Genetically modified organisms GMOs: traceability and labelling

2001/0180(COD) - 17/03/2003 - Council position

The Council adopted the common position by qualified majority without the support of Danish, Luxembourg, Netherlands and the UK delegations. It accepts 15 out of the 30 amendments adopted by the European Parliament at first reading. With regard to the scope of the Regulation, the Council fully accepts the Commission proposal. Exemptions from the traceability and labelling scheme shall be allowed for the adventitious or technically unavoidable presence of traces of GMOs. The thresholds for these exemptions are introduced in this Regulation by way of reference to the respective Articles of the Regulation on genetically modified food and feed (as discussed in parallel with this Regulation - refer to COD/2001 /0173), where the threshold level has been set at 0,9% and can be lowered via a regulatory committee procedure, as well as by way of reference to Directive 2001/18/EC. While the exemptions generally cover only GMOs that have been authorised in the EU, the adventitious or technically unavoidable presence of such GMOs that have not been authorised but have benefited from a favourable risk evaluation will be permitted below a threshold level of 0,5%, or lower as set by a regulatory committee procedure, for a transitional period of three years. The Council has tightened the Commission proposal with regard to the information that has to accompany bulk shipments of products containing mixtures of GMOs by allowing only for "a list of the unique identifiers for all those GMOs that have been used to constitute the mixture", instead of " unique codes for the GMOs that the product may contain" as originally proposed by the Commission. Complementary to this provision, the Council has introduced a review clause in order to call on the Commission - to present a report after the first experiences with the provision of Article 4(3) have been gained in practice and - where appropriate, to make proposals for changes to the Regulation. While the Regulation generally covers all stages of placing on the market of the products, the Council has filled a gap by introducing that inspection and control measures can also target the holding of a product. The Council has introduced the following main innovations in the text of the Regulation: - new Recital addressing feed for animals not destined for food production (pets); - further detailing of Recital 10, addressing the need for thresholds for the exemption of the adventitious or technically unavoidable presence of GMOs from the traceability and labelling rules; - revision of the definitions: elimination of the definitions of food/feed additives, (compound) feedingstuff, flavourings and feed materials and the inclusion of the definitions of "Final consumer" and "Ingredient". - re-structuring of the Articles that describe the traceability and labelling rules and the exemptions thereof; - amendment of Directive 2001/18 /EC by way of inclusion of a new Article which provides for an exemption from labelling for GMOs intended for direct processing.