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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 435/77) for a regulation on ~~the~~ statistical surveys of the areas under vines

Rapporteur: Mr A. LIOGIER

By letter of 2 December 1977 the President of the Council of the European Communities consulted the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 43 of the Treaty establishing the EEC, on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a regulation on the statistical surveys of the areas under vines.

By letter of 6 December 1977 the President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets for its opinion.

The Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr LIOGIER rapporteur.

It considered the proposal at its meeting of 30/31 March 1978 and adopted the motion for a resolution unanimously.

Present: Mr Kofoed, chairman; Mr Liogier, vice-chairman and rapporteur; Mr Andersen, Lord Brimelow, Mr Dewulf, Mr Früh, Mr Hansen, Mr Hoffman, Mr Klinker, Mr Müller, Mr Noé (deputizing for Mr Pucci), Mr Pisoni, Mr Radoux (deputizing for Mr Lemp) and Mr Tolman.

The opinion of the Committee on Budgets is attached.

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The Committee on Agriculture hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a regulation on the statistical surveys of the areas under vines

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council,¹
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty (Doc. 435/77),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 38/78),
1. Deplores the fact that it has not been possible to introduce and keep up to date a Community viticultural land register, especially table wines;
 2. Takes the view that the introduction of a regularly updated viticultural land register in the Member States concerned is still a valid means of rationalizing the market in wine;
 3. Notes that strict control of the areas under vines and more stringent limitation of planting will effectively prevent production surpluses;
 4. Recognizes that the introduction of a viticultural land register would cause certain difficulties, especially of a financial nature, but feels that the burden will be far heavier if production is unmanaged and that the cost of a viticultural land register will be largely offset by the benefits accruing from the resulting rationalization of the market;
 5. Is in favour of a genuine structural policy at Community level which would support the efforts of viticultural holdings to modernize and effect conversions, thereby remedying the structural imbalance of the market in wine;

¹ OJ No C 298 of 10.12.1977, p.3.

6. Accepts the Commission's proposal on condition that it undertakes to continue its efforts to bring about the introduction of a single viticultural land register for the whole Community.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The Commission Regulation of 28 February 1964¹ lays down that the Member States are to prepare and keep up to date a viticultural land register to act as a basis for the notification to the Commission of accurate and detailed information on wine production potential in the Community. This was an attempt to introduce into the Community as a whole a viticultural land register such as already existed in France.

Provided it is regularly updated, this system obviously provides very detailed and accurate information. The value of viticultural land registers for Community viticultural policy is beyond doubt.

Your committee feels obliged to stress the extreme gravity of the situation in the Community viticultural sector, which, in the absence of appropriate measures, is causing grave concern for the future.

The structural surplus in the Community - rising production coupled with a shrinking internal market - is becoming more acute. The balance sheet shows that in addition to imports, which mainly consist of table wines, there is currently a structural surplus of some seven million hectolitres.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that certain Community regions, where the climate and soil are ill-suited to wine growing, produce large quantities of poor quality table wine, whereas they could and should convert to other more suitable and therefore more profitable crops.

However, in other areas, with poor soil but a favourable climate, it is impossible to grow anything other than vines. This situation has long since raised the as yet unresolved problem of the definition of specific wine growing areas and of conversion measures to be encouraged elsewhere in the Community.

This underlines the urgent need for measures to control production at Community level. In this situation, Community wine growing policy should be orientated towards the introduction of stricter discipline on planting and stringent control of the areas under vines; these measures can only be effective if they are accompanied by a viticultural land register.

¹ Commission Regulation No. 26/64/EEC of 28 February 1964 laying down additional provisions for the preparation of the viticultural land register, for its management and for keeping it up to date; OJ No. 48, 19.3.1964, p.753

Given the present crisis, the Committee on Agriculture feels that current marketing and price policies cannot be confined to the promotion of quality and the adoption of small-scale corrective measures such as conversion premiums, grubbing-up programmes and distillation operations in exceptional cases. It recognizes that these measures were, and in some cases still are, essential but considers that a genuine structural policy is the only response to a structural situation.

Nonetheless, in view of the present situation and pending the introduction of a general viticultural land register for the whole Community, your committee, while urging the Commission to work towards the introduction of such a land register, suggests that Parliament should adopt the proposal submitted to it.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the chairman of the Committee on Budgets to the chairman of
the Committee on Agriculture

Luxembourg, 3 February 1978

Dear Mr Houdet,

At its meeting of 23/24 January 1978 the Committee on Budgets considered the proposal for a regulation on the statistical surveys of areas under vines on which it had been asked for its opinion.

The cost of these surveys to the general budget of the Communities (Article 264), estimated at 1 m u.a. in 1979 and 2 m u.a. in 1980 does not appear excessive.

Moreover, in view of the relatively modest request for appropriations our committee feels that the information at its disposal is adequate and hopes that the proposed measure will produce a better balance between demand and production capacity thereby reducing expenditure for the management of the market in wine.

While delivering a favourable opinion, the Committee on Budgets wishes to point out again that it has for some time been calling for the implementation of practical measures aimed at giving a new direction to Community policy so that the funds which - with obvious restrictive effects on the budget - are being used to support the market will be used to consolidate and restore balanced production structures.

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(sgd.) Erwin LANGE

Present: Mr Lange, chairman; Mr Aigner, vice-chairman; Mrs Dahlerup, Mr Dalyell, Mr Früh, Mr F. Hansen, Mr Jahn (deputizing for Mr Alber), Mr Mascagni, Mr Notenboom, Mr Spinelli and Mr Würtz

