Cocoa and chocolate products intended for human consumption

1996/0112(COD) - 17/04/1996 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: pursuant to the undertakings given by the Community, simplify certain vertical directives on food in order to take account only of the essential requirements which the products covered by those directives must meet so that they can move freely within the internal market. SUBSTANCE: the proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive simplifies the list of 28 cocoa and chocolate products defined in Directive 73/241/EEC. The operative part includes provisions on the scope of the directive, labelling and the committee procedure. The annex contains the definitions and designations of the products and details of their composition. The proposal contains the following provisions: - the definitions of the raw materials and intermediate products have been deleted, since they primarily concern relations between manufacturers and are not essential requirements. - particular consideration was given to the issue of the use of vegetable fats other than cocoa butter in chocolate production. In keeping with the subsidiarity principle, the Member States may decide whether or not to use vegetable fats other than cocoa butter in their national production, provided the following conditions are observed: . the added fats must be limited to 5% by weight of the end-product; . the other cocoa butter and dry cocoa contents specified in the directive may not be reduced. - in order to preserve the unity of the internal market, all chocolate products falling within the scope of the directive must be allowed to move freely throughout the EC under the trade names provided for in the annex to the directive; - in the interests of providing clear information to consumers and avoiding possible confusion regarding product composition, the directive stipulates the listing of the ingredients used in the manufacture of the product; - consumer information is strengthened in respect of chocolate products containing vegetable fats other than cocoa butter: the labelling must give a clear, neutral and objective indication of the presence of such substances. Producers and distributors of chocolate not containing vegetable fats may include a reference on the labelling to the fact that vegetable fats have not been used in the manufacture of their products as long as this does not mislead the purchaser; - as regards compliance with the composition criteria laid down by the directive, the Commission will ensure correct implementation of the Community directives on the official control of foodstuffs. Furthermore, it will implement a programme to develop methods of analysis allowing verification of compliance with the composition criteria.