EU school fruit and vegetables scheme

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Review of EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme

Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007

Update

Following a public consultation in May 2022, the European Commission is in the process of reviewing the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme.

Background

Since 2017, the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme has been supporting their distribution to children, to increase consumption and teach them about healthy eating habits.

The Commission is now reviewing the scheme to assess its compatibility with the Farm to Fork Strategy objectives of enhancing sustainable food production and consumption. The Commission also intends to review the administrative efficiency of the scheme.

The total EU budget for the scheme, in the period 2017–23, is €250 million per school year: up to €150 million for fruit and vegetables, and up to €100 million for milk (reduced to €220.8 million after the UK's withdrawal from the EU).

The legal basis for the school scheme is Regulation 1308/2013 (Arts. 22–25 and Annex V) on the common organisation of the markets in agricultural products; and EU Regulation 1307/2013 on direct payments to farmers (Art. 5 and Annex I).

What is changing?

In its roadmap published in 2021, the European Commission indicated that the new proposal would focus on the following elements of the EU scheme:

- Coverage: the current scheme targets all children, rather than those particularly at risk of not having a healthy and sustainable diet.

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- Eligible products: the current scheme largely excludes distributing foods with high sugar, salt and fat content. The review will consider whether other products, such as plant-based drinks or whole grains, should be included, and whether environmental factors need to be taken into account (e.g. share of organic products, sustainability of production, contribution to packaging waste).
- Distribution: fruit and vegetables are generally distributed outside regular school meals, which is thought to diminish the impact. The visibility and added value of this approach will be considered.
- Education: the content of, and budget for, educational measures intended to encourage healthy diets are not currently included in the legislation.
- Governance: relevant actors (e.g. public authorities, private stakeholders in the agricultural, education and health sectors) are not always effectively involved in the school schemes.

Timeline

The Commission is expected to propose revised legislation (amending Regulation 1308/2013 and Regulation 1307/2013) in the fourth quarter of 2023.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

AGRINFO stakeholders' participation in supplying fruit and vegetables to schools within this scheme may depend on the revised legislation. Some parties (e.g. the European Parliament) are pressing the European Commission to adopt criteria related to the length of the supply chain, which may limit the demand for produce from third countries.

Resources

European Commission (2022) Review of the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme.

European Commission (2022) School scheme explained.

European Parliament Agriculture Committee (2021) Draft Report on the implementation of the school scheme for fruit, vegetables, milk and dairy products under the Common Market Organisation Regulation

Sources

Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

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Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/39

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/40

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