

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

11.5.2005

B6-0307/05 }
B6-0308/05 }
B6-0309/05 }
B6-0310/05 } RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 103(4) of the Rules of Procedure, by

- María del Pilar Ayuso González, María Esther Herranz García, Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines and Cristóbal Montoro Romero, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Inés Ayala Sender, Rosa Miguélez Ramos, María Isabel Salinas García and María Sornosa Martínez, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Ignasi Guardans Cambó and Josu Ortuondo Larrea, on behalf of the ALDE Group
- Willy Meyer Pleite, Ilda Figueiredo, Pedro Guerreiro and Adamos Adamou, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group
- Liam Aylward, on behalf of the UEN Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- PPE-DE (B6-0307/05)
- GUE/NGL (B6-0308/05)
- PSE (B6-0309/05)
- ALDE (B6-0310/05)

on the drought in Spain

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PE 357.386v00-01}
PE 357.387v00-01}
PE 357.388v00-01}
PE 357.389v00-01} RC1

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European Parliament resolution on the drought in Spain

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 6 of the EC Treaty, under which environmental protection requirements must be integrated into Community policies in various areas, with a view to fostering environmentally sustainable economic development,
 - having regard to Article 174 of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of December 1997 and the Community's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol on 4 March 2002,
 - having regard to the Commission's report on climate change and the European water dimension,
 - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas southern Europe, and particularly the Iberian Peninsula, has suffered many severe droughts and frosts which have led to the destruction of numerous crops including fruit trees, olive groves, herbaceous plants and horticultural products and flowers, as well as causing substantial losses to stockbreeding and the processing industry,
- B. whereas the period from November 2004 to March 2005 was the driest Spain had seen since 1947, and as at 31 March 2005 the volume of water accumulated in the previous seven months was 37% less than the normal average for the same period; whereas water reserves in Spain are at just 60% of their normal capacity,
- C. whereas the period from January to March 2005 witnessed the lowest temperatures of frost recorded in Spain in twenty years, with the destruction of millions of olive trees and fruit trees, as well as major losses in other agricultural sectors,
- D. whereas after the frost had ended the drought persisted in Spain and this extreme drought has resulted in an alarming rise in the risk of forest fires; whereas in some autonomous communities the fire-risk level is fast approaching the maximum and high temperatures and no rain are forecast for the coming months,
- E. whereas the losses to producers will, by the next harvest period, stand at more than EUR 2 billion, and the consequences of the frost will continue for several years for many farmers who will not be able to restore their production levels in the short term, with particularly severe effects on olive cultivation areas, which will need drastic measures including slashing back or grubbing up young plantations, and also on the cultivation of fruit trees,
- F. whereas the olive sector has suffered considerable losses in production capacity and next season's harvest is likely to be dramatically reduced in many regions,

- G. whereas it is necessary to make use of the flexibility provided for in the common organisation of the market in fruit and vegetables in order to tackle cases of force majeure,
- H. whereas frost and drought have the effect of worsening the losses incurred by stockbreeders in Spain from the immobilisation of livestock introduced to prevent the spread of 'blue tongue' disease; whereas the fuel crisis is also increasing farmers' costs,
- I. whereas the consequences of this climatic disaster are affecting numerous local economies, reaching record dimensions with very serious effects in terms of temporary employment, especially for immigrants at a time when a major regularisation is taking place,
- J. whereas in its report No 2 of 2004 on the impact of climate change in Europe the European Environment Agency admits that global warming is having more serious consequences in southern Europe, with potentially severe repercussions for Spain in terms of increased drought, more forest fires and greater risks to human health,
- K. whereas the March European Council agreed to a new benchmark for international efforts to combat climate change,
1. Expresses its solidarity with farmers and stockbreeders in Spain and in the Iberian peninsula as a whole, in view of the generally unfavourable climatic conditions they are facing;
 2. Welcomes the Commission's Communication on risk and crisis management in agriculture (COM(2005)0074), and encourages the Commission and Council to take urgent action in response to it so as to establish, as swiftly as possible, an effective Community protection system to safeguard European farmers against risks and crises such as those arising from the current drought in Portugal and Spain;
 3. Calls, in this connection, for a swifter launch of the pilot project agreed in the 2005 budget procedure for establishing a Community insurance regime or compensation mechanism in case of natural disasters that guarantees a minimum income for farmers;
 4. Calls on the Commission to release resources from the Solidarity Fund with a view to alleviating the damage caused to the productive capacity of whole regions, given that the frost and drought have affected living conditions and economic stability in numerous areas;
 5. Calls once again on the Commission and Council to review the eligibility criteria and the measures that may be funded under the Solidarity Fund, so as to enable the fund to be used in response to situations of this kind, in which adverse weather conditions have a serious impact on rural communities and favours extending the eligibility criteria for Solidarity Fund aid in case of climatic disasters under the financial perspective for 2007-2013;
 6. Calls on the Commission to improve the eligibility conditions for aid under the common agricultural policy, by means of the following measures:
 - greater flexibility in the set-aside regime;
 - authorisation of grazing on set-aside land;

- extension of the obligation to achieve flowering for those receiving Community aid for herbaceous crops;
 - extension of the general obligation regarding grain legume use for those receiving aid and the possibility of direct use of the arable land concerned for grazing;
 - greater mobilisation of intervention cereals in order to meet livestock's feeding needs;
 - bringing CAP aids forward to September;
7. Asks, in the framework of the common organisation of the market in fruit and vegetables, for application to the operational programmes for 2006 of Article 4(4) of Regulation (EC) No 1433/2003 in order to ensure a minimum value for marketable production of 65% of the value for the earlier reference period, and that in the context of the forthcoming reforms of the COMs as much flexibility as possible be introduced into the rules applicable in the event of climate disasters; also asks that in the lemon sector the sanctions for failing to observe a contract with the processing sector be eliminated, since the frosts are a case of force majeure and must be recognised as such;
 8. Alerts the Commission and Council to the immediate need for funding to be made available and resources marshalled so as to ensure that effective preventive action may be taken against the escalation of forest fires that is another serious consequence of the lack of rain; calls for more resources for combating forest fires and for a properly organised Community strategy for dealing with a problem which is being made worse by the drought;
 9. Urges the Commission carefully to study the phenomenon of drought with a view to determining its periodicity or cyclical nature and whether it is a further indicator of the effects of climate change, and to assess its impact on erosion and desertification; similarly, in the connection with the policy to combat the effects of climate change, calls for the use of biofuels to be encouraged in order to reduce the European Union's high dependency on oil;
 10. Welcomes the recent European Council's commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% compared to their 1990 levels by 2010 and to keep the maximum increase in global temperatures to no more than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels;
 11. Calls on the Commission to support measures, including measures to raise public awareness, in support of the more rational use of water, in particular in southern Europe;
 12. Notes with interest the recent Commission report on the global phenomenon of climate change and its direct effect on ecosystems and the water cycle, together with the measures put forward with a view to facilitating management by those responsible for water policy at EU level;
 13. Urges the Commission to give thought to the setting up of a European drought monitoring centre;
 14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the Spanish Government and the regional and local authorities of the areas affected.

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