Procedure file

Basic information

COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1996/2277(COS)	Procedure completed
Biotechnology and the White Paper (rev. Directive 90/220/EEC) Subject 3.50.08 New technologies; biotechnology		

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	PSE BOWE David Robert	05/02/1997
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	PSE GÖRLACH Willi	19/03/1997
	ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy	PPE MATIKAINEN-KALLSTRÖM Marjo	12/12/1996
Council of the European Union			

Key events

10/12/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0630	Summary
15/01/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
02/07/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
02/07/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0239/1997	
15/07/1997	Debate in Parliament		
15/07/1997	Decision by Parliament	T4-0371/1997	Summary
15/07/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
22/09/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1996/2277(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)

Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/08519

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(1996)0630	10/12/1996	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0239/1997 OJ C 286 22.09.1997, p. 0007	02/07/1997	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0371/1997 OJ C 286 22.09.1997, p. 0024-0049	15/07/1997	EP	Summary

Biotechnology and the White Paper (rev. Directive 90/220/EEC)

OBJECTIVE: the Commission report presents the results of the review of directive 90/220/EEC on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) for experimental and commercial purposes. SUBSTANCE: the Commission considers that Directive 90/220/EEC covers an area of advanced technology which is changing rapidly, which makes it necessary to update the directive regularly so that it is always in line with technological progress. Application of this directive has shown that there are problems and the Commission has made provision to adopt a proposal for amendment of the directive during 1997, chiefly to make some of its provisions more flexible and guarantee greater transparency. In the meantime the Commission undertakes to use all the resources of the current directive in particular to: - intensify the work of the risk assessment group established in the framework of the Committee of Competent Authorities so that a common approach to risk assessment objectives and methodology can be adopted as guidance in March 1997; - encourage and facilitate the submission of a simplified procedure allowing multistate experimental releases of certain GMOs to take place under a single consent; - take a proactive role in the case of product notifications (the exchange of views between competent authorities should take place much earlier than foreseen in the directive); - ensure that its internal procedures will be applied in an efficient manner to ensure the speedy adoption of decisions on products. ?

Biotechnology and the White Paper (rev. Directive 90/220/EEC)

The committee decided that only genetically modified organisms (GMO) which posed no danger to health of the environment should be placed on the market. When it came to GMO, the principle of precaution ("better safe than sorry") should apply. The committee is currently drawing up a list of measures which it wishes to be incorporated into the next Commission proposal on the revision of Directive 90/220/EEC on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms. The own initiative report on the subject by Mr David BOWE (PSE, UK) adopted by the committee included a request by the committee for standard classification of GMO at European level on the basis of the risks involved in each case. The committee also decided that the procedures for obtaining authorization to release GMO into the environment should be commensurate with the particular type of risk involved. The report called on the European Commission to consider how an ethical, economic and social dimension could be introduced into the decision-making procedures associated with the directive. In addition, the liability to compensate any person who sustains losses as the result of the release of GMO should rest with the persons responsible. All products containing GMO which were placed on the market under the terms of the directive should be labelled as such. A data base should be created, Member States should exchange information and increased importance should be attached to democratic responsibility, transparency and public consultation. The committee was opposed at this stage to any further simplification of the fast-track procedure currently provided for GMO which presented less of a risk.?

Biotechnology and the White Paper (rev. Directive 90/220/EEC)

In adopting the report by Mr David Robert BOWE (PSE, UK), the European Parliament expressed the view that a new provision should be inserted in the Directive in order to utilize experience gained to establish a classification commensurate with the identified risks involved for each release of genetically modified organisms. It called for the procedures for granting authorization for releases into the environment to be fully commensurate with the category of risk in order to minimize the risk to the environment and human health. Parliament considered that 'strengthened provisions' (including the establishment of a database) by the Commission were necessary to ensure the exchange of information between Member States and that this was a pre-requisite for any new directive. It called on the Commission to ensure that there was an obligation to gather data/information during experimental releases that would enable the proper evaluation of the risks of full-scale commercial release. The internal Commission decision-making procedures should be examined with a view to making them speedier, more transparent and more democratically accountable. In this spirit, the existing provisions should be strengthened by publicly accessible data bases or registers and citizens should have the right to be consulted. Parliament called on the Commission to examine ways in which an ethical, economic and social dimension could be introduced into the decision-making procedures associated with the Directive and for rules on liability to be incorporated in the Directive on release. It believed that there must be labelling provisions for all products containing genetically

modified organisms placed on the market under the provisions of the Directive. Lastly, Parliament took the view that authorizations to place GMOs on the market should be for a limited period of time and that holders of authorizations should be required to draw up a report on their experience of introducing the GMO onto the market. ?