

(2000/C 280 E/136)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-2780/99****by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE/NGL) to the Commission**

(18 January 2000)

*Subject:* Price support measures for juicing oranges in Greece

Aid for juicing oranges has been reduced by 30% because of the overshooting of the current processing threshold of 1 189 000 tonnes, set by the Commission for the 1999-2000 period, and it is expected that this reduction will lead to a further drop in producers' incomes, since the prices fixed do not cover production costs, while in contracts which have been signed with the processors the trade price is also unusually low.

The 1 189 000-tonne threshold set for the imposition of penalties on orange production was calculated on the basis of years during which unusually low commercial quantities were produced, due to various circumstances, and it clearly does not correspond to actual production levels, as Parliament acknowledged in its sitting on 14 April 1999, when it suggested the threshold should be set at 1 665 000 tonnes. Does the Commission therefore intend to set a higher ceiling for processing oranges in order to reduce penalties and, primarily, to protect producers' incomes?

**Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission**

(15 February 2000)

Citrus growers must derive their income from selling their fruit on both the fresh and the processing markets. The processing aid is complementary to that income.

The threshold for oranges set by the Council was calculated using the quantities processed in the past with Community aid.

Council Regulation (EC) No 2202/96 of 28 October 1996 introducing a Community aid scheme for producers of certain citrus fruits<sup>(1)</sup> requires the Commission to submit a report on application of the processed citrus scheme to the Council accompanied by any appropriate proposals. It is in the context of this report that the Commission will examine the threshold level for oranges.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 297, 21.11.1996.

(2000/C 280 E/137)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-2781/99****by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE/NGL) to the Commission**

(18 January 2000)

*Subject:* Support measures for the marketing of oranges in Greece

It is expected that the large increase in orange production anticipated this year in Greece will create additional problems in finding market outlets for the product. The difficulty in exporting to central and eastern European countries, because of the bureaucratic and economic problems in certain countries and also because of the destruction of key roads due to the Yugoslavian war, is aggravating the market problem with the result that producers' incomes are in danger of falling dramatically.

What measures does the Commission intend to take (subsidising transport costs, increasing the quantities supplied as food aid, particularly in the Balkans, etc.) in order to facilitate the disposal of produce?