

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1224/00

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to the Commission

Subject: Commission decision to recover illegal aid payments from the Greek Cotton Board

By Commission decision of July 1999, published in the Official Journal of the European Communities on 10 March 2000¹, Greece is required to recover the aid received by Greek cotton-growers by way of compulsory contributions collected from 1992 to the present time by the Greek Cotton Board. This aid was financed by parafiscal charges unduly imposed on products imported from other Member States of the European Union, amounting to 1% of the price of ginned cotton.

1. As the notification of the Commission's decision makes no reference to the total sum of the aid concerned, will the Commission state the amount of the illegal aid together with interest which Greece must recover from cotton-growers?
2. Could Greece, in agreement with the Commission, have taken measures to ensure that aid for technical assistance, dissemination of know-how, training and research did not contravene the common market rules and were consistent with the rules on State aid?
3. Why did the Commission delay taking its decision for so long, despite the fact that Greece did not invoke the exemptions from application of the rules on State aid provided in Article 87(3) of the EC Treaty such as 'aid to facilitate the development of certain economic areas' so that such aid could be considered to be consistent with the common market?

¹ OJ L 63, 10.03.2000, p. 27