

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1841/02
by Georges Garot (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Shallot production

The French fruit and vegetable intertrade association and shallot producers in western France are concerned at plans put forward by the Commission's Directorates-General for Agriculture and for Health and Consumer Protection which call for the standardisation of shallot and onion production on the basis of those products' trade descriptions.

This approach is worrying on a number of counts:

- it is incompatible with the European Union's stated intention to promote the European agriculture model and it seriously detracts from the multifunctionality of agriculture, in particular the aspects thereof which are concerned with the environment (biodiversity) and with product safety and quality;
- it goes against the decisions taken at the Berlin Summit, with particular reference to rural development. The purpose of this second pillar is to maintain activity in rural areas; the main European shallot production method goes a long way towards meeting that objective, despite receiving no support;
- it runs counter to the sustainable-development strategy drawn up at the 2001 Göteborg European Council;
- lastly, it is at odds with the substance of the 2000 White Paper on food safety and, in particular, with the major principles of increased product quality and safety and better provision of information to consumers.

How can the Commission account for its failure to take the major principles and rules of conduct which it has adopted into account in its study, analysis and handling of the problems relating to shallots?

What interests and what policy is it really aiming to promote? Should the European texts relating to shallots not be reconsidered?