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Food for the most deprived persons: the programme will continue in 2012 and 2013

A political agreement within the Council will guarantee the continuation of the programme for the distribution of food to the most deprived persons in 2012 and 2013. The charitable organisations will be able to benefit in full for this programme under the Common agricultural policy (CAP) for the next two years.

The new provisions of the programme enlarge the scope of products - now market purchases are made a regular source of supply for the scheme to complement intervention stocks which constituted previously the core of the programme. It also gives, preference to products of EU origin.

The programme will be fully financed by the EU. Eligible actions for receiving financing will be: costs of transport, storage and administrative costs directly linked with the implementation of the scheme.

The annual budget line of the programme is around 500 million Euro every year in 2012 and 2013. More than 18 millions EU citizens are currently benefitting from this programme.

On the basis of this political agreement, the Council will adopt later its position at first reading. The Council's position was pre-negotiated with the European Parliament with the aim to reaching an early second reading agreement in order to allow the entry into force of the new rules as soon as possible. This regulation provides for retroactivity as from 1 January 2012 since it will be impossible to adopt it before the end of this year.

P R E S S

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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 rules 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. However, for 2012 and 2013 the market purchases would no longer be limited to situations of temporary unavailability of intervention stocks. This is linked to the fade-out of intervention stocks, due to the reframing of the CAP and high prices of agricultural commodities. The new rules foresee that for optimising the nutritional balance, the choice of foods distributed has been extended to those to which intervention does not apply.
