



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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Food for the most deprived persons

Today at the Agriculture Council¹, the Presidency indicated that a qualified majority within the Council could be confirmed, at a later stage, in favour of the temporary continuation of the programme for the distribution of food to the most deprived persons. This should guarantee the effective functioning of the programme in 2012 and 2013 under specific conditions.

The Presidency will include this item on the agenda of one of the next Council sessions with a view to reaching an agreement on the basis of a Presidency compromise.

Background

The initial proposal amending regulation 1290/2005 and regulation 1234/2007 as regards distribution of food products to the most deprived persons in the Union was presented to the Council in 2008. In 2010, the Commission submitted a new amended proposal on the same subject which was discussed three times between September 2010 and October 2011. On all these occasions, a blocking minority emerged against the proposal.

The current programme under which the European Union can supply food from intervention stocks to the most deprived persons was created in 1987. It was incorporated into the "single common market organisation" regulation in 2007. Current legislation also allows products to be exceptionally purchased on the open market for the purposes of the scheme where there is a temporary shortfall in the availability of that product in intervention stocks, or where transfer would be required in small quantities from the intervention stocks of a member state other than the one in which the product is to be distributed.

¹ Under "Any other business" at the request of the French delegation.

P R E S S

In 2008, the Commission proposed changes to the current rules. According to its proposal, food would be sourced either from intervention stocks or from the market but market purchases would no longer be limited to situations of temporary unavailability of intervention stocks, as is currently the case. Moreover, the fade-out of intervention stocks, due to the reframing of the common agricultural policy (CAP) and high prices of agricultural commodities, have already increased the current scheme's reliance on market purchases for the provision of food. In addition, to optimise the nutritional balance, the choice of foods distributed would be extended to those to which intervention does not apply. In 2010, a newly amended proposal introduced a reshaping of the text to bring it into line with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. Changes in the rules for possible cofinancing of the programme proposed by the Commission have also been discussed within the Council.
