



## Resolution 857 (1986)<sup>1</sup>

# Europe's agro-food industry and European integration

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering that the European agro-food industry, by which is meant the set of activities ranging from farming to the processing, distribution and marketing of food, is at present undergoing a rapid transformation of great importance to Council of Europe member states, bearing in mind food's prominent place in consumers' budgets and the industry's importance in national economies and international trade ;
2. Noting that these changes include a slower growth for the industry as a whole due to slower population growth and changing consumer habits, more processing of food owing to changing social habits, growing industry concentration and internationalisation, resulting in fewer companies dominating especially the processing and distribution of food, and more capital-intensive firms undergoing rapid technological development ;
3. Seeing, furthermore, that more and more emphasis is laid on advertising as a means of differentiating one company's products from those of competitors, and that the link between farmers and food processors is attenuated as the latter increasingly turn to chemical and other industries for part of their raw materials ;
4. Concerned that the above developments have led to a situation where, at least for some food sectors, governments and consumers are hard put to establish how companies set their prices and whether these are fair to consumers ;
5. Preoccupied by the plethora of national laws and regulations governing the food industry, and believing that these — as well as divergent policies as regards state support, protection and various requirements arising from public health considerations — present an obstacle to trade and further European integration,
6. Calls on the governments of the member states of the Council of Europe :
  - a. to maintain healthy competition in their food industries, assuring consumers the widest possible range of high-quality food at fair prices and at easily available outlets, low barriers to entry for new companies and rapid incorporation of technological progress ;
  - b. to safeguard the position of Europe's farmers within the agro-food system, in particular for the maintenance of family farming ;
  - c. to harmonise national laws and regulations governing their food industries within the framework of OECD, GATT and, where applicable, the European Communities, so as to further trade and economic integration ;
  - d. to co-ordinate the operation of Europe's major systems for food distribution, thus fostering greater overall efficiency in the food trade and a more rapid spread of innovations.

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1. Assembly debate on 30 January 1986 (26th Sitting) (see [Doc. 5505](#), report of the Committee on Agriculture). Text adopted by the Assembly on 30 January 1986 (26th Sitting).

