Biotechnology and the White Paper (rev. Directive 90/220/EEC)

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OBJECTIVE: the Commission report presents the results of the review of directive 90/220/EEC on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) for experimental and commercial purposes. SUBSTANCE: the Commission considers that Directive 90/220/EEC covers an area of advanced technology which is changing rapidly, which makes it necessary to update the directive regularly so that it is always in line with technological progress. Application of this directive has shown that there are problems and the Commission has made provision to adopt a proposal for amendment of the directive during 1997, chiefly to make some of its provisions more flexible and guarantee greater transparency. In the meantime the Commission undertakes to use all the resources of the current directive in particular to: - intensify the work of the risk assessment group established in the framework of the Committee of Competent Authorities so that a common approach to risk assessment objectives and methodology can be adopted as guidance in March 1997; - encourage and facilitate the submission of a simplified procedure allowing multistate experimental releases of certain GMOs to take place under a single consent; - take a proactive role in the case of product notifications (the exchange of views between competent authorities should take place much earlier than foreseen in the directive); - ensure that its internal procedures will be applied in an efficient manner to ensure the speedy adoption of decisions on products.