

# Genetically modified organisms GMOs: traceability and labelling

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The committee adopted the report by Antonios TRAKATELLIS (EPP-ED, GR) amending the proposal under the codecision procedure (1st reading). While broadly approving the proposal, the committee felt it did not go far enough and therefore wanted its objectives to be fleshed out and the rules to be made more stringent. It pointed out for example that, in order to be effective, the rules on traceability and labelling must be applicable to both products produced within the Community and those imported from third countries. The committee wanted it to be explicitly stated in the introductory article that the precautionary principle should apply and that the objectives should include protection of human and animal health, ensuring the smooth operation of the internal market while giving priority to human health and the environment, giving consumers a free choice and allowing effective measures to prevent the accidental presence of GMOs or products thereof in other food or feed. It added that the regulation should enable products to be withdrawn immediately if they proved harmful or hazardous. One amendment proposed a new article extending the traceability scheme so as to cover animals which have been fed with GM feed. It also stipulated that, when placing pre-packaged food products on the market which have been derived from such animals, operators must ensure that either the words 'This product is derived from an animal fed with GM feed' or 'This product contains [ingredient] derived from an animal fed with GM feed' appear on the label or in any advertising for the product. Another amendment deleted an article in the Commission proposal which, referring to a parallel draft proposal on genetically modified food and feed, would have excluded from the traceability scheme food and feed produced from unauthorised GMOs. The committee also felt that, given that health or other problems may take time to become evident, a period of ten years (rather than five as proposed) was the absolute minimum period necessary for the maintenance of operators' records. Other recommendations included drawing up guides to good segregation practice for businesses in the food industry to help avoid accidental contamination of foodstuffs with GMOs and setting up a central register containing sequencing information and reference material for authorised GMOs and also relevant information concerning unauthorised GMOs. At the final vote, the rapporteur voted against the report, arguing that the adopted amendments on traceability and labelling would prove 'inapplicable in real life'.