Indication of the ingredients in foodstuffs

2001/0199(COD) - 10/11/2003 - Final act

PURPOSE : to list the ingredients in foodstuffs on labels. LEGISLATIVE ACT : Directive 2003/89/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2000/13/EC as regards indication of the ingredients present in foodstuffs. CONTENT : this Directive comes about as a result of the fact that the food allergies affect the lives of many people, causing conditions ranging from very mild to potentially fatal. Common food allergens include cow's milk, fruits, legumes (especially peanuts and soybeans), eggs, crustaceans, tree nuts, fish, vegetables (celery and other foods of the Umbelliferae family), wheat and other cereals. The most common food allergens are found in a wide variety of processed foods. The avoidance of food additives is often difficult since not all of them are invariably included on the labelling. This Directive provides as follows: - additives, processing aids and other substances with allergenic effect covered by Article 6(4)(a) of Directive 2000/13/EC are subject to labelling rules, to give appropriate information to consumers suffering from food allergy; - the list of allergenic substances includes those foodstuffs, ingredients and other substances recognised as causing hypersensitivity; - in order to provide all consumers with better information and to protect the health of certain consumers, it will be obligatory to include in the list of ingredients all ingredients and other substances present in the foodstuff. In the case of alcoholic beverages, it will be mandatory to include in the labelling all ingredients with allergenic effect present in the beverage concerned; - it is important to be able to revise the list of ingredients rapidly, when necessary by including or deleting certain ingredients or substances. The revision will be based on scientific criteria determined by the European Food Safety Authority and take the form of implementing measures of a technical nature, the adoption of which will be entrusted to the Commission. - where fruit, vegetables or mushrooms, none of which significantly predominates in terms of weight and which are used in proportions that are likely to vary, are used in a mixture as ingredients of a foodstuff, they may be grouped together in the list of ingredients under the designation 'fruit', 'vegetables' or 'mushrooms' followed by the phrase 'in varying proportions', immediately followed by a list of the fruit, vegetables or mushrooms present; - ingredients constituting less than 2 % of the finished product may be listed in a different order after the other ingredients, - where ingredients which are similar or mutually substitutable are likely to be used in the manufacture or preparation of a foodstuff without altering its composition, its nature or its perceived value, and in so far as they constitute less than 2 % of the finished product, they may be referred to in the list of ingredients by means of the phrase 'contains ... and/or ...', where at least one of no more than two ingredients is present in the finished product. This provision does not apply to additives or to ingredients listed in Annex IIIa; - the list in Annex IIIa will be updated on the basis of the most recent scientific knowledge. The first re-examination shall take place at the latest on 25 November 2005. - the Commission will, not later than 25 November 2004, after consultation with the European Food Safety Authority, adopt a list of those ingredients or substances, which will consequently be excluded from Annex IIIa, pending the final results of the studies, or at the latest until 25 November 2007; DATE OF TRANSPOSITION : 25 November 2004. From that date, Member States may permit the sale of products that comply with this Directive; they must prohibit, as from 25 November 2005, the sale of products that do not comply with the Directive. Any products which do not comply with the Directive but which have been placed on the market or labelled prior to this date may, however, be sold while stocks last. ENTRY INTO FORCE : 25/11/2003.