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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Agricultural policy

Report
Committee on Economic Affairs and Development
Rapporteur: Mr Henri LONGCHAMBON, France

A. Projet de recommandation

The Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe :

1. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers should cause meetings of the Ministers for Agriculture in Member States to take place with a view to :

a. Setting .up an appropriate organ for the establishment of a register of available and exportable products, together with an analysis of agricultural markets and putting this information at the disposal of agricultural producers in every country.

a. Concluding long-term Agreements product by product, which will allow of a better and immediate organisation of agricultural markets, avoiding all excessive protection and leading to a development of production and consumption;

a. Completing these Agreements based on forecasts of average production by concerted measures that allow, on the one hand, for the reabsorption of stocks that are accidentally and abnormally high and, on the other hand, afford help to a Member State in the case of accidental and abnormal deficiencies in its stocks.

a. Particularly taking into consideration the case of countries whose economy is based almost exclusively on agriculture, such as Greece and Turkey, where traditional markets have been particularly affected by political upheavals in Europe, and especially with regard to the tobacco market.

2. Recommends to the Committee of Ministers that a European Organisation should be set up consisting, together with the Ministers for Agriculture or Governmental experts in various Member States, of Representatives of the Assembly, and representatives of leading national or international agricultural organisations, whose task it would be to examine and propose the setting up of appropriate Authorities for the organisation of production and agricultural markets.

3. Furthermore, the Committee on Economic Questions submits for approval by the Assembly the following Motion :

4. " Th e Consultative Assembly instructs its Committee on Economic Affairs to follow closely the carrying out of these Recommendations, to participate in this action where necessary and to report back to the Assembly on the subject in the course of the next Session."

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B. Exposé des motifs

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1. The Committee on Economic Questions, following speeches made in the course of the General Debate, and being required to examine various Motions referred to it, undertook a study, on the basis of documentation supplied by the relevant European or international bodies, of the present state of production, consumption and exchange of agricultural produce.

2. It has established :

2.1. The absolute necessity for a substantial increase in all agricultural produce in the Member Countries, overseas territories or associated countries, by reason of :

a. The increase in population (over 10 % since 1938);

b. The proven necessity of raising, both in quantity and particularly in quality, the level of consumption in certain countries and among certain population groups ;

c. The necessity for reducing, if possible, or in any case not increasing, imports from areas whose currencies or exportable surpluses or transport facilities may fall short of demand;

2.2. The fact that national development programmes for agricultural production are inadequate (even if they were carried out) to attain these objectives as a whole : for the following reasons :

a. Only 9 % of the total estimated invest- | ments of these countries is reserved for agrieul- j tural production programmes, which is an inadequate figure;

b. These programmes are drawn up without any certainty as to the means of marketing and distributing the estimated production, which threatens to compromise the utilisation by producers of the estimated investments;

c. The production programmes are inadequately co-ordinated, with a consequent risk of surpluses of certain products and even greater shortage of others.

3. Furthermore the Committee reminds the Assembly of the fact that the different kinds of agricultural production constitute 25 to 80 % of the total economic activities of the various countries and that it would be futile to base an economic recovery almost exclusively on industrial activities, where it is technically much more difficult to increase productivity and which are dependent on the situation in the agricultural sphere.

4. Examining what concerted action should be taken by the Governments of Member States, the Committee considers that the latter should be placed in two categories :

a. Action taken in respect of the first category should aim at efficient results in as short a time as possible. Considering the acute political character as well as the extreme complexity of the problems of agricultural production in all Member States, the Committee considers that such action should be studied and put into effect as a result of agreement between Governments ;

b. The action taken in respect of the second category should aim at obtaining the greatest possible results in the organisation and production of agricultural markets by progressive reduction of the considerable disparities existing between the various national policies (and affecting the cost and conditions of agricultural production) by a vigorous policy of investments and the improvement of technical methods, progression vely leading, subject to guarantees for the marketing of these products or surplus products, to a development of production linked with a reduction in production costs.

5. The Committee considers that the solution to these problems must be found in the setting up of appropriate and permanent Authorities.

6. The Committee on Economic Questions therefore recommends that the Assembly should vote on the following draft Recommendations :