Food safety: action plan, European Food Authority. White Paper

2000/2082(COS) - 25/05/2000

The Council heard a presentation by the President of the Council on, the work carried out to date on the Commission's White Paper on food safety and on the main guidelines emerging from it. In his presentation, the President noted that all delegations were in favour of the rapid creation of a European Food Authority which would carry out, in the field of food safety, essential risk evaluation and consumer information tasks. There is also a clear need to establish a general regulatory framework on food safety matters, defining the principles guaranteeing a coherent and transparent approach, covering the entire food chain. As regards the legislative measures to be adopted for the sector, the following topics should be treated as a matter of priority: - new animal feedingstuffs; - eradication of epizootic disease, in particular zoonoses; - improvement of food hygiene; - maximum limits for contaminants and residues; - stricter rules governing genetically modified foodstuffs. With regard to the question of substances used in the production of animal feedingstuffs, delegations appear receptive to the approach advocated by the Commission of establishing a white list in the medium term while for the time being endeavouring to expand the black list currently in force. In relation to national controls, most delegations agree that administrative cooperation between national authorities and the Commission should be improved, particularly to harmonise control methods and the presentation of results. Lastly, as regards the international dimension, all delegations share the Commission's view that food safety cannot be regarded only as a matter of domestic policy. They believe that imported food products should comply with standards enabling the appropriate level of health protection set by the Community to be attained. The Council took note of the Presidency's report, to be reported at the Feira European Council of 19-20 June 2000, and of a number of interventions concerning the candidates for the location of the future European Food Authority - Spain : Barcelona, Italy : Parma, and Finland : Helsinki.