

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3525/03
by Giacomo Santini (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Size of apples

With effect from 1 May 2004 the Fruit and Vegetable Management Committee will allow apples with a diameter of 5 cm to be placed on the European market. In response to this decision, many companies in the sector have already expressed their utmost concern at the damaging effect which this will have on quality produce. Given that the proposal has not yet been put into effect (since it has still to be approved by the Commission):

1. Does the Commission not agree that such a decision flies in the face of the quality policies which have so far been promoted by the Commission and the EU by means including the CAP reform and the COM in fruit and vegetables?
2. How is the Commission intending to respond to the proposal put forward by the Fruit and Vegetable Management Committee?
3. Does the Commission not think that, instead of forcing a decline in quality, it should encourage the growers of small apples to improve the quality of their produce? Furthermore, does the Commission not fear an adverse reaction from EU consumers?