Plant protection products: placing on the market, evaluation of the active substances (Directive 91 /414/EEC). Report

2002/2015(COS) - 23/04/2002

The committee adopted the report by Paul LANNOYE (Greens/EFA, B) on the Commission's evaluation report on the implementation of Directive 91/414/EEC. The report was highly critical of the way in which the directive was being implemented, citing unsatisfactory evaluation procedures, delays and a lack of transparency. It wanted the extension of the evaluation deadlines to be subject to a number of conditions, including a pledge by the Commission that it would put forward a proposal for the revision of the Directive by the end of 2002. The committee pointed out that the pesticides listed in Annex I may not be genuinely regarded as 'safe', given that some of the active substances authorised were subject to very tight restrictions and actually presented a serious risk. Moreover, the evaluation procedure did not take account of some important aspects such as endocrine disruption and the incidence of authorised active substances on the health of vulnerable groups such as children and foetuses. The committee called for future evaluation to take account of these factors as well as of any possible additive effects linked to total exposure to certain pesticide products. It also wanted serious consideration to be given to issues such as resistance to plant protection products, integrated pest management and good agricultural practice. The Commission should put forward proposals before July 2003 for a programme for the reduction in the use of pesticides, together with a Code of Best Practice for each crop with regard to the use of authorised pesticides, with priority assigned to non-chemical agricultural methods. The report also called for the evaluation and decision-making procedure under the Directive to be made more transparent and democratic, by involving representatives of interest groups (such as consumers, NGOs and water producers). Lastly, it wanted to see a publicly-accessible database created at EU level, giving details of the quantities of all pesticides produced and sold, the way in which they are used, their toxicological characteristics and non-chemical alternatives.