Basic information

2002/2008(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Food and food ingredients authorised for treatment with ionising radiation **Subject** 3.10.10 Foodstuffs, foodstuffs legislation 3.40.13 Food industry 4.60.04.04 Food safety	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	BREYER Hiltrud (V/ALE)	06/11/2001

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Health and Food Safety	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
08/08/2001	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2001)0472	Summary
16/01/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
05/11/2002	Vote in committee		
05/11/2002	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0384/2002	
16/12/2002	Debate in Parliament		
17/12/2002	Decision by Parliament	T5-0613/2002	Summary
17/12/2002	End of procedure in Parliament		
05/02/2004	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2002/2008(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/5/15663

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0384/2002	05/11/2002	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0613/2002 OJ C 031 05.02.2004, p. 0031-0134 E	17/12/2002	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2001)0472	08/08/2001	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES1489/2001 OJ C 048 21.02.2002, p. 0086	28/11/2001	

Food and food ingredients authorised for treatment with ionising radiation

2002/2008(COS) - 17/12/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a report by Hiltrud BREYER (Greens/EFA, Germany) on the Commission's Communication. It welcomed the Commission's consideration of consumer and food industry opinions in finalising the Community list and the emphasis on consumer benefits, genuine technological need and avoidance of treatments which can be misused to substitute for good practice. It called on the Commission to collaborate with the World Health Organisation on research into the safety of irradiated foods. Any additions to herbs, spices and vegetable seasonings should only be permitted for irradiation in the EU as and when scientific knowledge suggests it is safe to do so. Before any proposal is submitted to add foodstuffs to the positive list, a detailed analysis must be carried out on each foodstuff, with evidence given to demonstrate that each of the conditions for authorising food irradiation in Annex I of Directive 1999/2/EC is clearly met. Parliament went on to ask the Commission to encourage the development and validation of safe and effective substitutes for chemical fumigation and methyl bromide for food disinfestation. The Commission should require annual random testing of food by all Member States to prevent illegally irradiated, unlabelled products from being sold. All results should be made publicly available with tough action against breaches of the law. The Commission must also enforce regular controls, including irradiation detection surveys, of potentially irradiated imported foodstuffs in all Member States, especially of foods imported from third countries that are known to make wide use of food irradiation, such as the US and Brazil. A mechanism of sanctions ought to be introduced into the Directives against food importers or manufacturers who fail to carry out adequate monitoring to ensure they are not supplied with illegal irradiated ingredients or products and against producers and importers who withhold relevant information. Parliament stressed that the short and long-term effects of eating a diet largely comprised of irradiated foods on children's health should be used as a reference for human health risk assessments, given the enhanced sensitivity of children to

chemical exposure and depletion of nutrients in food. Dangerous processes should be substituted with safer processes. This should be a duty for food producers and processors in order to avoid risks to workers, human health and the environment.

Food and food ingredients authorised for treatment with ionising radiation

2002/2008(COS) - 08/08/2001 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: To assess future proposals for the extension of a positive list cataloguing irradiated foods and food ingredients. CONTENT: Two Directives currently regulate the EU market in irradiated foods. The first, a framework Directive (1999/2/EC), covers general and technical aspects relating to processing, labelling and authorisation. The second, an implementing Directive (1999/3/EC) establishes a Community list of food and food ingredients authorising foods suitable for treatment with ionising radiation. The positive list contains a single food category only: "dried aromatic herbs, spices and vegetable seasonings". Under the provisions of the framework Directive the Commission is obliged to offer proposals extending the list of foods and food ingredients to be catalogued under the positive lists by 31 December 2000. The safety aspect of irradiated food has been extensively investigated by a number of scientific studies instigated by the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organisation. There appears to be a scientific consensus suggesting that the irradiation of any food up to a maximum dose of 10 kGy is considered safe. Indeed, the WHO encourages the use of the irradiation process in order to reduce the incidence of food borne diseases caused by micro-organisms. This same study group concluded in 1999 that food irradiated with the maximum dose is both safe to consume and importantly, nutritionally adequate. Currently, Member States are free to assess which foods should be irradiated. Application of this method varies considerably from member state to member state. As the Communication notes, however, in practice only very few foods and food ingredients are actually irradiated. The percentage of a particular food which is treated by ionising radiation is in most cases small. Prior to preparing an update of the positive list the Commission sent out a consultation paper seeking the opinion of those involved in, or interested in, the matter of irradiated food and food ingredients. In total it received 33 responses. Firstly, there is the opinion of consumer organisations, which argues forceable against the extension of the positive list. They suggest there is no "reasonable technological need" for irradiated food. Rather, they feel priority should be given to the improvement of food production at primary level, in storage and during the manufacturing process. Secondly, there is the opinion of those in favour of food irradiation. Voices in favour stem largely from the irradiation industry, FAO/WHO, the US government and some research associations/institutes. Their main argument is that food irradiation is safe and contributes to increasing consumer protection. Furthermore, global trade liberalisation through the WTO requires that national authorities base their regulations on Codex Standards, sound science and proper risk analysis. Lastly, there is the opinion of the food producing industry itself. They are largely against extending the number of products subject to irradiation in that they fear a consumer backlash against such products. They also argue that current procedures to ensure good hygiene are sufficient. Until such time that consumer confidence in the process of irradiation grows, the food industry proposes postponing the matter of extending the list. Recognising the polarisation of this matter, the Commissionproposes three options. Proposing a list in which a real technological need has been identified. This would cover peeled shrimps and frog legs. The second option would be to include deep frozen aromatic herbs, dried fruit, cereal flakes and germs, chicken offal, egg white, gum arabic, peeled shrimps and frog legs. And lastly, the third option would be to regard the current list as complete. In the meantime the Commission will seek a wider ranging debate on this matter prior to launching new proposals.