

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

10543/83 (Presse 189)

884th meeting of the Council
- Development Co-operation -
Brussels, 15 November 1983
President: Mr Theodoros PANGALOS
State Secretary,
Ministry of Trade
of the Hellenic Republic

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Paul NOTERDAEME
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

Germany:

Mr Volkmar KOHLER
State Secretary,
Federal Ministry for
Economic Co-operation

France:

Mr Jacques LEPRETTE
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

Italy:

Mr Mario FIORET
State Secretary,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Ms E. SCHOO
Minister for Development
Co-operation

Denmark:

Mr Gunnar RIBERHOLDT
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

Greece:

Mr Theodoros PANGALOS
State Secretary,
Ministry of Trade

Ireland:

Mr James O'KEEFFE
Minister of State,
Department of Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean DONDELINGER
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

United Kingdom:

Mr Timothy RAISON
Minister of
Overseas Development

Commission:

Mr Edgard PISANI - Member

IMPLEMENTATION OF FOOD STRATEGIES

The Council received a progress report on food strategies in the four countries to which the Community had agreed to give its support, namely Mali, Kenya, Rwanda and Zambia, and also on the exploratory talks that the Commission was holding with a fifth country, Tanzania.

The Council expressed its gratitude to Commissioner Pisani for the efforts he was making to ensure the success of the operation, whose underlying concept had now become an important feature of Community development policy.

Noting the progress made in implementing the actions in support of food strategies, the Council observed that these had reached the stage of practical achievement.

The Council was also informed by Mr Pisani of the interest shown in the operation by other developing countries.

It asked the Commission to continue its activities, while closely co-ordinating them at various levels with the Member States and noted that the Commission would present a consolidated report in the following six months. It also noted the Commission's intention to submit forthwith to the Council a proposal on the implementation of the appropriations entered in Article 929 of the budget (projects in place of food aid) and to take shortly the necessary steps to enable decisions to be taken within the framework of the Council Regulation implementing the special programme to combat hunger in the world.

FOOD AID POLICY

Having held an initial discussion on the Commission communication on "Food aid for development" at its June meeting, the Council now approved a Resolution defining a number of guidelines for improved integration of food aid in the development process in recipient countries. In this context the Council held a wide-ranging debate on the importance and role of food aid for development. The text of the Resolution reads as follows:

"The Council, having examined the Commission communication entitled "Food Aid for Development", emphasizes the importance of the food problem and of food security in developing countries, and the need to deal with these problems as effectively as possible. It recognizes the provisional nature of the solution constituted by food aid, and recalls in this connection the action taken by the Community in the context of the plan of action to combat hunger in the world, in particular by supporting food strategies, and the encouragement which it is endeavouring to provide for increasing the food self-sufficiency of the countries concerned by supporting their efforts towards autonomous and self-sustained development of their economies, particularly by strengthening their food farming.

The Council is therefore of the opinion that the Community's aid policy, the framework for which is outlined in Council Regulation No 3331/82, would be all the better able to contribute to this aim if it met the following guidelines:

1. The Community's food aid must be integrated as thoroughly as possible into the development policies, and particularly the agricultural and agri-foodstuffs development policies, of the countries concerned.

It is therefore desirable to establish a dialogue with the recipient country. Possible participation of other donors is also to be hoped for. Efforts should be made to ensure that food aid is more consistent with other development measures, and food aid should, as far as possible, be linked with other forms of aid, particularly aid for agricultural production. Greater consistency of Community and national measures, taking account, where possible, of measures by other donors would be necessary here.

2. Every decision to grant food aid should take account not only of quantitative, but also qualitative criteria.

Food aid would continue to concentrate on low income food deficit countries in which food aid may be expected to make an effective contribution to overcoming existing food shortages without excluding the most deprived sectors of the population with special needs in other developing countries, or emergency situations.

3. Multiannual food aid programmes of well-defined duration may, in certain cases and given appropriate detailed arrangements, make a positive contribution to development in the recipient country.

Such programmes are intended to encourage the development of food production and the rural sector, and they should preferably be implemented in countries which intend to take related food self-sufficiency measures. Such programmes may also be envisaged in conjunction with international or non-governmental organizations specializing in development aid.

These programmes will ensure some security of supplies to recipients insofar as those countries at the same time take measures to attain the abovementioned objectives.

The risk of increased and prolonged dependence of the recipients on such aid should be minimized through the integration of such programmes into agricultural and rural development projects or programmes, the aims of which would have to be clearly defined in consultation between the Community and the countries concerned.

In this connection, multiannual programmes would be drawn up following a dialogue with the recipient country on the basis of an assessment of the latter's overall situation, taking account of quantitative and qualitative factors.

The written conclusions of such a dialogue on mutual intentions would have to involve indicating, for each of the countries concerned, the overall aid requirements and conditions for the use of the aid; they could lay down detailed arrangements for the substitution, in due course, of other forms of aid for that aid where the necessary conditions are fulfilled.

As part of the dialogue with the recipient countries, the latter would have to indicate their approach to the use of the aid offered.

Each programme of limited duration (the maximum being five years) and of an indicative nature, would deal with the quantity and type of aid envisaged throughout its duration. The quantity to be supplied would be determined each year by the relevant Community body, taking account inter alia of the requirements of recipients and the resources available for aid of this kind. The programme should also lay down the conditions under which it might be revised or terminated.

The possibility of nutritional programmes on a multiannual basis aimed at certain less-favoured sectors of the population would be examined in due course.

Multiannual programmes would constitute a reasonable share of the annual volume of Community aid.

4. International organizations and NGOs play a very useful and sometimes indispensable role in the matter of food aid. A significant proportion of such aid is supplied through these bodies, in particular for regions where for various reasons the Governments do not intervene, or where food aid to refugees and displaced persons is involved. In the latter case the aid, which is frequently vital to those concerned, is distinguished by certain special features. Food aid to refugees has to enable their real needs to be met in a swift, planned manner, while not making their subsequent economic and social reintegration more difficult.
5. The choice and possible diversification of the products to be supplied is of great importance in ensuring the effectiveness of food aid.

The products must in the first place meet the recipients' needs and comparison of different products must take account of the cost/specific nutritional quality ratio (e.g. animal or vegetable protein content, calorific value) and their suitability as regards consumer habits.

The greatest heed should be paid, when selecting products, to possible harmful effects on recipients (particularly the risk of changing eating habits, the risk of permanent dependence upon food or upon expensive food imports, etc.).

This being ensured, and subject to increased use of local products (by triangular operations), purchases must first of all take account of products available on the Community market, as provided for in Article 3(1) of the framework Regulation.

6. Triangular operations (the purchase of food products by the Community in a developing country which has products available for export to a country in deficit) are to be encouraged, as trade between neighbouring countries under the above conditions contributes to a system of regional food security.

Triangular operations make it possible, with a view to national development, to meet the needs of the recipients, to fit into a balanced production policy on the part of the supplier developing country and to ensure transport savings where appropriate, without delaying the actual availability of the aid.

7. The balance of payments situation remains one of the factors to be taken into consideration for the granting of food aid to a given country. With a view to development, support of the balance of payments cannot in any eventuality be the objective of such aid, but it can in certain circumstances usefully contribute to relieving the financial burden on the country concerned;

Care should be taken to avoid food aid having the result of providing a disincentive to efforts to develop local production or giving rise to difficulties counter to the efforts of the recipient countries to re-establish their balance of payments by other appropriate means.

8. Counterpart funds ought not to be the primary justification for food aid. They must in principle be used for financing the implementation and/or the operation of agricultural development projects or programmes in recipient countries in order to support a policy of food self-sufficiency.

Greater consistency between Community and national measures should also be considered here.

Checks on the use of counterpart funds should be improved wherever possible, in particular under multiannual programmes, in the interests of the recipient country's development. The Commission will each year provide the necessary information on the use of counterpart funds.

9. The Council acknowledges the importance of examining, on the basis of a proposal to be made by the Commission on the general criteria relating to the transporting of aid beyond the FOB stage, in the light of practice and from the point of view of the effectiveness of aid, the question of the Community bearing the cost of transporting food aid.

10. In the light of experience and in due course the Commission will submit a communication to the Council on the results achieved in implementing these guidelines in order to enable the Council to make any adjustments to it which may prove necessary."

FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL AID FOR NON-ASSOCIATED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES - GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR 1984

The Council held a general discussion on the guidelines to be followed for the programme of aid for non-associated developing countries in 1984. This discussion enabled the delegations to voice their comments on the implementation of the programme, the size of which forms a significant part of the Community's activities in the development sphere.

The Council then noted that agreement was emerging on the 1984 guidelines on which it would be requested to take a final decision when it had received the European Parliament's Opinion.

TRADE PROMOTION

The Council had before it a Commission working document on guidelines for the promotion of trade with the developing countries.

It agreed to consider this matter at its next Development Co-operation meeting.

OTHER MATTERS CONCERNING DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

The Council agreed to examine the following topics at its next Development Co-operation meeting:

- co-ordination and harmonization of aid from the Community and the Member States (request by the German delegation);
- implementation of the substantial new programme of action of the Paris Conference for the least developed countries (request by the French delegation);
- measures with a specific theme.

As regards the first two points, the Commission said it would submit documents to the Council in the near future; as for the third point, it submitted a communication to the Council at this meeting.

Bruxelles, le 14 novembre 1983

Note Bio (83) 472 aux bureaux nationaux
... aux membres du Groupe du Porte-Parole

Preparation Conseil Developpement (R. TE PASS)

Trois sujets principaux seront discutes au Conseil de
demain, 15 novembre 1983 :

1. - Progres realises dans la mise en oeuvre des strategies
alimentaires et un echange de vue sur l'examen detaille de
l'etat des travaux.
2. - Proposition d'une aide alimentaire, ou on discute d'un
projet de resolution sur la base de la communication de la
Commission au Conseil, intitulee : "Pour une aide alimentaire au
service du developpement".
3. - Echange de vue sur les orientations generales pour 1984
en matiere d'aide financiere et technique en faveur des pays en
developpement non associes.

RENDEZ-VOUS DE MIDI DU 14 NOVEMBRE 1983.

- Sujet traite : Preparation du Conseil developpement (voir
texte ci-dessus)
- Materiel diffuse : Memo 124 : Huile d'olive

Amities,

M. Santarelli comeur 16h/1/1



Bruxelles, le 15 novembre 1983
Note Bio(83)472(suite 1 et fin) aux Bureaux Nationaux
c.c. aux membres du Groupe du Porte-Parole

Conseil Developpement (R.Te Pass)

1. Le Conseil a eu un large echange de vues sur ce sujet notamment concernant les progres constatés au Mali et au Kenya. En suite une discussion partagee a eu lieu sur l'extension de la strategie a d'autres pays. La Commission et certains Etats membres estiment qu'il faut d'abord juger les resultats des premieres experiences tout en se declarant pret a entamer le dialogue avec d'autres Etats ACP qui en font la demande.

2. Le Conseil a adopte la resolution sur la Politique de l'aide alimentaire; la Commission ayant accepte de faire une etude sur notamment l'utilisation, l'effet nutritif et les couts des produits utilises par la Communauté pour l'aide alimentaire, y compris l'etude sur le remplacement des produits laitiers par d'autres produits.

3. Le Conseil a adopte a ce stade les orientations generales pour 1984 en attendant l'avis du Parlement Europeen.

4. La Commission a distribue en seance un document de travail sur le developpement du commerce et les actions de la promotion commerciale menee avec les P.V.D.

Amities,

M. Santarelli comeur///



