Food and food ingredients treated with ionising radiation

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In adopting the report by Mr BLOCH von BLOTTNITZ (V, D), the European Parliament has approved this proposal for a Directive with the following amendments: - a ban on irradiation of foodstuffs in the Community as from 31 December 1992, except for spices and under strictly regulated conditions; - deletion of all products authorized for treatment with ionizing irradiation in the Annex to the Directive, except for spices, seasonings and dried aromatic herbs. In this sole case, irradiation should be authorized, by way of a derogation, only where this method can be used instead of other harmful substances (e.g. carcinogens, as these products are commonly treated with ethylene oxide gas, a potentially harmful cleaning agent); - in the event of changes to the list of products which may be treated with ionizing radiation, Parliament and the Commission's Scientific Committee on Foodstuffs must be consulted in accordance with Article 100a of the Treaty; - in parallel, the Scientific Committee on Food must publish its conclusions if a risk to public health is identified; - foodstuffs treated with ionizing radiation and not intended for the ultimate consumer must be identified by a logo shown in Annex III to the Directive (which is very different from that proposed by the Commission); - Member States must take steps to ensure that irradiated foodstuffs originating from third countries cannot be marketed in the Community (a Community system of prior inspection of all irradiation facilities in third countries will have to be established; facilities which comply with the Directive will receive a licence for export to the Community); - the Commission must present proposals for the harmonization of qualifications of persons responsible for inspections; - stricter provisions on labelling are provided for where a non-irradiated foodstuff contains irradiated ingredients; - regarding packaging of irradiated foodstuffs, provision is made for a list of appropriate materials (to be published by the Commission); - foodstuff irradiation records must be kept for 50 years rather than 5 years. Registers of exposure files for persons working in the irradiation process must also be kept, and retained for 50 years. - from 1 January 1993, the marketing of irradiated foodstuffs which do not comply with the Directive will be prohibited.