



Committee of the European Starch Potato Producers' Unions

CESPU2008/01-3

Brussels, 14 January 2008

European Commission
DG Agriculture and Rural
Development
Agricultural Policy Analysis
and Perspectives
Head of Unit
Mr. Tassos Haniotis
Rue de la Loi 130
B-1049 Brussels

Re. 1st Public consultation on the CAP “Health Check”

Dear Mr. Haniotis,

Please receive herewith our position as answer to the first Public consultation on the Health Check.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'H. Simonin-Rosenheimer'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hélène Simonin-Rosenheimer
Secretary General



Committee of the European Starch Potato Producers' Unions

Position paper

On the European Commission's 1st Public Consultation On the CAP "Health Check" (6 December 2007)

The European starch potato producers organised in CESPU are ready to prepare for the future. The "Health Check" of the Common Agricultural Policy the European Commission wishes to readjust the CAP to the aims of the 2003 reform. The simplification of the Single Payment Scheme, the alleviation of bureaucracy and controls, the adjustment to new markets and the desire to respond adequately to new challenges are aims the CESPU members support. Nevertheless the specific production scheme of the sector and possible impacts on the production regions will have to be considered in all proposals.

The adaptation to recent changes in market conditions is still ongoing and new opportunities are in preparation, but need more time to show their impact. The political framework will have to secure the continuity of the sector as economic conditions change thoroughly. An adaptation of the political system should therefore assure consistency for the farmers concerned, especially keeping in mind the perspective until 2013/14 that was given to the sector for the specific direct payment scheme.

The high investments of farmers for this special culture, their planning of seed production, crop rotation, manpower and long-term strategic development of their farm were made in knowledge of the political framework, with realistic risk assessment in relation to market conditions. The farmers, as well as the industry who often work in cooperatives, are aware of the future their sector is capable of, but will need some more years' time to further round off and work the new markets and products. Therefore an instantaneous decoupling would represent a thorough and profound changing this converting sector will not withstand.

Furthermore the starch potato production is concentrated in regions where soil and climate conditions inhibit agricultural alternatives with similar added value, thus having the regions' workforce depending on this culture and industry. The agricultural production in such regions retains its sustainability via the starch potato, as soil fertility, varied production and enlivened rural areas depend on them.

For the given reasons the starch potato producers cannot accept further decoupling in the context of the “Health Check” and call for the reliability of the political framework. However, CESPu is assessing an adaptation of the coupled payment scheme that will make it more WTO compatible and will lead to a considerable simplification. We will contact you with the details of our ideas in the coming weeks.

14 January 2008