Genetically modified food and feed

2001/0173(COD) - 22/05/2003

The committee adopted the report by Karin SCHEELE (PES, A) amending the Council's common position under the 2nd reading of the codecision procedure. It reinstated a number of key amendments adopted by Parliament at 1st reading: - with regard to the derogation to the labelling requirements in the case of adventitious or technically unavoidable presence of GMOs, the maximum tolerance threshold should be 0.5% for each ingredient rather than 0.9% as proposed in the common position; - the committee proposed deleting the provisions amending Directive 2001/18 (the GMO Release Directive) as regards the derogation to the labelling requirements in the case of adventitious or technically unavoidable presence of unauthorised GMOs. The Council was proposing a three-year transitional period during which a tolerance threshold of 0.5% would apply for unauthorised GMOs which had received positive scientific risk assessments. The committee argued that thresholds for unauthorised GMOs and GMO ingredients did not even exist in US law and that the proposed threshold would undermine the EU biosafety framework; - measures must be taken to ensure the co-existence of GM production and non-GM production. The technical details of co-existence should be decided by means of the commitology procedure; - food and feed which can also be used as seed should only be placed on the market if it has been authorised for all these uses; - as regards emergency measures, the proposal should take up the wording of the provisions laid down in Directive 2001/18 (the GMO Release Directive), thereby enabling Member States to take emergency action themselves (rather than merely informing the EFSA and the Commission) in the event of severe risk or where they receive new information giving them grounds to suspect that the use of a food or feed posed a danger to human or animal health or the environment. The committee also proposed a number of changes aimed at streamlining the procedures relating to applications for initial authorisations and for renewals and interim reports. The common position stipulated that applications for initial authorisations should be submitted to the national competent authority of a Member State but that all applications for renewals and all interim reports should be addressed to the Commission. MEPs pointed out that this division of responsibilities was contrary to the principles of proper administration and called for initial authorisations, renewals and interim reports to be submitted to the competent authority of the Member State where the initial authorisation was applied for.