Resolution on the proposal by the Council amending the Annex to Directive 2002/95/EC on the restriction of the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment

2005/2584(RSP) - 06/07/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The "comitology" procedure is throwing up another conflict between MEPs and the European Commission. This time the dispute is over whether to scrap restrictions imposed two years ago on the use of decaBDE, a brominated flame-retardant used chiefly to ensure that electric and electronic devices, such as televisions and computers, do not burst into flames. The Commission wants to lift the restrictions but MEPs adopted a resolution opposing this plan.

Parliament is of the opinion that the Commission has clearly exceeded its implementing powers and they are calling on the Council to oppose the proposal. They dispute the scientific basis of the Commission's proposal and believe the restrictions should stay in place. A scientific advisory committee of the Commission itself also takes this view. Brominated flame-retardants can have toxic effects on health and the environment. Some of them, penta- and octaBDE, were in fact completely banned two years ago. Parliament fought up to the conciliation stage to win a ban on octaBDE and restrictions on decaBDE, pending - for the latter - more precise risk assessments. The assessments carried out do not convince MEPs and they note that less toxic substitute products exist.