

DP 897/03-07

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
National Assembly for Wales

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National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay

Eich cyf * Your ref
Ein cyf * Our ref

22 May 2006

At First Ministers Questions on 3 May 2006, in the context of debate about Grampian Country Food, you raised an issue about support by the French Government for its poultry industry. I undertook to look into the matter.

Having now consulted with DEFRA, I can confirm that it is true that the French and the Italians have put together a package of measures to help their industry, but it is understood that they have been notified to the Commission in compliance with the State aid rules. The Commission will (if it has not done so already) consider the package and issue a decision either approving or rejecting the package. I understand that several Member States have put pressure on the Commission to make sure that there is no unfair advantage being accorded.

As you appreciate, state (national) aids are subject to European control measures to prevent the distortion of competition. Aids related to outbreaks of disease must normally be notified to and approved by the Commission. In deciding whether to give approval, the Commission will have regard to whether the proposed aid complies with a detailed set of rules. I understand that some Member States have notified the Commission of some aid measures related to outbreaks of avian influenza within their territory and that the Commission has already approved at least some of them.

If there were to be evidence that a Member State had not notified aid measures to the Commission, or that the aid measures are not in line with the State aid rules, then that evidence would need to be presented to the European Commission for investigation. However that does not appear to be the case in this instance.



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Yours sincerely

First Minister