

SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC

----- 17th LEGISLATURE -----

Doc. XVIII No 58

RESOLUTION OF THE 9TH STANDING COMMITTEE

(Agriculture and Agri-Food Production)

(Rapporteur: Senator GAETTI)

approved on the session of 19 March 2014

ON THE

**PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING REGULATION (EU) NO 1308/2013 AND
REGULATION (EU) NO 1306/2013 AS REGARDS THE AID SCHEME FOR
THE SUPPLY OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES, BANANAS AND MILK IN THE
EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS (COM
(2014) 32 FINAL)**

pursuant to Article 144(1) and (6) of the Rules of Procedure

Notified to the President's Office of 21 March 2014

The Committee,

having examined, as provided for by Article 144 of the Rules of Procedure, the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 and Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 as regards the aid scheme for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in the educational establishments,

whereas:

The School Milk Scheme and the School Fruit Scheme aim to sustainably increase the share of fruit and vegetables and milk products in children's diets at a time in their life when their eating habits are being formed. Both schemes contribute to the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and are in line with the public health objective of creating healthy eating habits;

The current schemes operate within different legal and financial frameworks and have some important differences in their design and functioning. In particular, improved coordination and consistency between the two schemes are required so as to favour their immediate effectiveness;

It is proposed to establish a common legal and financial framework for the distribution of fruit and vegetables and milk to children in schools, supported by strengthened educational measures to reaffirm the link with agriculture and a variety of its products, as well as wider issues such as public health and environmental matters;

Both schemes were established in order to promote the consumption of fruit and vegetable and milk products, which play a key role for European agriculture, each representing approximately 15% of the value of European Union (EU) agricultural output. Their effects are clear in terms of health promotion too, as they combat modern consumption trends towards highly processed foods, which are often high in added sugars, salt and fat and risk getting even worse in younger age groups;

expresses the opinion, pursuant to Protocol 2 to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), that the proposal complies with the principle of subsidiarity;

expresses a favourable opinion with the following observations:

with regard to milk products, instead of limiting distribution a priori to drinking milk alone, milk products (e.g. cheese, yoghurt and other products that are considered both safe and healthy) should constitute an integral part of the scheme. In addition, Union resources should be made available for financing the distribution of milk products just as they are for other products;

the criteria for the allocation of funds to the School Milk Scheme should be the same as those used for the School Fruit Scheme, taking into account the number of children between six and ten years of age rather than the 'historical' use of such funds;

the selection of possible suppliers or bodies to implement the schemes should be limited to specialised operators in the agri-food sector, favouring producers and organisations thereof;

Delegated acts should establish the administrative procedures for the selection of possible suppliers or implementing bodies;

the scheme for the distribution of fruit and vegetables in schools should favour fruit and vegetables of the short production chain, i.e. produced locally, provided that the quality of the produce is guaranteed. In particular, the wording of the new Article 23(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council, of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the market of agricultural products should be such as to require - and not only allow - Member States to select the products to be distributed in schools taking into consideration, inter alia, the range or the availability of local products, organic products or products from a short production chain.

