

Council press release issued at the 1000th meeting of the Special Committee on Agriculture (Brussels, 31 October 1995)

Caption: This press release, issued on the occasion of the 1000th meeting of the Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA) held on 31 October 1995 in Brussels, recalls the origins and outlines the duties of the Committee.

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Press release (Brussels, 31 October 1995)

1000th meeting of the Special Committee on Agriculture

The Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA) of the Council of the European Union held its 1000th meeting today, Tuesday 31 October 1995, in the Justus Lipsius building in Brussels. Alongside the present heads of delegation the meeting brought together former Chairmen of the Committee, Commission spokesmen who had sat on the SCA in the past and the current and honorary Directors-General responsible for agriculture in the General Secretariat of the Council.

The SCA is the body which prepares the decisions of the Agriculture Council, notably for all aspects concerning common organizations of the markets, agri-monetary arrangements and agricultural structures. For that purpose it meets weekly, as a rule on Mondays and Tuesdays, except in weeks when the Council itself is sitting.

The Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) is directly responsible for preparing the proceedings of the Agriculture Council with regard to financial implications and harmonization of laws (veterinary, plant health, food, etc.).

Unlike Coreper, whose origins lie in the 1957 EEC Treaty, the SCA was set up by a Council Decision of 12 May 1960 on the acceleration of the rate of attainment of the Treaty, with particular reference to the establishment of customs union and the common agricultural policy (CAP). In order to ensure the acceleration decided upon in the latter domain, the then six Member States considered it necessary for the preparation of the provisions to be adopted to be entrusted to a specialized body.

The first SCA meeting was held on 9 September 1960. Over the years the Committee's work has intensified to reflect the increasing importance of the CAP. In order to be able to cope with the task of preparing the Council's proceedings, the SCA inter alia set up working parties for the various sectoral aspects, and these submit regular reports to it on the tasks given to them.

As with Council meetings, in principle the Commission participates in all meetings of the Committee and of the working parties set up by it. The General Secretariat of the Council assists the SCA and its working parties in carrying out their mandates.

In May 1967 the Council further entrusted the SCA with the task of facilitating ongoing mutual information for the Member States and the Commission on developments in agricultural markets and of studying all problems relating to the management of those markets and its direction.

The SCA has also proved, for many of its members, a rewarding preparation for greater responsibility at national and European level, with some of its members subsequently becoming Ministers for Agriculture, namely Mr Michel COINTAT (France) in the '70s and Mr Gerrit BRAKS (Netherlands) in the '80s, Mr Kalevi HEMILÄ (Finland) since April 1994 and Mr Walter LUCHETTI (Italy) since January 1995. Other members of the SCA still hold or have held senior positions in the Ministries of Agriculture. Some have become senior Commission officials, such as Mr David WILLIAMSON, Secretary-General of that Institution since 1987.

During lunch the current Chairman of the Committee, Mr Francisco Javier MATUT ARCHANCO, Agricultural Counsellor at the Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of Spain, made a speech in which he highlighted the preminent role of the SCA in the operation of the common agricultural policy and its successive reforms. For the Commission, Mr David ROBERTS, Deputy Director-General for Agriculture and former Chairman of the SCA, took the floor. Lastly, Mr José BARREIRO, Secretary-General of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, passed on to the guests the congratulations of the President of the Council, Mr Luis Maria ATIENZA, for the important work carried out by the SCA.