

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3643/03  
by Salvador Jové Peres (GUE/NGL)  
to the Commission

Subject: Reform of the common organisation of the market in olive oil

In 1998 the Council set national guaranteed quantities for olive oil, using figures which the Commission itself acknowledged as being questionable and on which the Court of Auditors also cast doubt in its special report 2/98. One of the objectives of the 1998 reform of the COM was to obtain reliable information on the true production situation. Exceeding the national guaranteed quantities entailed penalties which determined the amount of aid received during the period from 2000 to 2002. In its current proposal, the Commission suggests using this period as a basis for calculating future aid.

Does the Commission not consider that using information which it has acknowledged as unreliable will create distortion in future aid distribution? What efforts has the Commission made to verify the information used to determine the guaranteed national quantities in 1998? What was the outcome?

At the IOOC meeting in November 1996, slight changes were introduced consisting in the case of Greece of average reductions in production of 8% and in surface areas of 63%, in the case of Italy a reduction in surface areas of 54% and an increase in production of 3% and in the case of Spain, a slight reduction in production. This would suggest that olive oil production in Italy and Greece is higher than had been recorded. How does the Commission explain the adjustments made at the IOOC meeting in November 1996? Could there be other more likely explanations based on the unreliability of the figures used to determine the guaranteed national quantities?