

Thursday 10 March 2005

P6_TA(2005)0071

Draft amending budget No 1/2005

European Parliament resolution on draft amending budget No 1/2005 of the European Union for the financial year 2005, Section III — Commission (6876/2005 — C6-0052/2005 — 2005/2014 (BUD))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 272 of the EC Treaty and Article 177 of the Euratom Treaty,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities ⁽¹⁾, and particularly Articles 37 and 38,
 - having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2005, as finally adopted on 16 December 2004 ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 6 May 1999 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and improvement of the budgetary procedure ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to Preliminary draft amending budget No 1/2005 of the European Union for the financial year 2005, which the Commission presented on 28 January 2005 (COM(2005)0025),
 - having regard to Draft amending budget No 1/2005, which the Council established on 3 March 2005 (6876/2005 — C6-0052/2005),
 - having regard to Rule 69 of and Annex IV to its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A6-0047/2005),
- A. whereas it is necessary to adapt the Commission section of the 2005 budget to the changes made as part of the revision of the services organisation charts in connection with the appointment of the new Commission,
- B. whereas the aim of this draft amending budget is to make the necessary technical, budgetary neutral modifications to the 2005 budget,
1. Approves draft amending budget No 1/2005 without any amendments;
 2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the other institutions and bodies concerned.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 60, 8.3.2005.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 172, 18.6.1999, p. 1. Agreement as amended by Decision 2003/429/EC (OJ L 147, 14.6.2003, p. 25).

P6_TA(2005)0072

Organic food and farming

European Parliament resolution on the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming (2004/2202(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Communication 'European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming' (COM(2004)0415),
- having regard to the conclusions of the Gothenburg European Council of 15 and 16 June 2001,

Thursday 10 March 2005

- having regard to the conclusions of the European Conference on Rural Development held in Salzburg on 12 to 14 November 2003,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 of 24 June 1991 on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 December 2003 on coexistence between genetically modified crops and conventional and organic crops⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A6-0039/2005),
- A. whereas organic farming has become a growth industry and production method in the European Union as a result of consumer demand and the ever-increasing supply offered by producers,
- B. whereas this production method makes a major contribution to the multifunctionality of European agriculture, providing as it does healthy, high-quality products while at the same time bringing about a reduction in environmental pollution, encouraging the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, providing protection for cultivated land and preserving, or even creating, jobs,
- C. whereas in the EU of 15 the agricultural area devoted to organic farming increased from 0,1 to 3,3 % between 1985 and 2002, and whereas organic food represents an estimated turnover of EUR 11 billion at European level and EUR 23 billion worldwide,
- D. whereas before 1992 — the year when the European Union gave its support to organic farming in the framework of its agri-environmental policy — organic farming was developed solely at the private initiative of certain farmers, with the support of interested members of the public,
- E. whereas Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 is based on the promotion and production- and marketing-control criteria already developed by the relevant organic farming associations,
- F. whereas under the latest reform of the CAP support for organic farming depends on the overall volume of resources within the second pillar of the CAP and on the portion thereof compulsorily set aside for this farming method,
- G. whereas the special characteristics of organic farming, not only with regard to the environmental conditions required for it to operate, but also with regard to:
- (a) the clear need to market the products through short distribution channels,
 - (b) the still high prices of the final products,
 - (c) conformity with environmental and health regulations that must also be complied with by small-holders and SMEs involved in processing,
 - (d) extending organic production to other specific sectors such as stockbreeding and viticulture,
- are all aspects which require special handling at a regulatory and financial level, on a different basis from traditional production,
- H. whereas there is great variation in the support given by Member States to the development of organic farming, and whereas the disparities between them must be reduced in the framework of a European action programme to promote organic farming,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 198, 22.7.1991, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 91 E, 15.4.2004, p. 680.

Thursday 10 March 2005

1. whereas possible contamination by genetically modified crops is of particular importance in the context of organic farming, particularly as regards the measures to be taken to regulate the coexistence of transgenic and organic crops,

Development of the organic food market and development of standards (Actions 1-3)

1. Welcomes the fact that the Commission recognises that organic farming plays an important part in the objectives of the new CAP, as defined in the June 2003 Council of Ministers Luxembourg Agreement; notes that it does not consider it necessary to provide human or financial resources in the context of the European Union budget; welcomes the demand-based approach chosen by the Commission to stimulate organic farming;

2. Takes the view that:

- (a) the measures to support information and promotion campaigns are useful if they take account of the experience of the industry's professional associations and the Member States' legislation and programmes; producer groups and cooperatives should play a particular role in the rational management of the production and marketing of organic products and food; they can also contribute towards achieving quality production and to processing and marketing through direct distribution or commercial chains, thereby securing added value for the producers themselves;
- (b) the Commission should base its promotion measures on an analysis of the markets and of the consequences of the process of concentrating trade in organic products, paying particular attention to retailing and distribution;
- (c) consumer information campaigns, particularly for children and young people, should be intensified and combined with awareness programmes concerning the environmental and nutritional value of organic products; promotion campaigns should focus on public canteens, with particular reference to school canteens; the promotion of organic products should be strengthened under the relevant Community programmes within and outside the European Union;
- (d) in all promotion activities mentioned in Action 1, the Commission should specify and promote to the same level the environmental advantages of organic agriculture and the advantages that this type of product offers for human health;
- (e) small producers and SMEs working in the food industry should be the main beneficiaries of these measures, particularly as they are part of regional, multi-partner structures;
- (f) the development of an internal market in organic food and non-food products will lead to the standardisation of their production methods, whilst naturally taking account of their particular features and traditional regional methods of production, will establish uniform controls and national bodies for the certification of organic products, and will help to remove obstacles to trade and provide fuller information to European consumers; also takes the view that the Community logo should be supplemented with information about the local and regional origin of the products;

3. Welcomes the Commission's intention to further harmonise European standards for organic products and production, thus enabling proper functioning of the internal market, ending distortion of competition, and guaranteeing completely free trade in organic products throughout the European Union; considers that Member States' higher national standards should not prevent organic products from other Member States being traded freely as certified organic products in such Member States;

4. Acknowledges the major role of the Internet as a tool for the dissemination and promotion of organic farming and believes that it is extremely important that the information be circulated among the agents involved; suggests, for this reason, that a serious effort be made to transfer the technology already available; and requests that the Commission establish training measures with Community funding (over and above the provisions of Action 6 addressed to the Member States) for those farmers and producers who wish to opt for the conversion of their traditional operations into organic operations;

Thursday 10 March 2005

5. Takes the view that there should be better harmonisation of specifications, including those in the livestock-rearing sector;
6. Believes that the Commission should include, in its proposal for preparing plans at national, regional or local level in the Member States, promotion of seed production for organic farming and the encouragement of nurseries dedicated to the production of suitable plants for organic farming;
7. Recalls that in the context of the 2005 budgetary procedure, Parliament specifically included the Action Plan under the budget item relating to promotion measures (05 08 05 01), and takes the view that an increase in this budget line could be envisaged for 2006 after an analysis of the needs of the Member States;
8. Takes the view that the Action Plan should include a recommendation that development aid and fair trade should promote the production of and trade in organic products so that the Action Plan also acquires a global perspective;

Public aid for organic farming (Actions 4-6)

9. Considers it essential for the actions and aid for which provision is made under the Regulation on rural development to be more clearly defined as regards organic production, with a view to promoting this production method in all the Member States; considers in this connection that the dynamics of applying the new EARDF programme for rural development in the Member States should be carefully observed;
10. Stresses the need to encourage public aid for organic farming and for industries connected to organic farming, and to promote the introduction of quality systems;
11. Takes the view that care should be taken to ensure that the assisted introduction of organic farming, particularly in sensitive zones, does not cause an imbalance in the supply of organic products; conversions to organic farming should therefore be supported on the basis of identified outlets;
12. Takes the view that the health and hygiene standards applicable to SMEs in the processing sector, particularly in the dairy and meat industries, must be defined in the framework of the existing special arrangements for processing plants;
13. Believes that the Action Plan should point out clearly the contribution of organic farming in areas such as the Nitrates Directive⁽¹⁾, the Habitats Directive⁽²⁾, water policy and promotion of biodiversity, as well as its contribution to employment;
14. Takes the view that the Commission should pay particular attention to the situation of organic farming in the new Member States, inter alia in the contexts of employment and the rural economy;

Research (Action 7)

15. Suggests that in the European research framework programme, organic farming as a production method should be recognised as a priority, as should the coexistence of organic with conventional and genetically modified crops and assessment of the impact of the technologies that pose a threat to this production method, including environmentally directed research on selection, with regard to both crop species and farm animals;
16. Regrets that the Action Plan presented contains no specific measure to promote research beyond the general declaration of 'strengthening research on organic farming'; in this respect, urges the Commission to give more detailed definition to such measures by:
 - (a) promoting more studies, analyses and specific statistics on the various aspects of organic farming,
 - (b) carrying out more in-depth studies into the production of feed for organic stockbreeding,

⁽¹⁾ Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources (OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1).

⁽²⁾ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

Thursday 10 March 2005

- (c) incorporating new technologies for the development of organic farming,
- (d) compiling and publishing on a Europe-wide basis the studies and research undertaken in the various Member States on the subject of organic farming, etc.;

calls for this research to take account of the (global or holistic) systemic approach taken by organic farming, particularly by including in situ research measures;

Standards and inspection (Actions 8-21)

17. Welcomes the implementation of more advanced standards of animal welfare, but stresses that this should be accompanied by support for investment, since they can often require costly conversions or building of new structures; in parallel, economical methods (e.g. straw filters, overflow settling tanks, etc.) should be foregrounded;

18. Supports the Commission proposal in Action 9 to endeavour to guarantee the integrity of organic production by enforcing the regulations and adhering to the limit dates planned for the transitional periods; but requests that special cases that arise be examined, for example, in stockbreeding, in cases in which non-extension of the date for the introduction of animals not organically bred would mean a curb on the recovery and maintenance of certain indigenous breeds which are already endangered in certain Member States;

19. Considers it regrettable that the Commission has still not proposed an approach to seed in connection with the exchange of traditional local varieties and of varieties no longer included in the register which offers farmers freedom of action and allows seed health requirements and criteria of varietal purity and germination rates to be met, in accordance with existing legislation;

20. Considers that, in order to ensure the credibility of organic products, the Commission should check that the Member States carry out their supervisory duties by means of private and national supervisory bodies and, where necessary, impose penalties for infringements; considers, furthermore, that the Commission should draw up an annual survey of the Member States' reports and inform Parliament;

21. Urges the Commission to develop further the fifth facet of Action 10 and specify the way in which it intends to achieve the objective of improving environmental legislation with regard to organic farming;

22. Approves the establishment of an independent expert panel for technical advice, proposed under Action 11, to issue technical opinions, provided that the interested parties — farmers, processing companies and consumers — are appropriately involved;

23. Takes the view that in the Action Plan the issue of GMOs cannot be addressed solely by means of thresholds, but that the Commission must state what it intends to do as regards coexistence of transgenic and organic crops; whatever happens, it must be made clear that, in the event of contamination, even if accidental, the financial responsibility is to be borne exclusively by the people illegally marketing GMOs, and not by the farming industry as a whole; insists that with regard to GMOs the same rules should be applicable to Community products as to imported products;

24. Questions the appropriateness of Action 17, which aims to transfer to an independent international organisation the system of accreditation for control bodies, and calls for this important step in the process, which lends legitimacy to European organic farming in the eyes of European citizens, to remain under the control of the Commission and the Member States;

25. Suggests that any judgment regarding fraud pertaining to the organic nature of a product or production process be available throughout the European Union in order to avoid any recurrence of situations such as a person already convicted of fraud being able to find a new certifying body and having their certification reissued, or moving from one Member State to another in order to continue their fraudulent dealings, or operators in the industry having no knowledge of their fraudulent past;

26. Stresses that the definition of organic farming must relate not only to the production method but also to a set of agricultural practices which guarantee respect for the environment and biodiversity, and enable the production of healthy, high-quality foodstuffs; acceptance must be gained for this definition of organic farming in international fora in order to safeguard the specificity of the organic farming industry in the context of international trade;

Thursday 10 March 2005

27. Considers it regrettable that the Commission presents no concrete financial measures relating to the organisation of distribution channels, and calls for support, including financial support, to be given in the framework of the structuring of production, processing and marketing;

28. Stresses to the Commission the fact that European organic farming needs firm support for the marketing and distribution of its products; calls on the Commission to put forward more concrete proposals on the subject, bearing in mind that:

- (a) there is a need to tackle the current problem of high prices for organic products,
- (b) there is a need to promote the focussing of supply on organic products,
- (c) groupment into associations and the creation of organic producer organisations can play a fundamental role in facilitating marketing through common distribution channels,
- (d) the formation of a large market favouring long distribution channels, with the resulting additional costs to the environment (of processing, preserving and transport), is not the most suitable approach given the inherent characteristics of organic production; it would therefore be advisable to promote shorter distribution channels, which would be certain to result in better distribution and more affordable prices and make it easier to trace and inspect the foods;

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29. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.

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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women — Platform for Action (Beijing+10)

European Parliament resolution on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women — Platform for Action (Beijing+10)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March 2005,
- having regard to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 21 December 1965,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women of 18 December 1979,
- having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 10 December 1984,
- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in Beijing on 15 September 1995 by the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace,
- having regard to its resolutions of 15 June 1995 ⁽¹⁾ and 21 September 1995 ⁽²⁾ on that Conference,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 July 1996 on the follow-up to the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development ⁽³⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 166, 3.7.1995, p. 92.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 269, 16.10.1995, p. 146.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 211, 22.7.1996, p. 31.