for outbreaks of High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and 30% for outbreaks of Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI), the committee wanted a 50% co-financing rate for both types, on the grounds that it was important to eradicate the Low Pathogenic form as this can mutuate into HPAI;

- the Community should pay 100% of the costs of vaccination;

- MEPs wanted provision to be made for financial compensation to poultry farmers whose eggs or chickens were not necessarily destroyed but were sent to "other destinations", resulting in revenue that was lower than the normal value of the eggs or poultry. The proposal should specify that "differentiation should be applied when compensation is being given for different kinds of eggs";

- the committee added a new clause aimed at extending the scope of Community financial assistance so as to cover cooperation and technical assistance schemes for third countries, particularly in Asia, in order to ensure effective prevention and screening in the countries in which Avian Influenza originates;

- the Commission should investigate the establishment of a European animal health fund, with contributions from livestock farmers and other related businesses within the EU, which could cover the costs of outbreaks of contagious animal diseases;

- the Commission should draw up a proposal for harmonising the distribution of costs relating to such outbreaks between the agricultural sector and the governments within the Member States;

- the relevant Council regulations on exceptional market support measures should be brought into line with Council Decision 90/424/EEC, as amended;

- finally, the committee inserted a new clause providing for the Community to support the development of a system designed to monitor and screen for the disease, including laboratory diagnosis, research into vaccines, studies, meetings of experts, the provision of information campaigns and the issuing of publications. The aim would be to assess the impact which migratory birds have on the spread of contagious diseases in Europe and to monitor their migratory routes.