Wine sector: common organisation of the market COM

2006/2109(INI) - 18/09/2006

The Council held a policy debate, based on a presidency questionnaire, on certain key issues of the Commission's Communication on the wine sector reform.

The positions held by the delegations are as follows:

Question 1: Is option 2 or option 3 the most adequate solution to the current difficulties of the wine sector? In this context, should we envisage a combination of these options?

A large number of delegations supported option 2 as initially proposed by the Commission in its Communication; however some delegations either expressed their interest in option 3 or could envisage combining certain elements of option 3 with option 2;

Question 2:

a) To what extent would the proposed combination of the grubbing-up scheme, abolition of planting rights scheme and abolition of specific market measures contribute to improving the sector's competitiveness and achieving better balance on the market?

While many delegations stressed that grubbing-up should not be an objective in itself and should be subject to environmental, social or other criteria, several delegations supported the measure, as long as it was decided on by Member States on a national or regional basis, and managed through a national envelope. Some of these delegations suggested that Member States be granted greater flexibility when managing this envelope. Many producer Member States were reluctant to countenance the abrupt abolition of the planting rights scheme. Finally as regard specific market measures, several northern and eastern producer Member States opposed the ban on the use of sugar suggested by the Commission.

b) If market management measures were to be abolished, should this be applied from day one or progressively and to what extent should alternative safety net mechanisms be permissible under the national envelope?

In general, while many delegations acknowledged the need to abolish certain market measures, they believed that a progressive elimination was preferable, with some delegations preferring to retain some of the measures that proved to be efficient. Some producer Member States also supported the possible introduction of a safety net mechanism to be financed from within the national envelope.

Question 3: Early retirement, agri-environment support, support to investments at producers and processing level, and the other measures are already available in the rural development menu. Do you agree with the proposed transfer of funds from market to rural development and that these be ring-fenced for the wine producing regions?

While several delegations favoured a possible transfer of funds from market to rural development or could examine this possibility, a certain number of producer Member States were opposed to such transfer, arguing that the funding for restructuring the sector would be reduced.