

ORAL QUESTION H-0129/04
for Question Time at the part-session in March I 2004
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure
by María Ayuso González
to the Commission

Subject: Reform of the cotton sector

The Commission's proposal on the reform of the COM in cotton is not only liable to put a million cotton-pickers out of work in Spain and lead to the abandonment of 600 cottonfields and numerous indirect job losses: it also in no sense creates any genuine incentive for the formation of professional organisations in the sector.

The Commission proposes that producers wishing to join such a group should be granted an aid per hectare of only EUR 10. This aid does not amount to a genuine incentive to join an association which will, furthermore, lay down rigid rules which all members will have to comply with. This lack of incentives will mean that most producers will have no interest whatever in joining such organisations.

Can the Commission explain why it is not possible to promote professional organisations in the cotton sector in a meaningful fashion, so as to permit them to manage all coupled aid (the only form in which the Commission's proposed system can work)?

Can the Commission also explain on what grounds it states in its proposal that coupled aid may be received by a farmer who does not meet the conditions defining professional organisations, given that this could be an obvious incentive for receiving aid without having to fulfil any other production-related criteria?

Tabled: 26.02.2004
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