

Transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain

2018/0088(COD) - 29/11/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Renate SOMMER (EPP, DE) on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain and amending and amending eight sectoral legislative acts in terms of transparency and confidentiality.

As a reminder, the proposal for the revision of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 on general food law (the GFL Regulation") aims to (i) strengthen the transparency rules applicable to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), (ii) increase the reliability, objectivity and independence of the studies on which EFSA relies for risk assessment and (iii) improve EFSA's governance and (iv) strengthen risk communication.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission's proposal as follows.

Risk communication: Members believe that risk management, risk assessment and communication actions shall be based in particular on the thorough application of the precautionary principle. To regain public confidence, they called for a **transparent, independent, continuous and inclusive process of risk communication** throughout the risk analysis, involving Union and national risk assessors and risk managers.

Members have indicated that risk communication shall:

- foster **public understanding** of the risk analysis process, in particular by providing clear and consistent information on the respective tasks, powers and responsibilities of risk assessors and risk assessors;
- promote the **balanced involvement of all interested parties**, including economic operators in the food chain as well as consumers and civil society organisations;
- inform **consumers** about risk prevention strategies;
- combat the dissemination of **false information** and sources thereof.

In order to ensure **transparent risk management**, the Commission and the Member States shall be required to make public the draft risk management measures envisaged and the agenda and detailed minutes of the meetings of the Member States' working groups at which the risk management measures are discussed.

Risk assessment: Members proposed that the European Chemicals Assessment process shall be carried out as part of a coordinated approach for all sectors concerned. In addition, evaluators shall integrate the assessment of 'cocktail effects' into their work.

Studies, including test data, submitted by business operators in support of applications for authorisation shall be **based on accessible scientific literature** or comply with internationally recognised principles and good laboratory practice (GLP) principles. Data from a test commissioned but not registered shall not be used in a risk assessment.

To increase the effectiveness of the consultation, the consultation shall take place **immediately after** the studies submitted by industry included in an application for authorisation have been made public, under the transparency rules of this Regulation.

Organisation: the Board of Directors should be composed of members who ensure an optimal level of competence and commitment to the protection of health and the environment. It should include (i) two full and alternate members appointed by the Commission, (ii) **two representatives appointed by the European Parliament**, and (iii) six full members representing the interests of civil society and the food chain sector, including one representative of public non-governmental organisations specialised in health, farmers' organisations and agrochemical organisations. The maximum term of office for members would be 2.5 years.

Members of the Scientific Panels shall be appointed by the Management Board for a **renewable 5-year term**. The Executive Director, after consulting the Management Board, shall publish a call for expressions of interest in the Official Journal of the European Union, in the relevant scientific publications concerned and on the EFSA website, and inform the Member States accordingly. This call would set out the specific multidisciplinary expertise needed within each scientific group and indicate the number of experts required.

As 20% of the current national experts are British, the system shall be strengthened, while encouraging applicants to apply, in order to ensure that a sufficient pool of independent experts is available. In order to ensure the effectiveness of risk assessment, EFSA's staffing and financial resources shall be strengthened.

Lastly, using the model of the Board of Appeal of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), a **Board of Appeal** of EFSA shall be established by means of delegated acts.