Child health protection: phthalates, dangerous substances, safety of toys (amend. Directives 76 /769/EEC, 88/378/EEC)

1999/0238(COD) - 24/05/2000

The committee adopted the report (codecision procedure, first reading) by Per-Arne ARVIDSSON (EPP /ED, S) on a Commission proposal to amend the directive governing the safety of toys. The committee approved the proposal, subject to a number of amendments. These included enlarging the scope of the directive to ensure that adequate warnings were affixed on PVC toys and childcare articles (containing phthalates) intended not only for children aged under three but also for children aged 3 to 6, so that small children would be protected from putting the toys and childcare articles of their elder sisters and brothers into their mouths. The committee also felt that, on the basis of their chemical structure, it was likely that phthalates other than the six listed in the annex to the proposal could also pose a danger to children's health. It therefore wanted the proposal to cover phthalates of all kinds, on the grounds that the EU should take a lead role in applying the precautionary principle and protecting children against avoidable health hazards. The committee also wanted to stop fragrances being added to toys or childcare articles made of soft PVC containing phthalates, to avoid situations where children put toys or other goods into their mouths because of their pleasant smell. Lastly, it felt that the deadline for reviewing the directive should be brought forward and that research should take account of children's exposure to phthalates from sources other than toys.