

Meanwhile, down on the farm



The Farm Minister, Constantine Simitis

During Greece's presidency of the EEC, lasting from 1 July to 31 December 1983, meetings of the ministerial councils will decide pending matters of farm policy.

The farm minister, Constantine Simitis, has said the basic aims of the Greek side for this six months include an attempt to raise Greece's prestige worldwide in the solution of Community problems. A favourable outcome would show the world that Greece, far from being a shabby poor sister, has the ability to handle the smooth running of the EEC and its specialized agencies.

Greek interests, will, inevitably, influence the functioning of the EEC in this period, while it is hoped that the Greek state mechanism will get used to operating on a more efficient plane in matters of financial and trade policy.

Greece also will have an obligation to represent the EEC in other international organizations, the world press, and the European Parliament.

But specifically in the sector of farming, the most important matter to arise during Greece's presidency will be the amendment of the status of Mediterranean produce such as fruits, vegetables, oil, dried fruits, and the possibility of measures that will protect these.

At some point also, a decision will have to be made about replacing structural directives Nos. 159, 160, 161 and 268 which expire at the end of the year. These directives concern mainly the economic strengthening of mountainous and other problem areas, and are hence of direct interest to Greece.

There is expected to be an enforcement of the agreement on farm prices for this year and the next. Greece has a stake not only in the actual prices, but also in other parts of the farm programmes providing for technical personnel and irrigation prospects through Community funding. There is also the matter of organizing the farm produce market,

especially for sugar, milk and sheep and goat meats. The level of olive oil production will have to be regulated, and certain technical aspects of wine-producing? this includes dried fruit, for which the Greek side plans to press for better status.

The present farm credits regime expires at the end of this year, and thus it is up to the Greek presidency to seek to get it renewed. One of the most important meetings will be that which will try to get agreement on Community farm spending. There is at present a wide divergence of views on the subject inside the EEC, with Britain, West Germany and other northern countries arguing against increasing farm spending, and with Greece, Italy and France arguing for it. □

Farm policy will be a major subject of the talks during Greece's presidency for the EEC. Inside this question is the matter of Mediterranean produce, which is tied to the matter of programmes from problem districts and the organization of the farm goods market.

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