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

1998/0072(COD) - 26/03/1999 - Modified legislative proposal

Generally speaking, the Commission's amended proposal does not take up European Parliament that seek to modify the balance in the safety mechanism contained in the proposal, or which do not respect the basic principles of the Directive, such as the analysis on a case-by-case basis. Nevertheless, the Commission accepted, partially or wholly, the amendments (40 in total) that deal with the following aspects : - the introduction of methods to facilitate the identification, monitoring and recovery of GMOs; - the strengthening of the link between the Directive and the legislation on the products in such a way as to guarantee an exhaustive evaluation of risks for the environment from one end to the other of the legislative framework as regards biotechnology; - all the conditions, including those relating to the monitoring and the period of validity of the authorisation, are subject to revision before the renewal of the authorisation; - the optional character of the period of validity of the authorisation, in the event of renewal; - possibility for the Council and the European Parliament to ask the Commission to consult the Ethics Committee regarding general questions about the release of GMOs; - clarification of the definition of the word 'organism', which does not cover human beings; - taking into account of the precautionary principle as an essential element of the authorisation procedure; - obligation for the Member States to take all the necessary measures in the event of the unauthorised release of GMOs: information to the other Member States and the public; - provision of information concerning plans for decontamination and a detailed follow-up plan in the file notifying releases coming under part B; - public consultation regarding experimental releases; - obligation on the Member States to evaluate all complementary information brought to their attention following the issuing of an authorisation; - reports to be drawn up on releases, as well as the periodicity of these reports are laid down in the authorisation; the summaries of the results have to be communicated to the Member States; - possibility for Member States to obtain complete files on experimental releases; - the risk evaluation report has to specify that the GMO in question must not be placed on the market; - obigation to terminate the release of a GMO and, in the event of acute risk, to recover as far as possible the released GMO; an absolute requirement to inform citizens; - introduction of a precision regarding the circumstances in which the Commission can consult the Scientific Committee and the setting of a deadline for consultations; - introduction of the idea of 'pathogenic effect on micro-organisms in the chapter dealing with potentially damaging effects in Annex II regarding the principles applicable to the evaluation of risks for the environment; - necessity to interrupt the release of a GMO and, to the extent that it is possible, to counteract the effects when therisk is deemed to be unacceptable; this release can only take place when its conditions are modified in such a way as to significantly reduce the risks; - the information provided by the applicant concerning the monitoring plan has to specify the length and frequency of this monitoring; - the competent authorities may require that the applicant modifies the conditions of the release, that it be suspended or that it be terminated, and that he takes all necessary corrective measures.