

ORAL QUESTION H-0821/03

for Question Time at the part-session in January 2004  
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure  
by María Ayuso González  
to the Commission

Subject:           Reforming the cotton sector

Protocol No 14 of the Spanish EU Act of Accession establishes that a priority objective of the system of cotton aids is to support production in those regions of the Community in which it is important to the agricultural economy. This protocol supplemented Protocol No 4, signed when Greece joined.

In its reports for the 1995 and 2001 reforms, the Commission acknowledged that aid on the basis of surface area would lead to the cessation of cultivation. The proposal now before the European Parliament and the Council replaces the price subsidy system with subsidies on the basis of surface area. As I understand it, this means that the Commission has totally turned its back on the sector, and to justify this, is using commercial arguments (WTO negotiations) which are completely without foundation, as it has been told repeatedly.

Can the Commission tell me whether it intends to amend its proposal to prevent the abandonment of cultivation, particularly in view of the fact that Community production is hardly significant in the context of world trade?

Tabled: 16.12.2003  
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