Health problems: intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine (amend. Directive 64 /432/EEC)

1999/0217(COD) - 23/02/2000

The committee adopted the report (codecision procedure, first reading) by Friedrich-Wilhelm GRAEFE ZU BARINGDORF (Greens/EFA, D) reluctantly approving the Commission proposal to delay until the end of 2000 new rules concerning tuberculosis, brucellosis and leukosis in cattle and swine. The report regretted that delays by some Member States in setting up computerised databases needed to trace animals and monitor animal diseases had led to the postponement of animal-health regulations which were originally intended to enter into force on 1 July 1998. However, the committee accepted that there was no great harm in postponing (under certain conditions) mandatory brucellosis and tuberculosis tests until 31 December 2000. It also agreed that a special arrangement allowing imports of Spanish beef cattle which were not officially free of TB, leukosis and brucellosis could be continued, again until 31 December and under certain conditions, as the decision on whether to risk such imports was a matter for the discretion of the Member States. What the committee objected to was the Commission's proposal to allow the Member States an additional three-year grace period to implement the new rules under transitional measures over which Parliament would have no say. In order to encourage the Member States to implement the rules quickly whilst also allowing them time to adapt, and to avoid disruptions in the beef, veal and pork sectors, which were already in difficulties, the committee called for this grace period to be cut to two years. It also wanted proper policing of the new regulations, with spot checks in the Member States and monitoring by the Commission.