

Genetically modified organisms GMOs: deliberate release into the environment (repeal. Directive 90/220/EEC)

1998/0072(COD) - 16/05/2000 - Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading

The Commission can accept fully four amendments adopted by the European Parliament and nine in principle. The remaining 16 amendments are not acceptable. The amendments accepted by the Commission relate to the reintroduction of the term 'use' in the text as defined by the existing Directive; the obligation of the competent authorities of Member States to state reasons when demanding further information from the notifier under Part B of the Directive; the clarification that Member States are to inform the public when information becomes available which could have significant consequences for human health and the environment; and finally, sanctions that these should include penalties for the negligent release of GMOs. In addition, the amendments accepted in principle by the Commission concern: - the submission of proposals for the implementation of the recently agreed Protocol for Biosafety in the context of ratification. However, the Commission cannot accept to include provisions in the text of the Directive on export obligations in the present revision and therefore rejects the first part of the amendment; - the addition of a new paragraph which states that "it should also take due account of potential culminative long-term effects associated with the interaction between different GMOs in the environment"; - the introduction of a new recital which stresses the need for independent, systematic research on potential risk associated with the release of GMOs and that researchers should be given all relevant information; - the three-year reports of the Commission which should include a study of the likely socio-economic implications of the deliberate release or the placing on the market of GMOs; - the analysis carried out on comments received from the public on a proposal for establishing criteria and information for specified GMOs should only be done where it is deemed appropriate; - the addition of a recital which refers to the need for Community wide environmental liability rules and that the Commission is to submit a proposal which includes the impact of biotechnology on all areas of the European Union before the end of 2001; - the requirement that Member States ensure that the implication of gene transfer are accurately assessed on a case by case basis; - the importance of phasing-out of antibiotic resistance marker genes.