

The additional training appropriations will be funded within the current envelope of Title A-7 (decentralised expenditure on support staff and administration). The appropriations requested for Title A-7 in the 2001 preliminary draft budget are set at the same nominal level authorised in the 2000 budget.

At the proposed € 7,5 million level, provision for staff training will still only amount to about 0,05 % of total employment costs. This contrasts with provision in Member State administrations which is typically much higher.

As Reform proceeds and detailed proposals for necessary improvements in personnel policy are produced for consultation later this year it will be relevant to give consideration to increasing provision for training as an investment in improved efficiency and management. All analysis relating to such possible developments will naturally be available for parliamentary consideration.

(2001/C 81 E/033)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1350/00
by Jean-Louis Bernié (EDD) to the Council

(3 May 2000)

Subject: The Commission's challenging of the principle of 'assumption of employment' for performing artists laid down in Article L 762-1 of the French Labour Code

France is threatened with legal proceedings before the European Court of Justice for its refusal to waive the 'assumption of employment' for foreign artists referred to in Article L 762-1 of the French Labour Code.

1. Is this measure not excessive, given that to apply this article exclusively to French artists in effect puts them at a disadvantage in their own country?
2. In fact, it means that those who employ foreign artists would no longer have to pay social costs but would have to do so when employing French artists.
3. This downwards harmonisation will prejudice French performing artists. Is this not tantamount to a sentence of death for this specifically French provision which offers performing artists one of the highest standards of social protection in Europe?

Reply

(29 September 2000)

Article 211 of the EC Treaty requires the Commission to ensure that the provisions of the Treaty and the measures taken by the institutions pursuant thereto are applied. The Council is therefore unable to comment on the way in which Community law provisions are implemented by Member States, especially when such implementation is or shortly will be the subject of proceedings before the Court of Justice of the European Communities.

(2001/C 81 E/034)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1356/00
by Jorge Hernández Mollar (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(4 May 2000)

Subject: Modification of specific aids to the dried fruit and nuts sector

The Union of Small Farmers and Stockbreeders of Málaga province (Spain) has expressed its concern that the dried fruit and nuts sector could cease to exist in the near future, as a result of the decision to change the existing system of aids and replace it by a new system proposed by the Commission which could lead to the disappearance of the sector, which provides a livelihood for 200 000 households. In Málaga province alone, elimination of the aids would affect over 15 000 producers.

The Union of Small Farmers believes that if the sector is to survive it can only be through the introduction of specific income support arrangements for dried fruit and nuts producers under the budgets provided for in the COM in fruit and vegetables. This proposal has already been put forward by the Fruit and Vegetable Producers' Platform.

Can the Commission state what action it intends to take to alleviate these farmers' anxieties arising from its proposals to alter the aid arrangements which have hitherto applied in this sector?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission

(13 June 2000)

The specific aid scheme for nuts of Title IIa of Regulation (EEC) No 1035/72 of the Council of 18 May 1972 on the common organisation of the market in fruit and vegetables⁽¹⁾ was set up in 1989 in order to improve nut productivity and competitiveness. The main element of this scheme was the improvement plan, through which a producer organisation could benefit from financial support for a maximum of 10 years.

The support scheme has not been modified. The support was always intended to be temporary and degressive, in order to shift financial responsibility onto the growers.

Additional support for the nut sector is available for nuts and locust beans, as for all other products in the fruit and vegetable sector, through the operational fund scheme of Council Regulation (EC) No 2200/96 of 28 October 1996 on the common organisation of the market in fruit and vegetables⁽²⁾ which provides financial support for all fruit and vegetables marketed through producer organisations.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 118, 20.5.1972.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 297, 21.11.1996.

(2001/C 81 E/035)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1357/00

by Jorge Hernández Mollar (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(4 May 2000)

Subject: European Union arbitration in the controversy over designations of origin for Sherry and Montilla wines

The marketing strategies for Sherry and Montilla wines in the United Kingdom have led to a confrontation between the two Spanish designations of origin which will probably have to be settled before the courts.

In the light of this and similar situations, the Community agricultural sector has been wondering whether such disputes might be settled through arbitration which could be set in motion by means of specific mechanisms implemented within the framework of the common agricultural policy.

Can the Commission say whether the common agricultural policy (CAP) provides or could provide arbitration mechanisms which would help to settle disputes between Community farmers, either from the same country or from different countries, without them having to go before the courts?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission

(9 June 2000)

The Commission has no recent information on the confrontation to which the Honourable Member refers between the Montilla-Moriles and Jerez-Xeres-Sherry designations of origin brought about by their commercial strategies in the United Kingdom.