Procedure file

Basic information

COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	2001/2118(COS)	Procedure completed
Human health, environment, sustainable development: chemicals policy. White Paper Subject 3.70.13 Dangerous substances, toxic and radioactive wastes (storage, transport) 4.60.04.02 Consumer security 5.05 Economic growth		

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	V/ALE SCHÖRLING Inger	05/03/2001

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
JURI Legal Affairs and Internal Market	PPE-DE MAYER Hans-Peter	11/04/2001
ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy	PPE-DE LANGEN Werner	27/03/2001
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meeting	Date
Environment	2491	04/03/2003
Environment	2473	09/12/2002
Industry	2433	06/06/2002
Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2371	27/09/2001
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs	2357	11/06/2001
Environment	2355	07/06/2001
Energy	2347	14/05/2001
Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2336	12/03/2001
Environment	2334	08/03/2001

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Environment	

Key events

27/02/2001	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2001)0088	Summary
08/03/2001	Debate in Council	2334	
12/03/2001	Debate in Council	2336	
14/05/2001	Debate in Council	2347	
07/06/2001	Debate in Council	2355	
11/06/2001	Debate in Council	2357	
02/07/2001	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
27/09/2001	Debate in Council	2371	
16/10/2001	Vote in committee		Summary
16/10/2001	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0356/2001	
13/11/2001	Debate in Parliament		
15/11/2001	Decision by Parliament	T5-0610/2001	Summary
15/11/2001	End of procedure in Parliament		
06/06/2002	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
13/06/2002	Final act published in Official Journal		
09/12/2002	Debate in Council	2473	Summary

Technical information

Procedure reference	2001/2118(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148; Rules of Procedure EP 050
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/5/14481

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2001)0088	27/02/2001	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0356/2001	16/10/2001	EP	
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES1327/2001 OJ C 036 08.02.2002, p. 0099	17/10/2001	ESC	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0610/2001 OJ C 140 13.06.2002, p. 0383-0552 E	15/11/2001	EP	Summary

Human health, environment, sustainable development: chemicals policy. White Paper

PURPOSE : to propose a strategy for a future chemicals policy. CONTENT : this White Paper presents Commission proposal for a strategy on future chemicals policy in the Community with the overriding goal of sustainable development. The global production of chemicals has increased from 1 million tonnes in 1930 to 400 million tonnes today. The EU chemical industry was the world's largest in 1998, followed by that of the US with 28% of production value and a trade surplus of EUR 12 billion. The chemical industry is also Europe's third largest manufacturing industry. It employs 1.7 million people directly and up to 3 million jobs are dependent on it. As well as several leading multinationals, it also comprises around 36,000 SMEs. These SMEs represent 96% of the total number of enterprises and account for 28% of chemical production. In order to achieve the the overriding goal of sustainable development, the Commission has identified a number of objectives that must be met in order to achieve sustainable development in the chemicals industry within the framework of the Single Market: 1) Protection of human health and promotion of non-toxic environment: the Commission proposes that existing and new substances should in the future, following at the phasing in of existing substances until 2012, be subject to the same procedure under a single system; 2) Maintenance and enhancement of the competitiveness of the EU chemical industry: the Community policy in the field of chemical substances should aim to promote the competitiveness of the chemicals industry and encourage innovation, and in particular the development of safer chemical; 3) Prevent fragmentation of the internal market: it is imperative that the new policy be based on full harmonisation at Community level; 4) Increasing transparency: the public has a right to access to information about the chemicals to which they are exposed. This will enable them to make informed choices and to avoid products containing harmful chemicals. The creation of a single system it to be applied to all chemicals will improve the transparency of the regulation of chemicals; 5) Integration with international aspects: a global network of industrialised and developing countries and international organisations has developed over the past decades to promote global safe use of chemicals; 6) Promotion of non-animal testing: development of new non-animal test methods will be encouraged; 7) Conformity with EU international obligations under the WTO: the new policy shall not discriminate against imported products and it shall not create unnecessary obstacles to internatinoal trade. The proposed strategy must meet these objectives.?

Human health, environment, sustainable development: chemicals policy. White Paper

The committee adopted the report by Inger SCHÖRLING (Greens/EFA, S) on the Commission's white paper. It supported the Commission's plan to establish a single system for the registration, evaluation and authorisation of both existing and new chemicals but called for a more proactive, preventive approach. The report said that a key aim of the new policy should be to phase out substances as soon as they were shown to be of "very high concern" unless their use and their hazardous properties were shown to be essential and there was no safer alternative. It wanted the range of chemicals to be subject to authorisation to include persistent and bio-accumulative substances, endocrine disrupters and substances that were carcinogenic, mutagenic and toxic to reproduction. It also wanted to include imports into the EU and chemicals present in manufactured goods. It said that substances deemed to be of very high concern should be banned from consumer products by 2012 and products should be labelled to warn consumers of dangerous substances contained in them. The committee also said that chemicals in volumes of less than one tonne should be included in the new regime and registered, under a simplified procedure, by 2012 unless they were shown, as a result of screening carried out before 2008, to be of potential concern, in which case they must be subject to full registration. The committee was keen for the effects of chemicals on children's health to be taken into account and also wanted animal testing banned where recognised alternative tests were available. Lastly, it urged the Commission to draft a regulation to establish the new chemicals policy as soon as possible.?

Human health, environment, sustainable development: chemicals policy. White Paper

The European Parliament approved the report by Mrs Inger SCHÖRLING (Greens/EFA, S) by 242 votes to 196 votes with 35 abstentions. It supports the Commission's plan to establish a single system for the registration, evaluation and auhtorisation of both existing and new chemicals, to replace the existing cumbersome and ineffective legislation, but wants to go further. (Please refer to the previous text). In addition, the Parliament welcomes the merging of legislative provisions applicable to existing and new substances, and the proposed registration of and evaluation procedure for all substances produced in excess of 1 tonne annually. It rejects, on the other hand, calls for an additional register for all substances produced at under 1 tonne annually. The Parliament voted not to expand greatly the range of substances that are proven to be carcinogenic, mutagenic and toxic to reproduction (CMR) and should therefore be limited to CMR categories 1 and 2 substances and to persistent organic pollutants (POPs). However, it does want the Commission to consider whether substances such as PBTs should also be included and it wants to include pesticides. Lastly, Parliament is keen to ensure that the needs of industry, especially small business, are taken on board under the new chemicals strategy, which must avoid excessive red tape and protect commercial confidentiality.?

Human health, environment, sustainable development: chemicals policy. White Paper

Further to the Commission's White Paper of February 2001, the strategy on chemical products aims to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment while ensuring the efficient functioning of the internal market for these products and stimulating innovation and the competitiveness of Europe's chemical industry. It is therefore envisaged that the current dual authorisation system, which distinguishes between existing substances and new substances for the purpose of testing requirements, will be converted into a single effective, coherent system for treating the majority of chemical substances.?

Human health, environment, sustainable development: chemicals policy. White Paper

The Council held a public debate concerning the legislative package required for the implementation of the Commission's White Paper on a new chemicals policy at Union level. The debate was held on the basis of a paper drawn up by the Presidency in preparation of the in-depth discussions and negotiations the Council is expected to have on this matter during 2003. The paper focused the debate on the following key issues: - the scope of the new authorisation system (what substances should be covered?); - type of sanctions (how to apply the principle of no data no marketing?); - chemical substances in products imported into, as well as produced in the Union (which consumer goods to include in the regulation; e.g. toys, textiles, electronics?); - the situation of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and downstream users.

Following the discussion, the president concluded that there was consensus among the delegations on the consensus on the importance of the subject matter and that four questions raised by the paper were essential. Moreover, he concluded that carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic chemicals (so-called CMRs), as well as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), such as persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals (PBT) and very persistent and very bioaccumulative chemicals (vPvB), should be considered in future proposals, with special attention being given to endocrine disrupters. Delegations agreed on the principle of replacing those chemicals presenting most danger with safer alternative substances and that the lack of adequate data for registration should imply banning the marketing of those substances. There was also broad support for specific guidance to be directed at SMEs to assist with the implementation of future legislation. The Council adopted the following conclusions in preparation of the 22nd Meeting of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Governing Council which is due to take place in February 2003: The Council underlines that safe management of chemicals is of high priority for the European Union as reflected in other EU programmes and policies such as the 6th Environmental Action Programme and that the European Union is ready to move the international agenda on chemicals forward through supporting continued efforts particularly by UNEP in close co-operation with the Intergovernmental Forum for Chemical Safety. The Council calls on the Commission to finalise its analysis of the Globally Harmonised System (GHS) for Classification and Labelling of chemicals and thereafter to put forward appropriate proposals to introduce this system into the new EU chemicals legislation.?