Novel foods and novel food ingredients

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The rapporteur, Mrs Roth-Berendt (PSE, D), thought that the common position contained gaps, since it failed to provide adequate protection for the interests of consumers. She first wanted the scope of the regulation, which was restricted to foods and food ingredients produced from, but not containing, genetically modified organisms, to be extended to include enzymes. The rapporteur considered that a new authorisation was essential in cases involving a significant change in the production method being used. She also called for an approval procedure for new foods, and not just a simple notification, which might ensure a proper assessment of the risks and safety aspects of the product concerned. Finally, the consumer should be provided with adequate information (for example in the case of products produced using genetic methods); according to the rapporteur this would mean introducing a suitable system of labelling so that no essential information was concealed from the consumer. Commissioner Bangemann did not accept the main amendments being proposed by the rapporteur, as he believed this would result in a phenomenal amount of labelling. However, he agreed with Amendments Nos 17, 22 and 54 and in part with Amendments Nos 9, 29 and 44. As far as Amendment No 17 was concerned he pointed out that genetically modified food additives, flavourings and solvents were already covered by specific Directives; this also applied to transgenic organisms already authorised for use, which required no new notification. As regards the scope of the regulation the Commissioner was opposed to Amendments Nos 2, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 22. As far as the procedure was concerned he was not in favour of Amendments Nos 1, 3, 19 to 21, 23 to 28, 30, 45 to 47 and 49 to 53, and confirmed his support for a simplified procedure. Finally, on the subject of labelling the Commissioner was not in favour of Amendments Nos 32 and 55; however, he thought that it was important to know if there was a significant degree of modification, because if this was the case then the labelling would be useful in that it would enable a distinction to be drawn between a novel food or food ingredient and other equivalent products already in existence.