

European Parliament Resolution on criticism of the destruction of fruit and vegetables by the EC (17 January 1985)

Caption: On 17 January 1985, the European Parliament adopts a resolution in which it promotes the common agricultural policy (CAP) and suggests various measures to counter the criticism levelled at the European Community regarding the destruction of fruit and vegetables.

Source: Official Journal of the European Communities (OJEC). 18.02.1985, No C 46. [s.l.].

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Publication date: 22/10/2012

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The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the announcement that the European Community ‘will destroy one million tonnes of fruit at a cost of DM 550 million in the coming months’,
- B. whereas the annual intervention buying of fruit which is necessitated by the organization of the market can provoke hostility among the people of Europe to the common agricultural policy and the European Community in general,
- C. whereas this hostility is reinforced by publications in the media which give an incorrect picture of the situation,
- D. whereas only a small percentage (in 1981/82 around 1.7% and in 1982/83 around 3.5%) of the respective fruit and vegetable crop is taken off the market (bought into intervention) and that these quantities vary considerably from year to year depending on the size of the harvest,
- E. whereas between half and two-thirds of the quantities taken off the market can be put to some use (processing, animal feed, free distribution),
- F. whereas the purpose of the intervention measures is to ensure a minimum income for producers when there is a serious deterioration in the market situation due to surpluses, and to secure supplies to the consumer,
- G. whereas the appropriations spent on intervention are used for securing farmers’ incomes and not for the destruction of fruit and vegetables,
1. Calls on the Commission as part of its public relations work to provide the media with comprehensive and accurate information, so that the citizens of the Community are not misinformed about intervention measures by incorrect or incomplete reporting and more attention is paid to the moral aspects of the intervention buying of fruit and vegetables;
 2. Condemns as essentially wrong reporting that:
 - gives the impression that intervention buying of fruit and vegetables is tantamount to its destruction,
 - fails to refer to the percentage of the total quantity produced represented by the quantity bought into intervention,
 - includes appropriations for income support for farmers in the cost of the destruction of fruit and vegetables,
 - conceals the fact that a large proportion of the fruit and vegetables bought into intervention is put to some use;
 3. Stresses the need to make an adequate range of Community-grown fruit and vegetables available to consumers in the Community and to make every effort to secure for them a constant and adequate supply of high-quality, sound fruit and vegetables;

4. Points out that production levels of fruit and vegetables are subject to severe fluctuations because of their dependence on weather conditions, and that consequently it is not possible to ensure an adequate supply of European fruit and vegetables without also accepting the creation of surpluses;
5. Calls on the Commission and Council, in spite of the relatively small quantities involved, to make every effort to prevent the spoiling or destruction of the products concerned and to see that they are put to a suitable use;
6. Calls on the Commission to eliminate the shortcomings in the distribution of intervention fruit and vegetables to charitable organizations;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Council to confine intervention buying to the surplus quantities which occur as a result of the natural fluctuations in productivity in the fruit and vegetable sector;
8. Calls for the development of fruit and vegetable production to be continuously reviewed as part of the organization of the market and instructs its Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to draw up a report on current trends;
9. Takes the view that by processing larger quantities of certain easily perishable products — for instance, processing blood oranges to make a fruit juice which is still relatively uncommon on the market — a large proportion could be saved from destruction;
10. Encourages the Commission and the Council to persevere with the approach already adopted for reducing intervention levels, namely preventive withdrawals of apples and pears, and suggests that these measures also be extended to other products;
11. Calls on the Member States to make full use of the instruments available at Community level for improving the marketing structure and for restructuring the production sectors, since this can also help to reduce intervention;
12. Calls for the organizations and institutions eligible for the free distribution of bought-in fruit and vegetables to be extended and for financial support towards the cost of free distribution;
13. Calls for more refrigerating plants in the areas where large quantities of easily perishable fruit and vegetables are continually having to be bought into intervention;
14. Calls for an expansion of transport capacity in the areas concerned and the granting of aids for transport costs;
15. Calls on the Commission to do its utmost to prevent an increase in the quantity produced in the case of aubergines and apricots, which have been newly included in the intervention system;
16. Calls for better monitoring of the intervention buying process, in order to prevent the growth of a black market;
17. Notes that for technical reasons fruit and vegetables bought into intervention cannot be made available to those parts of the world afflicted by hunger and draws attention in this connection to the extensive food supplies from the European Communities in the form of food aid which corresponds more closely to the needs of these areas than fruit and vegetables bought into intervention;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the Council.