Basic information

1997/2216(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Endocrine-disrupting chemicals **Subject** 3.70.13 Dangerous substances, toxic and radioactive wastes (storage, transport) 4.20.01 Medicine, diseases	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	JENSEN Kirsten M. (PSE)	22/07/1997

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	GRAEFE ZU BARINGDORF Friedrich-Wilhelm (V)	26/11/1997
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy	POMPIDOU Alain (UPE)	08/10/1997
FEMM Women's Rights		

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
19/09/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/07/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
21/07/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0281/1998	
19/10/1998	Debate in Parliament		
20/10/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
09/11/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2216(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/09303

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0281/1998 OJ C 313 12.10.1998, p. 0007	21/07/1998	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0608/1998 OJ C 341 09.11.1998, p. 0011-0037	20/10/1998	Summary

Endocrine-disrupting chemicals

1997/2216(INI) - 20/10/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mrs Kirsten Jensen (PES, DK) on endocrine-disrupting chemicals, Parliament calls for chemical substances on the market which have an effect on the human endocrine system to be classified into groups according to risk. The possibly hazardous substances (pesticides such as DDT and its derivatives, industrial products, medicines and pollutants) work by simulating the action of natural hormones or interfering with their metabolism and affect human biology in four ways: a carcinogenic effect, or effects on the reproductive system, nervous system or immune system. But, as Parliament points out, there is still a great deal of uncertainty in research on endocrine disrupters. For this reason, pending a detailed risk assessment, the precautionary principle and constant vigilance should prevail. Regulations on chemical substances should stipulate compliance with the precautionary principle. Pending a more rigorous evaluation of the risks, Parliament calls for the following substances to be gradually withdrawn from the market: - substances which are not easily biodegradable, which accumulate in the organism with serious and irreversible effects on health and the environment; - substances which may be regarded as hormone-mimicking which are currently on the market. Parliament calls for integrated programmes to be implemented to reduce the use of plant protection products and promote ecological farming. It also calls on the Commission to amend directive 91/414/EEC (Annex II) so that an environmental impact assessment of the hormonal effects of pesticides is required. Particular attention is to be paid to other substances such as plasticisers, emulsifiers. etc. which may have a demonstrable endocrine-disrupting effect. These substances should be included in Directive 91/414/EEC and be appropriately labelled. With regard to exposure to the substances as such, Parliament - calls on the Commission and Council to take account of the hormonal effect of certain chemical substances in Community action in the field of water policy, - calls on industry to use chemicals primarily in closed processes, - calls on the Commission to use Directive 96/61/EC on integrated pollution prevention to control endocrine-disrupting chemicals, - calls on the Member States to make information on endocrine disrupters widely available, with the focus on reproductive health problems, on the basis that the right to know principle is the best way to enable people to maintain control over their own reproductive health rights, - calls on the Commission and the Member States to make coordinated efforts with a view to developing standardised tests for chemical substances to be placed on the market. With regard to research, Parliament calls on the Commission to draw up a comprehensive research strategy on this subject and for adoption by the end of 1998 of a provisional definition of endocrine disrupters in order to improve the comparability of research findings (this definition should be harmonised as far as possible with that adopted by the OECD member countries and should apply both to human beings and to wild species). Parliament calls on the Commission to set up a research network at EU level on endocrine disrupters and calls for industry to be involved in research. Parliament invites the EU to develop a research strategy at European level into the adverse effects of chemical substances on sperm quality, the nervous system, behaviour and the various endocrine glands (e.g. the thyroid). It calls for specific budget allocation to research to identify endocrine disrupters suspected of harming the foetus or having effects on the reproductive system in the context of the Fifth Framework Research Programme. Parliament also calls for scientific committees to assess the directive on health and cosmetics (foam baths and creams), PVC and toys, hormone-mimicking substances which can remain in clothes, etc. It also calls for research to taking account of the need for: - improved understanding of the endocrine and reproductive systems (including the role of hormones), - epidemiological studies on links between sexual abnormalities and their effects on other biological functions, including investigations of the effects on mothers and children of hormone disrupters and the role of other factors such as diet, location and socio-cultural origin; - long-term epidemiological studies, in different environments and geographical areas, on reproductive effects, including sperm quality. Noting the current international attempts to define persistent organic pollutants (POPs), it calls on the Commission to take part in this work. In general, Parliament would like the most dangerous substances replaced by less dangerous ones in the EU and for the EU to have an approval procedure for dangerous substances in the working

environment, corresponding to the approval plus alternative assessment system for pesticides. It calls on the Commission to examine whether the existing legislation on the marketing of new chemicals is adequate and if necessary to put forward amendments with regard to the potential effects of these substances. It calls for labelling regulations to be reviewed to ensure that each chemical product is labelled in an easily understandable way to show what level of substances not occurring in the natural environment it contains and that the risk category for these substances is displayed.