

ORAL QUESTION H-0738/03
for Question Time at the part-session in December 2003
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure
by Christos Folias
to the Commission

Subject: Unacceptable conditions imposed by the Greek Agricultural Bank

The board of the Greek Agricultural Bank (ATE), whose purpose is to assist Greek farmers has decided to issue letters of guarantee to raw tobacco producer groups (OPAK) for advance payment to members of the fixed subsidy and payment to the OPAK of the advance on special aid in respect of the 2003 tobacco crop.

The conditions imposed by the ATE for issuing these letters of guarantee include the following: by way of security the OPAK shall provide standing orders by the producers concerned, authorising the ATE to transfer from the savings account of each recipient an amount in settlement of all the latter's debts to the ATE. Precisely the same arrangements as those applying to producers also apply to the OPAK producer groups in settlement of their own debts to the ATE!

What view does the Commission take of these totally unacceptable conditions, which reflect the mentality and practices of times past? What measures is it able and willing to take to put an end to such practices? How does it intend to respond to the philosophy adopted by the Bank, whose purpose is to assist Greek farmers, who are thus being compelled to reimburse their debts to the ATE whether or not they are in a position to do so?

Tabled: 14.11.2003
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