

Genetically modified organisms GMOs: traceability and labelling

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The committee adopted the report by Antonios TRAKATELLIS (EPP-ED, GR) amending the Council's common position under the 2nd reading of the codecision procedure. It reinstated a number of amendments adopted by Parliament at 1st reading, sometimes in modified form: - the introductory article should explicitly state 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, and giving consumers sufficient information to make a free and independent choice; - pre-packaged products produced from GMOs should be described as such, using the words "This product is produced from GMOs" or "This product contains [ingredient] produced from GMOs" on the label and also as part of any display or advertising; - the period during which operators must maintain records should be 10 years rather than 5 years; - GMOs from which a product is made should be precisely identified, with provision of their unique codes; - a central register should be set up containing sequencing information and reference material for authorised GMOs as well as relevant information concerning GMOs not authorised in the EU; - no new products should be approved for marketing prior to the entry into force of the system provided for under the proposal for assigning unique codes. The committee also voted to delete the clause providing for precise descriptions of mixtures of GMOs in a single product to be replaced by a "declaration of use" by the operator. Moreover, it added a new article on co-existence, stipulating that the Member States should ensure that the notifier or any person selling the product took "appropriate measures to prevent the unintended presence of the GMO or part thereof in other products". On the basis of observed developments in the Member States, the Commission should develop guidelines on the co-existence of genetically modified, conventional and organic crops. Lastly, MEPs called for Member States to report regularly (every 3 years) on their experience with inspections and other control measures and for the Commission to report regularly to Parliament and Council on these experiences.