Basic information

2000/2082(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Food safety: action plan, European Food Authority. White Paper **Subject** 4.60.04.04 Food safety	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	BOWIS John (PPE-DE)	23/02/2000

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
JURI Legal Affairs and Internal Market	GEBHARDT Evelyne (PSE)	28/03/2000
ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy	CORBEY Dorette (PSE)	19/04/2000
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	AYUSO Pilar (PPE-DE)	28/03/2000

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	2271	2000-06-13
Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2248	2000-03-16
Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2265	2000-05-25
Agriculture and Fisheries	2309	2000-11-20
Agriculture and Fisheries	2445	2002-07-15
Agriculture and Fisheries	2322	2000-12-19
Agriculture and Fisheries	2250	2000-03-20
Consumers	2255	2000-04-13

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
		COM(1999)0719	Summary

12/01/2000	Non-legislative basic document published		
16/03/2000	Debate in Council		Summary
17/03/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/03/2000	Debate in Council		
13/04/2000	Debate in Council		Summary
25/05/2000	Debate in Council		Summary
13/06/2000	Debate in Council		
10/10/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
10/10/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0272/2000	
25/10/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0471/2000	Summary
25/10/2000	Debate in Parliament		
25/10/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
20/11/2000	Debate in Council		
19/12/2000	Debate in Council		Summary
12/07/2001	Final act published in Official Journal		
15/07/2002	Debate in Council		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2000/2082(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/5/12478

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0272/2000 OJ C 197 12.07.2001, p. 0006	10/10/2000	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0471/2000 OJ C 197 12.07.2001, p. 0113-0203	25/10/2000	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1999)0719	12/01/2000	Summary

Follow-up document	SEC(2002)0833	12/07/2002	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0077/1999 OJ C 226 08.08.2000, p. 0007	12/04/2000	
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0585/2000 OJ C 204 18.07.2000, p. 0021	24/05/2000	

Food safety: action plan, European Food Authority. White Paper

2000/2082(COS) - 19/12/2000

The Council held an open debate on the subject of food safety and the future European Food Authority on the basis of the proposal on the matter submitted by the Commission. From the debate it emerged that in general the delegations felt there was an urgent need to act on this proposal, the overall approach of which they endorsed. The debate also showed broad agreement on the fact that high-level, independent, transparent assessment of risks to health is vital to effective risk management and hence to ensuring that the responsible authorities take the right decisions at the right time. The Food Authority ought therefore to make a useful contribution to the safety of the food supply and consequently to crisis prevention. It was felt that in crisis situations it would be for the Food Authority · by means of its scientific opinions · to advise the Commission and the Member States as fully and as swiftly as possible on the emergency measures to be taken.

Food safety: action plan, European Food Authority. White Paper

2000/2082(COS) - 13/04/2000

The Council held an orientation debate on the Commission's White Paper on food safety confirming that a majority of Member States broadly agree with the principles outlined in the document. The debate focussed in particular on the consumer information aspects of the White Paper addressing questions related to the provision of scientific information to the consumers, the need for information campaigns on nutrition at Community level and on possible Community provisions to regulate claims regarding consumer health protection. All delegations expressed themselves in favour of public availability of the information related to scientific opinions according to procedures guaranteeing transparency. In addition, a majority have underlined the importance of clarity of the information provided to customers, certain delegations pointing to the serious consequences that might arise in case of misunderstandings in this field. The role of the proposed Food Safety Authority in this area was highlighted. In relation to nutritional campaigns, Member States felt that initiatives should continue to be taken at national or local level in connection with diversity of consumer habits with complementary action at the EU level on questions of general interest. Finally, most delegations were open to the introduction of EU provisions to regulate functional claims on food, as outlined by the Commission's White Paper. The need to avoid uncertainty of consumers through such claims was stressed by all. The President thanked Member States for their contributions and noted that the results of the debate will be a useful input in the preparation of the Presidency progress report to be presented at the Feira European Council of 19-20 June 2000.

Food safety: action plan, European Food Authority. White Paper

2000/2082(COS) - 25/05/2000

The Council heard a presentation by the President of the Council on, the work carried out to date on the Commission's White Paper on food safety and on the main guidelines emerging from it. In his presentation, the President noted that all delegations were in favour of the rapid creation of a European Food Authority which would carry out, in the field of food safety, essential risk evaluation and consumer information tasks. There is also a clear need to establish a general regulatory framework on food safety matters, defining the principles guaranteeing a coherent and transparent approach, covering the entire food chain. As regards the legislative measures to be adopted for the sector, the following topics should be treated as a matter of priority: - new animal feedingstuffs; - eradication of epizootic disease, in particular zoonoses; - improvement of food hygiene; - maximum limits for contaminants and residues; - stricter rules governing genetically modified foodstuffs. With regard to the question of substances used in the production of animal feedingstuffs, delegations appear receptive to the approach advocated by the Commission of establishing a white list in the medium term while for the time being endeavouring to expand the black list currently in force. In relation to national controls, most delegations agree that administrative cooperation between national authorities and the Commission should be improved, particularly to harmonise control methods and the presentation of results. Lastly, as regards the international dimension, all delegations share the Commission's view that food safety cannot be regarded only as a matter of domestic policy. They believe that imported food products should comply with standards enabling the appropriate level of health protection set by the Community to be attained. The Council took note of the Presidency's report, to be reported at the Feira European Council of 19-20 June 2000, and of a number of interventions concerning the candidates for the location of the future European Food Authority - Spain : Barcelona, Italy : Parma, and Finland : Helsinki.

Food safety: action plan, European Food Authority. White Paper

2000/2082(COS) - 25/10/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report drafted by Mr John BOWIS (EPP-ED, Uk) on the Commission White Paper on food safety. The resolution was adopted by 461 to 12 votes with 9 abstentions. In adopting the resolution, the European Parliament calls for its own involvement in setting up the food authority through the codecision procedure. The resolution also calls on the Commission in view of the forthcoming Sixth Framework Programme, to enhance and adapt the role of food safety research and extend it to cover consumer concerns regarding both the safety and the quality of products. It also calls on the Commission to develop a strategy to empower and encourage candidate countries to comply with the highest food safety standards and to this end, establish reliable and effective indicators to enable practical assessments to be made of the adoption by the applicant countries of the "acquis communautaire" with regard to food safety before accession. Furthermore, the European Parliament calls on the Commission to present, as soon as possible, a detailed estimate of the costs of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) performing its duties properly. With regard to the EFSA itself, notwithstanding its many roles and functions, the resolution recognises that the EFSA cannot have a legislative remit. With regard to the White Paper's Action Plan on Food Safety, the European Parliament believes that it should be divided into 4 categories: priorities for legislation, less urgent items for legislation in due course, consolidation measures and finally, matters more appropriate for health promotion activity. Finally, the resolution calls on the Commission to examine whether the content of the numerous specific labelling rules cannot be covered in the labelling directive (79/112/EC).

Food safety: action plan, European Food Authority. White Paper

2000/2082(COS) - 16/03/2000

The Council held a debate, open to the public, on the Commission's White Paper on Food Safety, focusing in particular on issues related to the establishment of an independent European Food Authority. Ministers concentrated their interventions on the tasks of the proposed Authority, its cooperation with the relevant scientific agencies and institutions of the Member States and the rules to ensure its proper functioning. Summing up the debate, the Presidency noted that, with a view to guarantee a high level of safety in food, the establishment of an independent European Food Authority, acting in a transparent way, is now considered urgent by all Ministers. The tasks to be conferred on the Authority should include the elaboration of independent scientific opinions, data gathering, risk analysis and consumer dialogue and information. Aspects related to risk management should remain, however, the competence of European institutions, as established by the Treaty. The Presidency also mentioned the important role that the future European Food Authority will have in effectively presenting and explaining scientific opinions related to food safety, on which Community legislation is founded, at international level, also referring to the negotiations within the World Trade Organisation. The Presidency considered the results of the debate a useful input in view of the preparation of a progress report to the Fiera European Council of 19-20 June 2000. In this framework the "Agriculture" and the "Consumer" sessions of the Council will also give a contribution, in relation to items linked to their respective competencies.

Food safety: action plan, European Food Authority. White Paper

2000/2082(COS) - 12/01/2000 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present the White Paper on Food Safety. CONTENT : the main aim of this paper is to achieve the highest possible level of health protection for Europe's food consumers. The White Paper sets out a radical plan: a major programme of legislative reform is proposed to complete the EU's "farm to table" approach as well as the establishment of a new European Food Authority. Achieving the highest standards of food safety in the EU is a key policy priority. The guiding principle throughout the White Paper is that food safety policy must be based on a comprehensive, integrated approach. The White Paper envisages the establishment of an European Food Authority based on the principles of the highest standards of independence, of scientific excellence and of transparency in its operations. Therefore, the Authority must be guided by the best science, be independent of industrial and political interests, be open to rigorous public scrutiny, be scientifically authoritative and work closely with national scientific bodies. The tasks of the Authority will essentially concentrate on risk assessment and risk communication. Risk management, - including legislation and control, should remain the responsibility of the European institutions which are accountable to the European public. The envisaged tasks of the Authority will comprise: - establishment of risk assessment through scientific advice; - information gathering and analysis; - communication; - rapid alert. The White Paper is not prescriptive about all of the details concerning a Food Authority at the European level, and the Commission, therefore, has not yet proposed concrete resource figures for the Authority. In addition, it is envisaged that the Authority should be in place by 2002 once the necessary legislation has been enacted. Before finalising its proposal the European Commission is inviting all interested parties to give their views on the European Food Authority by the end of April. A definitive legislative proposal would then be brought forward by the Commission in September of this year. The White Paper proposes an action plan with a wide range of measures to improve and bring coherence to the Community's legislation covering all aspects of food products from "farm to table". It sets out over 80 separate actions that are envisaged over the period ahead and intends to close identified loopholes in current legislation. The new legal framework will cover animal feed, animal health an welfare, hygiene, contaminants and residues, novel food, additives, flavourings, packaging and irradication. It will include a proposal on General Food Law which will embody the principles of food safety such as: - responsibility of feed manufacturers, farmers and food operators; - traceability of feed, food and its ingredients; - proper risk analysis through a) risk assessment (scientific advice and information analysis), b) risk management (regulation and control) and c) risk communication; - and the application of the precautionary principle ifappropriate. With regard to the consumers, if they are to be satisfied that the action proposed in the White Paper is leading to a genuine improvement in food safety standards, they must be kept well informed. The Commission together with the new European Food Authority, will promote a dialogue with consumers to encourage their involvement in the new Food Safety policy. At the same time, consumers need to be kept better informed of emerging food safety concerns, and of risk to certain groups from particular foods. Proposals on the labelling of foods, building on existing rules, will be brought forward. In conclusion, the success of the measures proposed in this White Paper is intrinsically linked to the support of the European Parliament and the Council. Their implementation will depend on the commitment of the Member States. This White Paper also calls on strong involvement of the operators, who bear the prime responsibility for the daily

application of requirements for food safety. Greater transparency at all levels of Food Safety policy is thread running through the whole White Paper and will contribute fundamentally to enhancing consumer confidence in EU Food Safety policy.