

# Food law, European Food Authority, and food safety

2000/0286(COD) - 11/12/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

The European Parliament adopted the recommendation by Mr Philip WHITEHEAD (PES, UK). It supports the wish of the Commission and Council for a start date in early 2002 for the new Authority but MEPs felt this imminent deadline must not prevent Parliament from playing its full role as co-legislator on a crucial issue such as food safety. An amendment retabled from first-reading adding the word 'safety' to the name was adopted almost unanimously, as were amendments on the streamlining of the Authority's Management Board (14 instead of 16), its efficiency, its democratic accountability (public meetings and documents) and its seat. Important amendments were also adopted with regard to food safety procedures. The Management Board should be appointed in such a way as to secure the highest standard of competence, a broad range of relevant expertise, for instance in management and in public administration. This should be facilitated by a rotation of the different countries of origin of the members of the Management Board without any post being reserved for nationals of any specific Member State. An amendment was adopted demanding that 4 of the 14 members of the Management Board should have their background in organisations representing consumers and other interests in the food chain. The Parliament suggests that the Members' term of office shall be four years, and may be renewed once. Before appointment the candidate nominated by the Management Board shall be invited without delay to make a statement before the European Parliament and answer questions put by members of this institution. Although there is general agreement between the three institutions on the European Food Safety Authority, this is not the case for its seat. The Parliament called on the Council to apply the following criteria in its decision-making procedure on the location of the EFSA: - it should be, and be seen physically to be, independent of the Commission and their institutions; - it should have a long-standing tradition in food safety in order to lend credibility to the Authority in the eyes of EU citizens; - it should enhance the Authority's independence and integrity; - it should provide good scientific infrastructure and facilities in the field of food safety; - it should be easily accessible in terms of communications and have good rapid transport connections.