

**Question for written answer E-004077/2012  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE)**

Subject: Change in the rules of support for fruit and vegetable producer groups

On 4 April 2012, the Commission published in the Official Journal of the European Union the new Implementing Regulation (EU) No 302/2012 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 543/2011 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 in respect of fruit and vegetables and processed fruit and vegetables sectors.

The European Commission has introduced significant restrictions on the support granted to fruit and vegetable producer groups with regard to implementing investments, limiting it to EUR 10 million across the EU. In addition, the transitional provisions proposed in Article 2 will create serious legal ambiguities and impact those producer groups which have already been recognised or are in the process of implementing plans for gaining recognition. In my opinion, it is unacceptable for an entity implementing an officially approved plan, which includes precise financial assumptions, to suddenly have to face completely new legal conditions that change the basic financing principles.

I would like to remind the Commission that the aim of the support granted to producer groups (including for the implementation of investments) was to make it easier for entities with that status to meet the criteria for recognition as producer organisations. In changing the current laws in this area, the Commission is actually removing the most important incentive encouraging fruit and vegetables producers to cooperate. Consequently, the process of organising the fruit and vegetable market will slow down significantly.

I would also like to remind you that the level of organisation in the fruit and vegetable sector in new EU Member States is unfortunately still very low relative to the old EU Member States (approx. 15 % in Poland compared to 80 % and 90 % in Belgium and the Netherlands respectively).

In addition, I would like to obtain detailed explanations of the motives for changing the existing regulations. Furthermore, is the Commission aware of the fact that the adopted regulation will bring the formation of new producer groups in new EU Member States to a complete halt?