

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

CO-OPERATION IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

ARTICLE 129

Objectives of Co-operation in Agricultural Development

The overall objectives of co-operation in the agricultural sector are the achievement of regional food security and rational agricultural production within the Common Market. To this end, the Member States undertake to adopt a scheme for the rationalisation of agricultural production with a view to promoting complementarity and specialisation in and sustainability of national agricultural programmes in order to ensure:

- (a) a common agricultural policy;
- (b) regional food sufficiency;
- (c) an increase in the productivity of crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry for domestic consumption, exports within and outside the Common Market and as inputs to agro-based industries; and
- (d) replacement of imports on a regional basis;

ARTICLE 130

Co-operation in Agricultural Development

The Member States undertake to co-operate in specific fields of agriculture, including:

- (a) the harmonisation of agricultural policies of the Member States with a view to having a common agricultural policy;
- (b) research, extension and the exchange of technical information and experience;
- (c) agro-meteorology and climatology;
- (d) the production and supply of food-stuffs;
- (e) the coordination of the export and import of agricultural commodities;
- (f) the coordination of bulk purchases of imports of essential agricultural inputs;
- (g) the control of animal and plant diseases and pests;
- (h) the development and utilisation of land and water resources, particularly shared river and lake basins;

- (i) the exploitation and surveillance of the exclusive economic zones with regards to marine fisheries development; and
- (j) the marketing and stabilization of prices of agricultural commodities bearing in mind internal agricultural and exchange rate policies in individual member countries.

ARTICLE 131

Co-operation in the Supply of Staple Foods

1. The Member States undertake to:

- (a) ensure the adequate supply and availability of food by the promotion of agricultural development that would lead to the production of surpluses in food, the establishment of adequate storage facilities and strategic grain reserves;
- (b) promote co-operation in the production of foodstuffs which are rich in protein such as meat, fish, dairy products and legumes;
- (c) ensure the prevention of pre- and post-harvest losses;
- (d) establish a Common Market Early Warning System

to assess and supply information regarding the food security position within the Member States and the Common Market; and

(e) conclude such agreements amongst themselves as would facilitate the realisation of food security in the Common Market.

2. The Member States agree to provide the infrastructure and investment required to implement the undertakings in paragraph 1 of this Article.

ARTICLE 132

Co-operation in the Export of Agricultural Commodities

The Member States shall:

(a) coordinate their policies and activities relating to the export of crops, livestock, livestock products, fish and fish products and forest products;

(b) harmonise their policies in relation to international commodity agreements for the export of crops, livestock and livestock products, fish and fish products and forest products;

(c) co-operate in solving specific problems relating to

the export of crops, livestock, livestock products, fish and fish products and forest products;

- (d) harmonise their policies and regulations relating to phyto-sanitary and sanitary measures without impeding the export of crops, plants, seeds, livestock, livestock-products, fish and fish-products; and
- (e) harmonise their agreements granting concessions for the exploitation of their agricultural resources, especially fisheries and forest products by third country nationals.

ARTICLE 133

Co-operation in Agro-industries

In order to foster strong linkages between agriculture and industry, the Member States shall:

- (a) promote on-farm processing of crop, livestock, fish and forest products so as to enhance the value and availability of finished or semi-processed products and to increase rural employment and incomes;
- (b) endeavour to consult one another concerning the establishment of large-scale agro-industries so as to avoid under-utilisation of existing and planned

processing capacities;

- (c) co-operate in jointly establishing any large-scale agro-industrial processing complexes where such collective processing of agricultural commodities is synergistically advantageous for the Common Market;
- (d) co-ordinate national agro-industry development policies and programmes so as to achieve balanced agro-industries development in the Common Market in line with the comparative advantages enjoyed by individual the Member States;
- (e) coordinate their policies and activities regarding the production of raw materials to sustain agro-industries within the Common Market; and
- (f) coordinate their policies regarding the importation of raw materials which can be produced within the Common Market.

ARTICLE 134

Co-operation in Agricultural Research and Extension

The Member States shall:

- (a) give priority to research on food crops;
- (b) strengthen and effectively utilise existing national agricultural research and extension institutions on a network basis for the benefit of the Common Market;
- (c) exchange pertinent research findings and research and extension expertise for the benefit of the farming community within the Common Market;
- (d) strengthen extension services in order to establish effective liaison mechanisms between research systems and farmers; and
- (e) establish data banks and journals for the dissemination of research and extension information within the Common Market.

ARTICLE 135

Co-operation in Drought and Desertification Management

The Member States shall:

- (a) agree on appropriate policies on the utilisation of fragile lands in order to prevent land degradation;

- (b) institute appropriate measures to contain the effects of droughts by developing irrigation programmes, improved techniques in dry-land farming and the use of drought-tolerant crops; and
- (c) co-operate in the exchange of information and expertise regarding drought and desertification managements.

ARTICLE 136

Co-operation in Rural Development

The Member States shall promote rural development through the adoption of measures such as:

- (a) appropriate mechanisation;
- (b) improved water supply;
- (c) health services;
- (d) improved nutrition;
- (e) improved rural access roads and means of transport and telecommunications;
- (f) rural electrification and supply of wood fuel;

- (g) educational services;
- (h) rural resettlement to facilitate the rational utilisation of land; and
- (i) the development of rural industries.

ARTICLE 137

Strengthening Farmers Participation in Agricultural Development

The Member States agree to strengthen farmer organisations and coordinate their activities for the improvement of agriculture in the Common Market through:

- (a) the utilisation of such organisations as effective mechanisms for the marketing and processing of agricultural produce;
- (b) the provision of essential services to members of the organisations at a regional level;
- (c) the fostering of collaboration among the farming community by means of inter-regional visits, exchange of ideas and information, and trading;

- (d) training on risk management practices and promoting the development of agricultural insurance schemes and other loss minimisation measures within the Common Market; and
- (e) the promotion of rural insurance.