

European Parliament resolution on Mediterranean agriculture and enlargement towards the south (17 November 1982)

Caption: On 17 November 1982, the European Parliament adopts a resolution in which it highlights the implications of the enlargement of the European Economic Community (EEC) to include Spain and Portugal, with particular regard to the special situation of their agriculture.

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Resolution on Mediterranean agriculture and the problems of the enlargement of the EEC towards the south (17 November 1982)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture (Doc. 1-785/82),

A. having regard to the current negotiations between the European Community and Spain and Portugal on the accession of the latter two States to the Community,

B. having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the Council on a Mediterranean policy for the enlarged Community (COM(82) 353 final),

C. having regard to its resolution of 13 April 1978 on the guidelines concerning the development of the Mediterranean regions of the Community together with certain measures relating to agriculture ⁽¹⁾,

D. having regard to its resolution of 13 March 1980 on agricultural structural policy ⁽²⁾,

E. having regard to the Commission's proposals on reforming Community arrangements for certain Mediterranean products (COM(81) 402 final, COM(81) 403 final, COM(81) 408 final, COM(81) 610 final),

F. having regard to its resolution of 16 June 1982 on the changes to the common organization of markets in the fruit and vegetables sector ⁽³⁾,

G. having regard to its resolutions of 9 April 1981 ⁽⁴⁾, 20 November 1981 ⁽⁵⁾ and 9 July 1982 ⁽⁶⁾ organization of the market in wine,

H. having regard to its resolution of 19 November 1981 on the enlargement of the Community towards the south ⁽⁷⁾,

I. having regard to the association and cooperation agreements which the Community has concluded with a number of Mediterranean countries,

J. considering that the accession of two new States will have repercussions on agriculture in the Community of the Ten, in particular on its Mediterranean agriculture, and that its effects will also be felt on agriculture in the two applicant countries and in Mediterranean third countries,

K. considering moreover that enlargement towards the south will require the Community to review its trade relations with the Mediterranean countries as a whole,

L. considering that enlargement is a means of consolidating democracy in Spain and Portugal; that, consequently, every effort must be made to ensure its success,

M. considering the fundamental importance of agriculture in the economic activities of a number of Mediterranean regions of the Community,

N. considering that the London European Council at its meeting of 26 and 27 November 1981 decided to take the problems of Mediterranean agriculture into consideration,

O. considering that further enlargement must be such as to strengthen the Community as a whole; that, consequently, it must not be allowed to aggravate the existing difficulties of the Mediterranean regions of the Community of Ten,

P. considering, again in the spirit of strengthening the Community, that the essential regulatory procedure and production disciplines should be established forthwith for products likely to place a disproportionate

burden on the Community budget, having regard to their share of the value of final agricultural production,

Q. whereas, in some cases, it will be necessary to regulate the conditions governing the import of certain products in competition with Mediterranean products so as not to create serious and untenable situations in the enlarged Community, such as would arise in the vegetable oils and fats sector, leaving intact the commitments to cooperation and the development policies,

R. considering that any improvement in guarantees for Mediterranean agricultural production must not result in a disproportionate burden on the budget; that, consequently, those market organizations that depend on excessively costly instruments must be reviewed, since no discrimination can be tolerated in a democratic Europe,

S. whereas the improvement of guarantees for Mediterranean agricultural products will involve a revision of the market organizations for those products,

General considerations on the enlargement of the Community towards the south

1. Stresses the weaknesses inherent in Mediterranean agriculture, attributable in particular to:

(a) the nature of certain Mediterranean products, often highly seasonal and perishable, so that even transient difficulties on one market can wipe out the results of a year's work for the producers concerned,

(b) the difficulty of stocking certain products, making markets highly sensitive to supply and demand variations,

(c) inadequate, or even non-existent, producer organizations in certain sectors and regions and a weak cooperative system in certain sectors, preventing this market instability being alleviated,

(d) the inadequacy of Community rules for typical Mediterranean products as regards guarantees, crisis prevention and Community preference,

(e) agricultural structures poorly adapted to modern agriculture (small land areas, fragmentation), often as a result of perennial crops that are difficult to change, and a historical, human and cultural heritage that must be given its rightful place,

(f) the inadequacy of the technological effort that has been applied to the specific problems of agriculture and the agri-foodstuffs industry in these regions;

2 Also recalls the natural difficulties confronting the Mediterranean regions such as the geographical relief, soil types, water supply and the very changeable climate (heat, cold, wind); notes that natural difficulties in the more Northern regions have been overcome by the application of technology, a development that has not been matched in the South of the Community;

3. Stresses the importance of the agricultural sector in the two applicant countries, and in the Mediterranean regions of the Community and third countries;

4. Stresses the economic and social disparities as between agriculture in the applicant countries and in the Community, as well as disparities between the technical and structural levels of the respective agricultures;

5. Endorses, therefore, the Council Decision of 28 and 29 June 1982 asking the Commission to draw up a list of the economic and institutional problems created by Spanish and Portuguese membership; awaits with interest this list which will cast light on what is really at stake with enlargement;

6. Recommends in consequence a firm approach during accession negotiations to ensure that applicant countries:

(a) will immediately adopt, with a view to their accession, existing Community disciplines and those resulting from adaptation of Community arrangements;

(b) will refrain from encouraging their farmers to step up output in sectors where the Community is already experiencing difficulties in ensuring market balance and guaranteeing incomes, even if it is necessary to improve agricultural incomes in their Countries;

7. Considers in particular that investment incentives, new irrigation projects and the introduction of more intensive production techniques should be rigorously controlled in the case of surplus products and encouraged in the case of those in short supply;

8. Recommends to this effect that the Commission be authorized to inform the Spanish authorities forthwith of the concern aroused by the use of irrigated areas and to propose joint consideration of the possibility of earmarking such land, not for sensitive products (fruit and vegetables, wine, olive oil), but for crops in short supply, with the aim of reducing agri-foodstuffs dependency both in Spain and in the Community of Twelve;

9. Also recommends that the applicant countries should have time to adapt their agriculture to the new conditions of competition that will result under Community rules from the elimination of customs barriers;

10. Recommends in addition that, before accession, Portugal and even Spain should, with Community help, increase their scientific and technical activities in the agricultural sector to bring them more into line with the Member States in this area;

11. Considers that appropriate transition periods must be provided for the two applicant countries having regard to the nature of their respective types of agriculture, this transition to take place in varying stages, depending on the approximation of rules and conditions conducive to fair competition;

12. Considers that real negotiations must be initiated on the most important and sensitive issues, in particular agriculture; formally declares that the Accession Treaty must lay down fundamental rules precluding any regrettable cycle of permanent renegotiation after the definitive accession of the applicant States to the Community;

13. Affirms the absolute need for adaptation, before accession of the two applicant countries, of Community arrangements concerning sensitive Mediterranean agricultural products (fruit and vegetables, wine, olive oil), so as to prevent agricultural activity from being called into question in regions of the Community that are already put at a disadvantage by existing rules, and to secure for those engaged in agriculture in these regions guarantees comparable to those available in other regions of the Community, so as to comply with the objectives of Article 39 of the EEC Treaty; Asserts the need for rapid action to halt the present growing disparity between the incomes of those engaged in agriculture in different regions of the Community and to bridge the gap which has arisen between this sector and other sectors;

14. Believes that the reform of the CAP should not delay the accession negotiations which must aim to make Spain and Portugal full members of the Community at the earliest possible date;

[...]

(¹) OJ No C 108, 8.5.1978, p.49; Ligios report Doc. 34/78.

(²) OJ No C 85, 8.4.1980, p.53; Barbarella report Doc. 1-824/79.

(³) OJ No C 182, 19.7.1982, p.30; Maffre-Baugé report Doc. 1-279/82.

(⁴) OJ No C 101, 4.5.1981, p.53; Colleselli report Doc. 1-680/80.

(⁵) OJ No C 327, 14.12.1981, p.111; Colleselli report Doc. 1-667/81.

(⁶) OJ No C 238, 13.9.1982, p.87; Colleselli report Doc. 1-412/82.

(⁷) OJ No C 327, 14.12.1981, p.60.