

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1983 - 1984

20 July 1983

DOCUMENT 1-451/83/ANNEX

OPINION

of the Committee on Agriculture

on the proposals from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 1-228/83 - COM(83) 152 final)

for:

- I. a regulation on a Community tariff quota for imports of high quality, fresh, chilled or frozen beef and veal falling within subheading 02.01 A II (a) and 02.01 A II (b) of the Common Customs Tariff
- II. a Council Regulation on a Community tariff quota for imports of frozen buffalo meat falling within subheading 02.01 A II (b) 4 (bb) 33 of the Common Customs Tariff

Draftsman: Mr A. DIANA

Opinion
(Rule 101 of the Rules of Procedure)

of the Committee on Agriculture

Draftsman: Mr A. DIANA

On 16 June 1983 the Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr DIANA draftsman of the opinion.

The committee considered the draft opinion at its meeting of 12/13 July 1983 and adopted its conclusions unanimously.

The following took part in the vote: Mr CURRY, chairman, Mr FRÖH, vice-chairman, Mr DELATTE, vice-chairman, Mr BARBAGLI (deputizing for Mr DIANA), acting draftsman, Mr ABENS (deputizing for Mr SUTRA), Mr COSTANZO (deputizing for Mr COLLESELLI), Mr DALSASS, Mr EYRAUD, Mr GIUMARRA (deputizing for Mr LIGIOS), Mr HELMS, Mr HORD, Mr MARCK, Mr PRANCHERE and Mr PROVAN.

1. In reply to a written question (No. 1915/80)¹ on imports of frozen buffalo meat from Australia, the Commission stated that in 1980 2,140 tonnes of frozen buffalo meat were imported into the Community from Australia and that the imports in question were used mainly by processing industries in the Federal Republic of Germany for the manufacture of 'game specialities'.

In the same answer, the Commission stated that these were traditional imports which did not have any repercussions on the Community market for buffalo meat.

2. In its judgment of December 1982², the Court of Justice ruled that buffalo meat of non-domestic species came under the regulations governing the common organization of the market in beef and veal; neither the Council Regulation (EEC) nor the common customs tariff make any distinction between buffalo meat of domestic and non-domestic species.

H.P. Klughardt of Hamburg, which is the largest importer of this type of meat, appealed to the Court of Justice on the grounds that buffalo meat did not come under the common organization of the market in beef and veal and therefore should not be subject to duty.

With its judgment, the Court of Justice rejected the appeal by this German company.

3. Council Regulation (EEC) No. 218/81 opened a Community tariff quota for an overall volume of 2,250 tonnes of frozen buffalo meat as from 1 January 1981 and Council Regulation (EEC) No. 3226/82, which amended Council Regulation (EEC) No. 218/81, maintained the same quota for the years 1982 and 1983.
4. On 29 March 1983, the Commission presented a new proposal for a regulation (COM(83) 152 fin.) which fixes at 2,250 tonnes the import quota of buffalo meat for 1984 and subsequent years. The importation of this quota from Australia to Germany would thus be fixed for an indefinite period.
5. As a result of information gathered by German parliamentarians and the National Institute for Foreign Trade of Hamburg, it has been established that the Klughardt Company of Hamburg uses the import quota for the manufacture of 'Wildspezialitäten' or game specialities such as paté.

¹ OJ C 111 of 13.5.1981

² OJ C 49 of 19.2.1983

6. The buffalo has not in fact always been a non-domesticated animal in Australia insofar as it was introduced to work in marshy regions. Today, however, it lives in a semi-wild state.

In Italy there are over 125,000 head of buffalo. Buffalo rearing, which is now an established part of Italian tradition, has opened up an important channel for exports of livestock and dairy products made from buffalo milk (like the traditional mozzarella).

In view of its particular nutritional and wholesome characteristics, buffalo meat can provide the consumer with a typical dish at a lower cost than beef or veal.

Buffalo rearing should therefore be encouraged as buffalo meat represents a valid alternative to the growing food deficit which is evidenced above all by imports of beef and veal.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on Agriculture

- (a) agrees with the judgment of the Court of Justice of 19 December 1982 to the effect that buffalo meat of non-domestic species comes under the common organization of the market in beef and veal;
- (b) considers that 3 years after the opening of a Community tariff quota of 2,250 tonnes of frozen buffalo meat it may be necessary to review this quota;
- (c) notes that buffalo rearing is a valid alternative to the growing food deficit and that there are more than 125,000 head of buffalo in Italy;
- (d) stresses that this imported meat is not for direct consumption as the majority of it goes to industries that produce game specialities and a much smaller amount is retailed by shops specializing in game;
- (e) is of the opinion that:
 - the regulation in force so far establishing this quota can be accepted for another year, but renewal of the tariff quota of 2,250 tonnes of frozen buffalo meat should not be agreed for an indefinite period;
 - Community production should be guaranteed in view of the fact that buffalo rearers are entitled to the calving premium in the same way that cattle rearers are entitled to a calving premium and that, furthermore, these stock-rearing farms are situated in the southern regions of the Community and represent a valid alternative income for farmers in these areas;
- (f) finally, prefers that this tariff quota be reviewed each year to assess the impact that these imports have on internal Community production of buffalo meat.

By letter of 21 April 1983, the President of the Council of the European Communities consulted the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 43 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, on proposals from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for

- I. a Regulation on a Community tariff quota for imports of high quality, fresh, chilled or frozen beef and veal falling within subheadings 02.01 A II (a) and 02.01 A II (b) of the Common Customs Tariff
- II. a Regulation on a Community tariff quota for imports of frozen buffalo meat falling within subheading 02.01 A II (b) 4 (bb) 33 of the Common Customs Tariff.

On 15 May 1983, the President of the European Parliament referred these proposals to the Committee on External Economic Relations as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Agriculture for their opinion.

At its meeting of 25 May 1983, the Committee on External Economic Relations appointed Mr Barry SEAL rapporteur.

The committee examined the Commission's proposals and the draft report at its meeting of 14 June 1983.

During the meeting the committee decided by 13 votes to nil with 5 abstentions to recommend to Parliament that the Commission's proposals should be approved without amendment.

The committee then adopted the motion for a resolution in its entirety by 13 votes to nil with 5 abstentions.

The following took part in the vote: Sir Fred CATHERWOOD, chairman; Mrs WIECZOREK-ZEUL, vice-chairman; Mr BLUMENFELD, Mr COHEN (deputizing for Mr CAILLAVET), Mr DELOROZOY (deputizing for Mr DAMSEAUX), Mr FUCHS (deputizing for Mr RADOUX), Mr GAUTHIER (deputizing for Mr BORD), Mr JONKER, Mrs Louise MOREAU, Mrs PAUWELYN (deputizing for Mr PININFARINA), Mr PELIKAN, Mr PESMAZOGLU, Mr RIEGER, Mr SEELER, Mr SPENCER, Sir Jack STEWART-CLARK, Mr VANKERHOVEN (deputizing for Mr MOMMERSTEEG) and Mr ZIAGAS.

The opinions of the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Agriculture are attached.

This report was tabled on 17 June 1983.

A

The Committee on External Economic Relations hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

closing the procedure for consultation of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a Regulation (EEC) on

- I. on a Community tariff quota for imports of high quality, fresh chilled or frozen beef and veal falling within subheadings 02.01 A II (a) and 02.01 A II (b) of the Common Customs Tariff
- II. a Community tariff quota for imports of frozen buffalo meat falling within subheading 02.01 A II (b) 4 (bb) 33 of the Common Customs Tariff (Doc. COM(83) 152 final - Doc. 1-228/83)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission to the Council (Doc. COM(83) 152 final)¹,
- having been consulted by the Council (Doc. 1-228/83),
- having regard to the report of the Committee on External Economic Relations and the opinions of the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Agriculture (Doc. 1-451/83),

1. Approves the Commission proposal;
2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission as Parliament's opinion.

¹ OJ No. C 103, 16.4.1983, pp 9 and 10.

Explanatory Statement

1. The Committee on External Economic Relations agrees with the Commission that Council Regulation (EEC) No. 217/81 opened for the years 1981 and 1982 a Community tariff quota of 21,000 tonnes of high quality fresh, chilled or frozen beef and veal falling within subheadings 02.01 A II (a) and 02.01 A II (b) of the Common Customs Tariff. The amount has been increased to 29,800 tonnes for 1983 (OJ No. L 353, 15.12.1982, p. 1).
2. Council Regulation (EEC) No. 218/81 opened for the years 1981, 1982 and 1983 a Community tariff quota of 2,250 tonnes of frozen buffalo meat falling with subheadings 02.01 A II (b) 4 (bb) 33 of the Common Customs Tariff.
3. These tariff quotas arise from obligations contracted by the Community under the GATT and are therefore permanent in character. This fact is reflected in the proposed regulations which, with nearly identical texts, are designed to secure more efficient Commission management.
4. In view of the agreements entered into under the GATT the Commission proposes to the Council to maintain these quota arrangements and to fix the tonnages at 29,800 and 2,250 per year respectively.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the chairman of the committee to Sir Fred CATHERWOOD, chairman of the Committee on External Economic Relations

Brussels, 17 June 1983

Subject: Opinion of the Committee on Budgets on:

(a) a proposal for a Council regulation (EEC) on a Community tariff quota for imports of high quality, fresh, chilled or frozen beef and veal falling within subheadings 02.01 A II (a) and 02.01 A II (b) of the Common Customs Tariff

(b) a proposal for a Council regulation (EEC) on a Community tariff quota for imports of frozen buffalo meat falling within subheading 02.01 A II (b) 4 (bb) 33 of the Common Customs Tariff

(presented to the Council by the Commission) (Doc. 1-228/83)

Dear Sir Fred,

The Committee on Budgets considered the two abovementioned proposals at its meeting of 16 June 1983.

It confirmed the favourable opinion which it gave on 26 May when expressing its agreement on the application of the procedure without report.

However, the Committee on Budgets pointed out that the financial implications are largely dependent on the level of prices within the Community and on the world market. It therefore feels that the budgetary implications of these two proposals should be reconsidered each year and that it is impossible at this stage to express an opinion on budgetary implications beyond 1985.

At the same time, the Committee on Budgets repeated its request that the Commission should accompany its proposals on Community tariff quotas with a general summary of the losses in own resources resulting from current tariff quotas.

Yours sincerely,

Erwin LANGE

Present:

Mr LANGE, chairman; Mr NOTENBOOM, vice-chairman;
Mr BALFOUR, Mr GABERT (deputizing for Mr ORLANDI), Mr HERMAN (deputizing for Mr RYAN), Mr JACKSON, Mr KELLETT-BOWMAN, Mr NEWTON DUNN, Mr PFENNIG, Mr PROTOPAPADAKIS, Mr Konrad SCHON and Mr VAN ROMPUY (deputizing for Mr BARBAGLI).