

**COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 2379/2002
of 30 December 2002**

approving operations to check compliance with the marketing standards applicable to fresh fruit and vegetables carried out in Slovakia prior to import into the European Community

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2200/96 of 28 October 1996 on the common organisation of the market in fruit and vegetables ⁽¹⁾, as last amended by Commission Regulation (EC) No 545/2002 ⁽²⁾, and in particular Article 10 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Article 7 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1148/2001 of 12 June 2001 on checks on conformity to the marketing standards applicable to fresh fruit and vegetables ⁽³⁾, as amended by Regulation (EC) No 2379/2001 ⁽⁴⁾, lays down the conditions under which approval will be given — to those third countries that request it — for the compliance checks they perform prior to import into the Community.
- (2) On 10 October 2002, the Slovak authorities sent the Commission a request for the approval of checking operations performed by Slovakia's national, regional and local veterinary and food administrations (SVPS, KVPS and RVPS) under the responsibility of the National Administration (SVPS). The request states that that establishment has the necessary staff, equipment and facilities to carry out checks, that it uses methods equivalent to those referred to in Article 9 of Regulation (EC) No 1148/2001 and that the fresh fruit and vegetables exported from Slovakia to the Community must meet the Community marketing standards.
- (3) The information supplied to the Commission by the Member States shows that imports of fresh fruit and vegetables from Slovakia between 1997 and 2002 had levels of non-compliance with the marketing standards that were above the average level for other third countries. However, in a more recent period (1999 to 2002), non-compliance has dropped to levels comparable with those in third countries that have already received approval and, moreover, the legislation in force since 1 October 2002 has made checks on exports obligatory. During an on-the-spot visit in June 2002, information was obtained guaranteeing that this rate of non-compliance would improve with the change in legislation.
- (4) Representatives of the Slovak inspection services are regular participants in international efforts to agree trading standards for fruit and vegetables in the United

Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (UNECE) Working Party on Standardisation of Perishable Produce and Quality Development. Slovakia is also taking part in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables. Lastly, the Slovak inspection services have for many years taken part in various conferences and training activities organised by several Member States.

- (5) The compliance checks performed by Slovakia should therefore be approved with effect from the date on which the procedure for administrative cooperation provided for in Article 7(8) of Regulation (EC) No 1148/2001 is established.
- (6) The measures provided for in this Regulation are in accordance with the opinion of the Management Committee for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

The checks on compliance with the marketing standards for fresh fruit and vegetables performed by Slovakia prior to import into the Community are hereby approved in accordance with the terms set out in Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1148/2001.

Article 2

Details of the official correspondent and inspection bodies in Slovakia referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1148/2001 are given in Annex I to this Regulation.

Article 3

1. The certificates referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 7(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1148/2001, issued following the checks referred to in Article 1 of this Regulation, must be issued on forms drawn up in accordance with the model given in Annex II to this Regulation.

2. Notwithstanding the sixth subparagraph of Article 7(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1148/2001, box 3 of the form referred to in subparagraph 1 of this Article may be printed partially in Slovak.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 297, 21.11.1996, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 84, 28.3.2002, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 156, 13.6.2001, p. 9.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 321, 6.12.2001, p. 15.

Article 4

This Regulation shall enter into force on the 20th day following its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

It shall apply from the date the notice referred to in Article 7(8) of Regulation (EC) No 1148/2001 relating to the establishment of administrative cooperation between the Community and Slovakia is published in the C series of the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 30 December 2002.

For the Commission
Franz FISCHLER
Member of the Commission

ANNEX I

Official correspondent within the meaning of Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1148/2001

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Inspection bodies within the meaning of Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1148/2001

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