

Boosting trust in scientific studies on food safety: Commission welcomes the provisional agreement reached today

Today marks an important step forward towards the modernisation of the EU food safety policy, as the European Parliament and the Council reaches a provisional agreement on the European Commission's proposal for a Regulation on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** and Commissioner **Vytenis Andriukaitis**, in charge of Health and Food Safety, welcomed the agreement:

"The provisional agreement reached today by the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission, after the positive conclusion of a third trilogue, is a resounding response to the citizens' concerns over transparency of scientific studies in the area of food. This has been achieved in less than a year, thanks to committed work and involvement of all institutions. We have heard the call, notably expressed via a European Citizens Initiative on pesticides, for greater transparency, at an early stage of the risk assessment process, on studies submitted as part of an application for an authorisation. The EU's scientific risk assessment body – the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) – will also be strengthened, with a greater involvement of Member States in its Management Board. This shows that European Citizens' Initiatives supported by over 1 million European citizens can have real impact on EU policy and legislation. We now call on the European Parliament and the Council to finalise the adoption of the new rules so they can be in place as soon as possible".

Main elements of the agreement aim at:

- **Ensuring more transparency:** Citizens will have automatic access to all studies and information submitted by industry in the risk assessment process. Stakeholders and the general public will also be consulted on submitted studies. At the same time, the agreement will guarantee confidentiality, in duly justified circumstances, by setting out the type of information that may be considered significantly harmful for commercial interests and therefore cannot be disclosed.
- **Increasing the independence of studies:** The European Food Safety Authority will be notified of all commissioned studies to guarantee that companies applying for authorisations submit all relevant information and do not hold back unfavourable studies. The Authority will also provide general advice to applicants, in particular SMEs, prior to the submission of the dossier. Commission may ask the Authority to commission additional studies for verification purposes and may perform fact-finding missions to verify the compliance of laboratories/studies with standards.

- **Strengthening the governance and the scientific cooperation:** Member States, civil society and European Parliament will be involved in the governance of the Authority by being duly represented in its Management Board. Member States will foster the Authority's scientific capacity and engage the best independent experts into its work.
- **Developing comprehensive risk communication:** A general plan for risk communication will be adopted and will ensure a coherent risk communication strategy throughout the risk analysis process, combined with open dialogue amongst all interested parties.

Next steps

The provisional agreement will now have to formally be adopted both the European Parliament and the Council.

Background

The [proposal](#) was tabled on 11 April 2018, following a reply by the European Commission to the European Citizens' Initiative: 'Ban glyphosate and toxic pesticides', as well as the Commission's commitment to a Better Regulation which included a fitness check of the General Food Law.

More information:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-19-1031_en.htm

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-2941_en.htm

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-18-2942_en.htm

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