

Food additives: sweeteners and other than colours and sweeteners

2004/0237(COD) - 26/10/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted the resolution drafted by Mojca **DRCAR MURKO** (ALDE, SI) and made some amendments to the Commission's proposal. The resolution was adopted by 556 votes in favour, 98 against and 8 abstentions. Many national exemptions for traditional products have been endorsed by Members, under detailed conditions, in order to facilitate an agreement at the first reading stage. In order to protect people suffering from allergies, restrictions are introduced for soybean hemicellulose which should not be permitted for unprocessed food in which it is not expected to be found. On the other hand, some products are added to the positive list of authorised additives like pullulan (a new polysaccharide), TBHQ (an antioxidant) and starch aluminium. The new Directive modifies provisions regarding the use of sulphites in cooked crustaceans, table grapes and lychees. Amendments include the following:

-The maximum residual levels set for certain traditionally-manufactured meat products should ensure that the acceptable daily intake (ADI) established by the Scientific Committee on Food in 1990 is not exceeded. Products which are not specifically named in the legislation, but which are traditionally produced in a similar manner (i.e. similar products) can if necessary be categorised in accordance with Articles 5 and 6 of Directive 95/2/EC. For cheese, the level should be set as added amount in the cheese milk. If a process is used where addition of nitrate follows removal of whey and addition of water, this should lead to levels identical to those which would have been obtained if the nitrate had been added directly to the cheese milk.

-Consumers should be informed when products contain hemicellulose derived from soybean in accordance with the provisions of Directive 2000/13/EC.

-The European Food Safety Authority has assessed the information on the safety of pullulan and found the use of pullulan acceptable in coating food supplements that are in the form of capsules and tablets as well as in breath fresheners in the form of films. It is therefore appropriate to permit these uses.

-Similarly, the EFSA has assessed the information on the safety of tertiary butyl hydroquinone (TBHQ) and established an ADI of 0-0.7 mg/kg body weight for this antioxidant and found that its use would be acceptable in certain foodstuffs at certain inclusion levels. It is therefore appropriate to permit this additive.

-The Scientific Committee on Food has assessed the information on the safety of starch aluminium octenyl succinate and found that the use of this additive as a component of micro encapsulated vitamins and carotenoids may be regarded as acceptable. Parliament's text permits this use.

-Current provisions regarding the use of sulphites (E 220-228) in cooked crustaceans, table grapes and lychees are updated. (Please see the preceding summary.)