

Food law, European Food Authority, and food safety

2000/0286(COD) - 21/11/2001

The committee adopted the report by Philip WHITEHEAD (PES, UK) amending the Council's common position under the codecision procedure (2nd reading). Although the Council had taken on board a number of Parliament's amendments from 1st reading, the committee retabled other amendments - which had been rejected by Council - aimed at improving the Authority's efficiency, democratic accountability and transparency. The committee wanted the Management Board to be streamlined by having just 12 members rather than 16. Appointments to the Board and the post of Executive Director should be made on merit and be subject to individual confirmatory hearings by Parliament. Meetings of the Authority should be held in public and its opinions should be published immediately. The committee also retabled an amendment calling for the Authority to be located in a place which would enable it to be seen as independent of the Commission and other EU institutions. This place should have a longstanding tradition in food safety, good scientific infrastructure and facilities and good transport connections. Another amendment retabled in the report added the word "safety" to the name of the new body, which would thus be called the European Food Safety Authority. On the question of food safety procedures, the committee wanted food operators, food businesses and animal feed businesses to be required to inform the competent authorities if they had reason to believe a suspect product had been placed on the market. They should also not prevent or discourage anyone from cooperating with the authorities when a food risk was suspected. Lastly, the committee retabled in slightly modified form a first reading amendment calling for a consignment containing animal feed which is deemed not to satisfy feed safety requirements to be destroyed, unless the relevant control authority states that it can be used for other purposes.