Protection of human health: food of animal origin, specific hygiene rules

2000/0179(COD) - 30/03/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

The European Parliament has adopted the four reports by Mr Horst SCHNELLHARDT (EPP-ED, D) on the reform community legislation concerning the hygiene of foodstuffs. The Parliament reintroduced amendments from the first reading which were not supported by the Commission and were not included in the Council's common position. Notable disagreements include the application of the HACCP system to primary production (Annex I of the Hygiene Package) as well as the powers of the Commission to use the comitology procedure modify the legislation's annexes on hygiene rules applicable to primary production and other types of food business (Annex II), on the specific rules on products of animal origin (Annex II - meat (red meat, poultry and game), milk, bivalve molluscs (oysters, mussels, clams etc.) and fish and on imports of animal products from third countries (Annex III). The Parliament underlined that official controls of fresh meat should in principle be carried out by official staff. However, the Member States may allow slaughterhouse staff to perform certain specific activities under the supervision of the official veterinarian but - according to two amendments adopted by MEPs - this possibility should be restricted to poultry and rabbit meat. These two particularly controversial points supported by Parliament are contested by both the Council and the Commission. Their adoption by Parliament probably means that conciliation will be necessary. The House also adopted an amendment which calls on Member States to ensure that food business operators offer all assistance needed to ensure that official controls carried out by the competent authority can be performed effectively. They should in particular give access to all buildings, premises, installations or other infrastructures; and make available any documentation and record required under the present regulation or considered necessary by the competent authority for judging the situation.