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OPINION

of the Committee on Budgets

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 1-756/82 - COM(82) 599 final) for a Regulation concerning the conclusion of the Agreement between the Government of the Revolutionary People's Republic of Guinea and the European Economic Community on fishing off the Guinean coast

Draftsman: Mr E. KELLETT-BOWMAN

PE 81.188/fin./Ann.

English Edition

OPINION

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On 1 December 1982, the Committee on Budgets appointed Mr Kellett-Bowman draftsman of the opinion.

The Committee considered the draft opinion at its meeting of 8 December 1982 and adopted it unanimously.

The following took part in the vote: Mr Lange, Chairman; Mr Kellett-Bowman, draftsman; Mr Ansquer, Mr Balfe, Mr Barbagli, Mrs Boserup, Mr Fich, Mrs Hoff, Mr R. Jackson, Mr Mouchel (deputizing for Mr Cousté), Mr Newton Dunn, Mr B. Nielsen (deputizing for Mr Louwes), Mrs Nikolaou, Mr Nord (deputizing for Mr Rossi), Mr Price, Mr Saby, Mrs Vayssade (deputizing for Mr Lalumière).

Introduction

1. The proposal concerns an agreement concluded between the Commission and Guinea on 10 August 1982. Council has now consulted Parliament (on 15 October 1982) before signing the agreement, which is intended to come into force on 1 January 1983. This opinion is for the Committee on Agriculture as the competent committee.

2. The agreement is the third to be concluded between the Community and West African States: the first two concerned Senegal and Guinea Bissau. Fishermen from the Community have traditionally fished off the coasts of these countries. The Community now negotiates on their behalf and concludes agreements taking the place of earlier bilateral agreements. There is no scope to offer fishermen from these countries reciprocal fishing rights in Community waters so the fundamental element of these agreements is the financial compensation paid.

Financial aspects

3. The agreement foresees expenditure of 2.4 mECU over the three-year life of the agreement. This expenditure is apportioned as follows:

- 2.1 mECU specified in Article 2 of the protocol attached to the agreement as compensation, to be paid at the rate of 0.7 mECU per year;
- 0.2 mECU is the Community's contribution to a scientific programme designed to improve knowledge of the fishery resources of Guinea (Article 5 of the protocol);
- 0.1 mECU for six three-year study and training projects for nationals of Guinea to study subjects concerned with fisheries, to be taken up either in the Member States of the Community or those of the ACP (although not specified in COM(82) 599, this amount corresponds to 5,556 ECU per year per student).

4. Article 4 of the protocol attached to the agreement specifies that the use to which the compensation is put shall be determined exclusively by Guinea, and no checks on this compensation are therefore laid down. In its draft motion for a resolution, the Committee on Agriculture requests the Commission to ensure proper coordination with the European Development Fund.

The draftsman of the opinion supports this view; fishery development projects in West African countries have substantial potential for increasing the supply of protein for the native population, which is short of this type of foodstuff.

5. The relevant budget article is 322 ("Expenditure in connection with fishing in the maritime waters of certain developing countries"). Both the 1982 budget and the 1983 draft budget contain 5.8 mECU in both payments and commitments for this obligatory expenditure; these amounts are earmarked for the agreements with Senegal and Guinea Bissau. The 1983 draft budget also contains a reserve amount of 4.26 mECU in Chapter 100 earmarked for funding certain fishing agreements, and the 0.9 mECU foreseen for the first year of this agreement with Guinea will presumably be funded from that. Although Parliament proposed modifications to the 1983 budget concerning this budgetary line, these modifications did not affect the agreement with Guinea and were in any case rejected by Council.

Conclusions

6. The Budgets Committee looked at the first agreement of this type (with Senegal) with some care and emphasised that

- Council should respect the procedures of consultation before putting any such agreement into effect,
- more detail should have been provided on the minor forms of compensation such as grants.

7. These conditions appear to have been fulfilled in the present case and the Budgets Committee therefore endorses the proposed regulation, should it be considered that a regulation is necessary given that the necessary funds are entered in the budget. It also supports particularly the request that this financial compensation should be coordinated as far as possible with other forms of aid, so as to improve the protein supply in Guinea.