EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANTS, ANIMALS, FOOD AND FEED HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 09 DECEMBER 2014

(Section Genetically Modified Food and Feed and Environmental Risk)

CIRCABC Link: *https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/a9a54f7b-6be8-4541-8e63-e69a4db090fc*

Chair: Dorothee Andre (for points A.01, A.02 and B.01)

Sabine Pelsser (miscellaneous)

A.01 Presentation of the FVO Overview Report on Laboratory performance.

The Commission (Food and Veterinary Office) presented the main findings and conclusions included in the FVO Overview report on laboratory performance in the Member States with a view to identifying horizontal issues which could usefully be addressed by Member States or by the European Commission services.

A.02 Study on "Harmonisation of sampling and analysis of GM material in food" – information by the Commission.

The Commission informed Member States about the study, which aim is to collect and analyse data and information allowing drawing a clear picture of the current and forthcoming situation linked to the lack of harmonisation of those methods of sampling and analysis at EU level. The study will be performed by an external contractor and completed within six months after the signature of the contract. The Commission requested collaboration from the Member States in the collection of data and information by the external consultant.

B.01 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of, or produced from genetically modified soybean MON87769 (MON-87769-7) pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003.

Following the discussions at the PAFF meeting on 24 October 2014, a new proposal for specific nutritional labelling was presented to the members of the Committee and accepted. The draft Decision authorising the placing on the market of genetically modified soybean MON87769 was then proposed to the Committee for vote.

Reasons for the negative vote or abstention:

- No agreed national position
- Negative public opinion
- Political reasons
- Risk assessment deemed not sufficient
- Precautionary principle
- The Regulation on GM food and feed is not considered as the right legal basis to authorise products other than food and feed containing and consisting of GMOs

AT written statement:
Although several scientific questions concerning the risk assessment of soybean MON 87769 (MON-87769-7) have been clarified between EFSA scientists and national experts from the Austrian competent authority some important concerns relating to the safety of the product remained.
Austria is of the opinion that the risk assessment which has been carried out is not suitable to give a scientific proof for the safety of this product and, therefore, objects the placing on the market of genetically modified soybean MON 87769 due to the following reasons:
Application of GM contaminated control and reference seed samples which would have to be labelled as genetically modified according to current EU legislation for fields trials.
Insufficient toxicity analysis due to low maximum doses of the test item in whole food/feed animal toxicity studies.
From the Austrian point of view, products others than food and feed containing or consisting of soybean MON 87769 (MON-87769-7) are not within the scope of EU-Regulation 1829/2003 but under Directive 2001/18/EC.

The Chair informed that the draft Decision will be submitted to the Appeal Committee for vote.

Vote taken: No opinion.

M.01 Amendment of Regulation 882/2004

The Commission clarified its position presented at the meeting of the "Joint Working Party (WP) of veterinary and phytosanitary experts on the proposal for a Regulation on official controls and other official activities" which took place on 2 and 3 December 2014 and in which Article 1 – Scope of the proposal was discussed.
The Commission' view on this is that deliberate release of GMOs is already included in Regulation (EC) 882/2004. In addition, the inclusion of controls not directly linked to the agri-food chain is respecting the "from farm to fork" approach. Moreover, there is no need to have separate types of controls for GMOs that are not destined for food/feed. The reasoning for the controls is the same, the types of controls are the same, and therefore there is no need to differentiate.

M.02 Proposal for amendment of Directive 2001/18/EC

The Commission informed about the agreement found between the co-legislators during the trilogue on the proposal for amendment of Directive 2001/18/EC as regards the possibility for the Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of genetically modified organisms in their territory, which was held on 3 December 2014 (subject to the endorsement by Member States in COREPER and EP in Plenary). A technical modification proposed by the Commission on the timelines in phase 1 will also be subject to the agreement by Member States in COREPER.

M.03 Public consultation of the EFSA Guidance on renewal applications

The Commission confirmed that the public consultation is scheduled to end on 16 December and stressed that it is a good opportunity for Member States who have comments and suggestions to communicate them to EFSA. The document is an EFSA Guidance and there will be no endorsement by the Standing Committee. EFSA will be invited to the Standing Committee to present it.

M.04 Complaint for maladministration against the Commission

The Commission informed about a complaint against the Commission, filed on 15 September 2014 by EuropaBio, COCERAL and FEFAC. The complaint is related to the handling by the Commission of 20 applications for the authorisation of genetically modified food and feed pursuant to Regulation No. 1829/2003. The allegations are that the Commission has caused illegal and unreasonable delays in the authorisation of these applications.

M.05 Change of the GMO legislation in Turkey

A Member State informed about a recent change of the GMO legislation in Turkey causing detainment of EU vitamins and enzymes. Several other Member States confirmed this information. The Commission informed that it is aware of this change in the Turkish legislation and is analysing it. This issue will be put on the Agenda of the next PAFF Committee meeting in February 2015.

M.06 Food/feed files pending adoption by the Commission

A Member State enquired about the state of play of the food/feed files pending adoption by the Commission. The Commission informed that the files need to be looked at by the new Commission and no further information on the timelines could be given for the moment.