# ENVI

European Parliament

## Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

## CHAIR'S WELCOME

The next ENVI meeting will take place on the 7th of June, in Brussels.

We start with a debate on the implementation of the Plant Protection Products Regulation (plant protection products are also referred to as "pesticides"). Pesticides are products consisting of substances intended against pests or certain plant diseases. The European Commission is responsible for evaluating active substances for safety, while Member States need to authorise the actual pesticides before these can be commercialised in the Member State concerned. We will discuss the ENVI implementation report drawn up in relation to the Plant Protection Products Regulation. The Rapporteur considers that the objectives related to health and the environment have not been achieved in practice, due to aspects such as the increased number of derogations meant to allow authorisations of pesticides in emergency situations, or to the precautionary principle not being duly applied. The draft report calls, *inter alia*, on the Commission and the Member States to acknowledge that health and environmental protection objectives should take priority over the objective of improving plant protection. The Parliament has set up a special committee earlier this year, to deal with the Union's authorisation procedure for pesticides, which should deliver its final report at the end of its term.

We will remain in the area of public health and continue the meeting with a discussion of the draft report on health technology assessment (HTA). HTA measures the added value of a new health technology compared to existing ones. The Commission proposes boosting cooperation amongst Member States in this field, and that Member States be able to use common HTA tools and procedures across the EU, while working together in specific areas. Patients are the ones who will benefit from faster uptake of promising innovative technologies, if HTA collaboration is strengthened. The Rapporteur welcomes the proposal, while recalling that we need more and better clinical evidence, as the basis for determining the quality of medicines, and raises serious concerns about the growing difficulties faced by European citizens in accessing suitable treatment in the EU, whether because of the price, the non-availability of a treatment or the quality of new products.

Access to good quality drinking water remains a subject of importance for EU citizens. The Drinking Water Directive is an essential piece of legislation in the field of water, but has not undergone a major overhaul since its adoption, twenty years ago. The Commission proposes a revised text to align drinking water quality standards with the most up-to-date scientific data. The proposal came as part of the follow-up to the first European citizens' initiative - 'Right2Water - Water and sanitation are a human right!'. We will discuss the draft report on the revised Drinking Water Directive, where the Rapporteur endorses the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations in different areas linked to the proposal, and notes, for instance, that there should be a clear share of responsibilities between the various stakeholders responsible for water, in the light of principles such as those of precautionary and 'polluter pays'. The draft report also supports the introduction of the new article on access to water, as an important step towards the goal of achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all, and as a reply to the citizens' Initiative.

Follow our discussions live and get involved in the debate at *http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/envi/home.html*

*Adina-Ioana Vălean*

Brussels - 6 June 2018

## MEETING ITEMS

*Results of the votes of the last ENVI meeting are available here.*

**Considerations:**

- Implementation of the Plant Protection Products Regulation EC/1107/2009 and presentation of the EPRS Study
- Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on health technology assessment and amending Directive 2011/24/EU
- Quality of water intended for human consumption (recast)
- Deployment of infrastructure for alternative fuels in the European Union: Time to act!

## ENVI IN NEXT PLENARY

- Monitoring and reporting of $CO_2$ emissions from of new heavy-duty vehicles

Draft agenda of the Plenary is available *here*

## CONSIDERATIONS

### Implementation of the Plant Protection Products Regulation EC/1107/2009 and presentation of the EPRS Study

Consideration of draft report (see *meeting documents*)

The ENVI Committee decided in March 2017 to draw up a report on the implementation of the Plant Protection Products (PPP) which would analyse the application of the PPP Regulation since it entry into force on 14 June 2011.

The Regulation has two general objectives: to ensure a high level of protection for humans, animals and environment; and to 'improve the functioning of the internal market through harmonisation'. The Regulation also aims to clarify, harmonise, simplify and accelerate procedures linked to PPPs. The PPP Regulation also introduced a number of strict cut-off criteria for the approval of active substances at EU level. This novelty aimed at eliminating the most toxic substances from the market on the basis of an hazard-based approach. Member States are also allowed to apply the precautionary principle where there is scientific uncertainty as to the risks posed by the PPPs to human or animal health or the environment.

A European Implementation Assessments (EIA) on the Regulation was carried out by the European Parliament's Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (DG EPRS) and published in mid-April 2018.

The draft report presents the main findings of the EIA, highlights the main areas of concern and sets out a number of recommendations. It stresses how the high number of derogations on authorisations granted by Member States under Article 53 of the Regulation, the insufficient harmonisation of data and testing requirements and issues linked to transparency of the approval and authorisation process all hinder the successful implementation of the Regulation. The Rapporteur calls on the Commission and the Member States to address these issues by, among others, limiting the use of derogations, by ensuring full and uniform application of the hazard cut-off criteria and limit the use of the confirmatory data procedure.

*Rapporteur: Poc (S&D)*
*Shadows: McGuinness (EPP), Procter (ECR), Huitema (ALDE), Hazekamp (Greens/EFA), Häusling (Greens/EFA), Pedicini (EFDD), Goddyn (ENF)*

## Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on health technology assessment and amending Directive 2011/24/EU

Consideration of draft report (see *meeting documents*)

Presented by the Commission on 31 January 2018, the proposal on Health Technology Assessment (HTA) aims at boosting cooperation amongst EU Member States for assessing health technology.

The proposed Regulation covers new medicines and certain new medical devices, providing the basis for permanent and sustainable cooperation at the EU level for joint clinical assessments in these areas. Member States will be able to use common HTA tools, methodologies and procedures across the EU, working together in four main areas: 1) on joint clinical assessments focusing on the most innovative health technologies with the most potential impact for patients; 2) on joint scientific consultations whereby developers can seek advice from HTA authorities; 3) on identification of emerging health technologies to identify promising technologies early; and 4) on continuing voluntary cooperation in other areas. In respect of the added value of EU involvement, the Commission states that the diversity and multitude of approaches to HTA across the Member States means that, due to their scale and effect, only action at Union level can eliminate the obstacles described. Without action at EU level, it is unlikely that national rules on how HTAs are carried out would be harmonised and thus the current fragmentation of the internal market would persist.

In her draft report (171 amendments), the Rapporteur welcomes the proposal as a further step towards closer EU integration in an area as important as health, while recalling the fundamental aim of the proposal, which is to introduce joint clinical assessment of health technologies at EU level. *Inter alia*, the Rapporteur states that we need more and better clinical evidence, as the basis for determining the relative efficacy and therapeutic benefits of medicines, i.e. their quality. The draft report also provides that there are serious concerns about the growing difficulties faced by European citizens in accessing suitable treatment in the EU, whether because of the price, the non-availability of a treatment or the quality of new products. Those concerns are shared by the European Parliament, which has drawn up an own-initiative report on measures to improve access to medicines. Furthermore, the Rapporteur stresses that the Commission proposal focuses on the need to bring an end to the distortion of the internal market resulting from duplication of clinical assessments, which makes it difficult for the industry to plan ahead.

*Rapporteur: Cabezón Ruiz (S&D)*
*Shadows: Grossetête (PPE), Piecha (ECR), Meissner (ALDE), Rivasi (Greens/EFA), Konečná (GUE), Pedicini (EFDD), Mélin (ENF)*

## Quality of water intended for human consumption (recast)

Consideration of draft report (see *meeting documents*)

The Drinking Water Directive (Directive 98/83/EC) is one of the pillars of the EU legislation in the field of water and provides a quality water supply in more than 99% of cases within the Union. The purpose of the revision of this directive is to align drinking water quality standards with the most up-to-date scientific data, to tackle the areas of improvement identified by the Commission in its REFIT review and to adapt the legislative framework to better respond to emerging challenges, such as climate change and the circular economy.

In his draft report, the rapporteur tackles the identified areas of improvement, through the following amendments:

1. Updating drinking water quality parameters: while endorsing the Commission's approach which incorporates most of the WHO recommendations for updating the list of parameters, the rapporteur does not support the proposal to adopt a stricter framework for several parameters in accordance with the precautionary principle, considering that the WHO recommendations provide the necessary human health safeguards.

2. Member States' responsibility for compliance with water quality standards: being the legislation proposed a directive, the rapporteur believes that Member States should retain responsibility for enforcing

the minimum quality requirements and assessing the risks to human health in the event of non-compliance with the parametric values.

3. Harmonisation of materials in contact with water: Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 on construction materials does not cover all products and materials in contact with water and the scope and time frame of the mandate given to the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) remains uncertain. Therefore, the rapporteur proposes an approach geared to the harmonisation and the establishment of minimum quality standards for those materials.

4. Access to water: the rapporteur supports the introduction of the new article on access to water as a step towards achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all, and as a reply to the the first European Citizens' Initiative 'Right2Water'. He nevertheless proposes several adjustments to ensure that this provision complies with the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality.

5. The rapporteur supports an improvement of transparency on water quality information, provided that it is comprehensible, relevant and easily accessible to consumers.

*Rapporteur: Dantin (EPP)*
*Shadows: Palmer (S&D), Dohrmann (ECR), Müller (ALDE), Javor (Greens/EFA), Boylan (GUE), Evi (EFDD), Goddyn (ENF)*

## Deployment of infrastructure for alternative fuels in the European Union: Time to act!

Consideration of draft opinion (see *meeting documents*)

The TRAN Committee is preparing an own-initiative report entitled "Deployment of infrastructure for alternative fuels in the European Union: Time to act!" to which ENVI will contribute with an opinion. The report will be based on the Commission Communication "Towards the broadest use of alternative fuels - an Action Plan on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure [...]". The communication on alternative fuels infrastructure is part of the Commission's second mobility package of November 2017.

The communication on alternative fuels infrastructure notes that with around 95% of road vehicles still conventionally fuelled, the number of vehicles, and vessels, running on alternative energies in the EU remains far too low. The lack of proper infrastructure for recharging and refuelling with alternative energies hampers the efforts to decarbonise mobility.

The Commission's action plan highlights measures to complement and better implement national policy frameworks (NPFs) under Directive 2014/94/EU on alternative fuels infrastructure and to help create an interoperable EU backbone infrastructure by 2025, particularly for the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) corridors so that vehicles and vessels can be used across borders and for long distances. The Communication also addresses, among others, the issue of funding, the role the Commission can play to support the development of the necessary infrastructure and the role of public and private investment as well as the need to foster cooperation at different administrative levels.

In her draft opinion, the rapporteur notes with concern the different level of ambition and degree of fulfilment of NPFs among Member States; she underlines the need for comprehensive private charging infrastructure and emphasises the need for smart charging solutions to bring together all actors and create a higher level of ambition. Finally she calls for coherence across the policy spectrum to ensure demand for alternatively fuelled vehicles - such as through the adoption of ambitious emission standards for 2025 and 2030.

*Rapporteur: Schaldenmose (S&D)*
*Shadows: Grzyb (EPP), Demesmaeker (ECR), Punset (ALDE), Eck (GUE), Škrlec (Greens/EFA)*

## NEWS FROM THE POLICY DEPARTMENT

### Recent Publications

- Workshop proceedings on *Post 2020 CO2 emission targets for cars and vans*
- Study on *the food safety situation in Ireland and overview of the Directorate for Health and Food Audits and Analysis of DG SANTE*
- Briefing on *IMO's challenges on the route to decarbonising international shipping*
- Workshop proceedings on *Climate Diplomacy*

### Upcoming Publications

- Briefing on the UN-High Level Political Forum on SDGs in New York from 16 to 18 July 2018
- Briefing on large carnivores in the Alps
- Workshop proceedings on the Sustainability of Health Systems

### Upcoming Events

- Workshop on Digitalisation and big data: implication for the health sector (19 June 2018, 10:00 -12:00)

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## NEWS FROM THE AGENCIES

### European Environment Agency (EEA)

**European Bathing Water Quality in 2017** Despite a slight drop in results, 85% of swimming sites across Europe monitored in 2017 met the European Union's highest and most stringent 'excellent' quality standards for waters mostly free from pollutants, according to the latest annual European bathing water quality report. The results give a good indication where holiday makers can find the best quality bathing waters this summer. More

### European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

The May ECHA Newsletter is online. You can read about the adoption of endocrine disruptor criteria, the restriction proposal for microplastics, the Commission's remarks on the second REACH review and EU-OSHA's recently launched 'Healthy Workplaces' campaign on managing dangerous substances. More

### European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

An Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak is ongoing in the Equateur Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The outbreak is not unexpected, since it is in a recognised area of Ebola virus circulation. However, the proximity of the Congo River and the cases in Mbandaka increase the risk of the virus spreading to neighbouring countries. The risk of introduction to the EU and the risk of EU travellers/residents in DRC getting infected is considered very low. Travellers to affected areas should follow safety precautions, such as avoiding contact with symptomatic patients and their bodily fluids, washing hands regularly, avoiding unsafe sex, avoiding habitats populated by bats. More

### European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

EFSA has completed its review of the maximum levels of glyphosate that are legally permitted to be present in food. The review is based on data on glyphosate residues in food submitted to EFSA by all EU Member States. More

### European Medicines Agency (EMA)

**Foundation stone-laying ceremony takes place at Zuidas for the new building of EMA.** The laying of the foundation stone for EMA's new building in the Zuidas area of Amsterdam was marked with a ceremony on Monday, 28 May 2018. More

**Next meeting of the ENVI Committee :** 20-21 June 2018 (Brussels);
Future meetings: *2018 meeting dates*.

**Watch online** the Committee meeting on the *EP web site* or on *Europarl TV*. Past meetings are available: *EP Live multimedia library* and you can also download the extracts of speeches.

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**Further information sources:** The **EP Policy Departments** *publish* studies, notes, information notes and workshop proceedings; To request a hard copy of any publication please contact *Poldep-Economy-Science@europarl.europa.eu*. The European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) provides research publications in the area of environment, public health and food safety. You can find all the latest publications on the European Parliament website's *Think Tank* pages.

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