Tobacco: manufacture, presentation and sale of products (recast of Directives 89/622/EEC, 92/41 /EEC, 90/239/EEC)

1999/0244(COD) - 25/05/2000

The committee adopted the report (codecision procedure, first reading) by Jules MAATEN (ELDR, NL) amending the directive on the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco products in order to make it much stricter. The committee called for the size of health warnings on cigarette packets to be increased even more than suggested by the Commission, with a minimum of 40% of the packet size for general warnings and no less than 50% for additional, more specific, warnings. Labelling should in general be stricter and provide more complete health warnings and a list of ingredients should be available on request. MEPs felt that general warnings like "smoking can kill" were not sufficient and should be replaced by warnings such as "smoking kills half a million people each year in the EU", "85% of lung cancers are caused by smoking" and "if you smoke, you are killing yourself". The committee also called for such warnings to be clearly displayed on vending machines. Printing colour photographs or other illustrations depicting the health consequences of smoking should also be allowed. The committee adopted various other amendments on testing (laboratories for carrying out tests on cigarette yields should be independent from the tobacco industry), the traceability of cigarette packets (batch numbers should be indicated on each packet) and research (manufacturers should allocate 2% of the proceeds of the sale of tobacco products to encourage scientific research on the health and addiction aspects of smoking).