



European Economic and Social Committee

NAT/326
Genetically modified
micro-organisms
(codification)

Brussels, 26 October 2006

OPINION

of the

European Economic and Social Committee

on the

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the contained use of
genetically modified micro-organisms (codified version)

COM(2006) 286 final – 2006/0100 (COD)

On 4 September 2006, the Council decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 37 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms (codified version)
COM(2006) 286 final – 2006/0100 (COD).

The Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 8 September 2006. The rapporteur was Franco Chiriaco.

In view of the renewal of the Committee's term of office, the Plenary Assembly has decided to vote on this opinion at its October plenary session and has adopted Mr Chiriaco as rapporteur-general under Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure.

At its 430th plenary session, held on 26 October 2006, the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 97 votes with three abstentions.

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1. **Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of this proposal is to undertake a codification of Council Directive 90/219/EEC of 23 April 1990 on the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms. The new Directive will supersede the various Directives incorporated in it; their content is fully preserved, and they are brought together with only such formal amendments as are required by the codification exercise itself.

2. **General comments**

2.1 The Committee considers it extremely helpful that all the legislation on this matter is being consolidated into a single directive. Keeping in mind the goal of a people's Europe, the Committee agrees with the Commission on the importance of simplifying and clarifying Community legislation so as to make it clearer and more accessible to ordinary people, thus opening up new opportunities to them and enabling them to benefit from the rights that legislation gives them.

2.2 To protect human health and the environment, all measures to ensure the optimum use of biotechnology, in particular for human foodstuffs, need to be taken, and all use of genetically-modified micro-organisms (GMMs) must be contained so as to avoid any negative consequences.

- 2.3 The EESC emphasises that the control of GMMs can only be effective if it is applied consistently in all Member States of the Community, as GMMs, once used, can reproduce across borders.
- 2.4 The EESC recalls that a genetically modified micro-organism (GMM) is "a micro-organism in which the genetic material has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally" and agrees with the Commission's stated position relating to occupational safety and hygiene and to prevention of accidents and control of dissemination.
- 2.5 The Committee has satisfied itself that this codification does not involve any substantive change to the provisions it consolidates and simply serves to present Community legislation in a clear format. The Committee fully supports this aim, and, having satisfied itself as stated above, is in favour of the proposal under consideration.

Brussels, 26 October 2006.

The President
of the
European Economic and Social Committee

The Secretary-General
of the
European Economic and Social Committee

Dimitris Dimitriadis

Patrick Venturini
