Commom agricultural policy CAP: risk and crisis management

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The Italian delegation, supported by the French, Greek, Spanish, Polish, Portuguese, Hungarian and Cypriot delegations, drew the attention of the Commission and the Council to the crisis in the sectors of wine and fruit and vegetables, in particular concerning tomatoes and peaches and eating grapes, after several demonstrations had taken place in Italy recently. Increasing production, growing imports from third countries and a reduction in consumption of fruit and vegetables had led to low prices in this sector. The Italian delegation also asked for further authorisation for crisis distillation measures in the wine sector to be adopted. The Italian delegation asked for presentation of the draft Regulation on crisis management in agriculture – different options had been discussed under the Luxembourg Presidency- as soon as possible. The measures envisaged by this delegation would include, among others, withdrawal from the market of the excess production and promotional campaigns.

Commissioner Fischer-Boel recalled that she had already presented a communication from the Commission on risk and crisis management in agriculture on which the Council had held an exchange of views as a first step towards launching a comprehensive debate within the Council. She underlined that extending the safety nets in the common market organisations (CMOs) in the event of market crises such as the one existing in the beef sector was not envisaged. She stressed the need for a case-by-case approach in each sector. She also stated that, with regard to the extremely varied positions expressed by delegations in the Council, no legislative proposal had yet been submitted. She also indicated that the Commission had launched a management instrument for risk and crisis management, as requested by the European Parliament, and was awaiting a report from the European Parliament and other European bodies on this issue.

Concerning the reform of the CMO on fruit and vegetables (Regulations 2200/1996/EC and 2201/1996 /EC), she mentioned that, in order to have a coherent and complete overview of the sector, legislative proposals for both of the Regulations on fresh and processed fruits and vegetables would be presented to the Council in the second half of 2006. She also insisted on a more market-oriented sector. Finally, as regards the Italian request on wine, she indicated that the management committee on wine agreed on 6 September 2005 on a Commission Regulation opening crisis distillation for table wines in Italy for a volume of 2 million hectolitres.

On this particular issue, she also pointed out that under the current Regulation 1493/1999/EC on the CMO in wine, producing Member States also enjoyed the possibility of a specific scheme for the permanent grubbing-up of vineyards. She finally hinted that under the future draft legislation amending the current CMO in the wine sector, further incentive would be given to this specific scheme.