ENVI NEWS
Newsletter from the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

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CHAIR'S WELCOME

The next meeting of the ENVI Committee will take place in Brussels on 9 and 10 November 2015. Members will vote on an objection to granting an authorisation for the use of the plasticizer material **bis(2-ethylhexhyl) phthalate** (DEHP). The Committee will also consider the draft report on the **Mid-term review of the EU's Biodiversity Strategy**, and a draft opinion on the AGRI report on enhancing innovation and economic development in future European farm management. An exchange of views will be held with Dr Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank, on the key issue of **climate finance** in the run up to COP21. Exchanges will also be held with the Commission with respect to environmental and food safety issues, namely: **emissions** from light passenger and commercial (Euro 6) vehicles, **cetaceans** in captive facilities; and on the fitness check of the **general food law**. Regarding health issues, discussions will be held with the Commission and the EMA on the conditions for a paediatric investigation plan/waiver and on the recent WHO report on the on the carcinogenicity of the consumption of red meat. Oral questions will be asked to Commission representatives on the subjects of rare cancers and WEEE treatment in the EU.

Giovanni La Via

MEETING PREVIEW

Objection pursuant to Rule 106: granting an authorisation for uses of bis(2-ethylhexhyl) phthalate (DEHP)

Consideration and vote on draft motion for a resolution (see meeting documents)

Bis(2-ethylhexhyl) phthalate (DEHP) is the most common member of the class of **phthalates**. Due to its suitable properties and low cost, DEHP is often used as a plasticiser in the manufacturing of articles made of PVC.

The draft measure would authorise certain legal entities to use DEHP for the following two purposes: the formulation of recycled soft PVC containing DEHP in compounds and dry-blends, and the industrial use of recycled soft PVC containing DEHP to produce PVC articles.

The objectors oppose the draft measure on the grounds that the implementing act concerning DEHP is incompatible with the main aim of the REACH Regulation, which is to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment from the risks that can be posed by chemicals.

The objectors: Poc (S&D), Konečná (GUE), Eickhout (Greens/EFA)

Mid-term review of the EU's Biodiversity Strategy

Consideration of the draft report (see meeting documents)

The Commission published in October 2015 its mid-term review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which assesses whether the EU is on track to achieve the objectives set out in the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The main aim of the strategic own-initiative report on "The Mid-term review of the EU's Biodiversity Strategy" is to respond to this mid-term review and to the State of Nature in Europe report. It will also be Parliament's contribution to the on-going fitness check of the Nature legislation (Birds and Habitats Directives.

In his draft report, the rapporteur highlights that the overall trend in biodiversity loss is alarming and calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide urgent political priority to the achievement of the 2020 targets. In addition, he calls for a multi-stakeholder approach, stresses the crucial role of regional and local actors in this process, and emphasizes that greater public awareness of and support for the biodiversity are essential. As regards the on-going fitness check of the Birds and Habitats Directives, the rapporteur considers that the legislation is not fundamentally flawed, but problems have mainly arisen due to its incomplete or inadequate implementation. Furthermore, he opposes any revision of the Nature directives as he believes that this would result in a long period of legal uncertainty, which would weaken the legislation.

Rapporteur: Demesmaeker (ECR) *Procedure file*
Shadows: Lins (EPP), Kadenbach (S&D), Bearder (ALDE), Boylan (GUE), Auken (Greens/EFA), Affronte (EFDD)

Towards a new international climate agreement in Paris

Exchange of views with Dr Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank, on climate financing

In preparation for COP21 taking place in Paris this December, a series of **high-level speakers** have been invited for exchanges of views with the Committee. Hence, key actors in the international climate change negotiations have been in attendance at Committee meetings since September.

Mr *Werner Hoyer*, President of the European Investment Bank, has been invited for an exchange of views on the expectations for an international agreement to be reached this December, particularly as regards **climate finance**. Climate finance is widely seen as an issue that will be pivotal in the upcoming negotiations. This is something that has been recognised in the INI, 'Towards a new international agreement in Paris', which was adopted in the Brussels plenary of 14 October, and which describes climate finance as the potential **cornerstone of an agreement in Paris**. The INI will be the mandate for the 15-MEP delegation to Paris during the high-level segment of COP21.

The cetaceans in captive facilities

Exchange of views with the European Commission (see meeting documents)

Council Directive 1999/22/EC relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos (the "**Zoos Directive**") was adopted with the objective of protecting and conserving wild fauna by strengthening the role of zoos in the conservation of biodiversity. The Directive introduces a legal framework for **biodiversity conservation in zoos**, for implementation by the Member States through the adoption of a **licensing** and **inspection system**.

Captive facilities which keep and display cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) in the EU are generally licensed as zoos and are therefore required to meet the requirements of the EU Zoos Directive. However, there have been concerns voiced suggesting that several EU captive facilities do not meet these requirements and are therefore in **breach of the Zoos Directive**.

Fitness check of the General Food Law

Exchange of views with Commission representatives on the fitness check of the general food law

This is the first exchange of views on a fitness check of a specific piece of legislation in line with the decision of the Coordinators to systematically invite the Commission to report on the on-going REFIT procedures to the Committee before the evaluations and next steps are decided by the Commission. The aim of this exchange of views is to inform the Committee as regards the state of play of this Fitness Check (initial results of the analysis of gathered information and possible ways forward which the Commission considers in the follow-up to this Fitness Check). This fitness check will cover **Regulation (EC) 178/2002** setting up general principles and requirements, and basic objectives of food law, establishing EFSA and providing for the management of emergencies and crises. The regulation was adopted in 2002 and fully entered into force in 2005. Since its adoption, it has never undergone a comprehensive evaluation.

Oral question on WEEE treatment in the EU

Exchange of views with the European Commission (see meeting documents)

This is an exchange of views on the oral question on the treatment of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) in the EU.

The oral question concerns a recent study on illegal trade of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) that was widely reported. The study was co-authored, amongst others, by Interpol, the United Nations University and the WEEE forum. It raises significant issues with regard to the **widespread mismanagement of WEEE in the EU** in 2012 - 4.65 million tonnes of WEEE were mismanaged or illegally traded within the EU.

Given that Member States had to transpose the WEEE recast by 14 February 2014, and that increased collection rates have to be achieved in 2016, it is important to discuss the proper implementation of the Directive with the Commission, as well as possible consequences from the study for future work.

Authors: Eickhout (Greens/EFA), Florenz (EPP)

Oral question on rare cancers

Exchange of views with Commission representatives (see meeting documents)

Every year, 540,000 European citizens are diagnosed with a rare cancer, representing 22% of all new cancer cases in Europe. Today there are about 4,300,000 patients living in the European Union diagnosed with a rare cancer, 24% of the total European citizens affected by cancer.

Against this background, questions have been addressed to the Commission about the action that it will take to support Member States in putting in place measures to ensure **improved prevention measures, timely diagnosis and treatment** for patients affected by rare cancers, in particular for those rare cancers where highly effective treatments exist, but where the best care infrastructure is not always in place (eg. head and neck cancers), about how the Commission envisages following up on the findings of EU funded projects with a view to developing **pan-European, binding minimum standard services** for rare cancer patients, and about how the Commission will monitor the implementation of these minimum standard services and their impact on patients.

Policy on the Conditions for a Paediatric Investigation Plan/Waiver

Exchange of views with the European Commission and EMA see meeting documents)

EMA has been invited for an exchange of views on the determination of the conditions for a Paediatric Investigation Plan/Waiver. This policy document aims to establish a framework for identifying the scope of a Paediatric Investigation Plan (PIP) or waiver by creating a systematic approach to classifying diseases and conditions, although not even through secondary legislation. The document actually sets out how conditions are determined using the MedDRA classification system with the 'High Level Term' (HLT) used to determine whether a condition occurs in children; anything falling below this would be considered to be already covered by an existing PIP or waiver and no new PIP or waiver would be required.

Under this policy, many treatments for adult cancers receive a PIP waiver, as most adult cancers do not occur in children and vice versa. However, if the policy were changed to use the 'Preferred Term' (PT) under the MedDRA, this would allow the regulator to look at the genetic abnormality that leads to a cancer, rather than just the type of cancer. By using the PT to determine conditions, less cancer treatments would receive a PIP waiver and more treatments would be tested for their potential to treat **paediatric cancers**. It therefore appears that this policy, which is not legislation, is having a direct impact on the availability of **cancer treatments** for children.

The state of play on the real driving emissions procedure (RDE) in comitology

Exchange of views with the European Commission (see meeting documents)

Representatives from the Commission were invited for this exchange of views following their exchange with the ENVI Committee on 13 October. The RDE procedure is being developed under the regulatory procedure with scrutiny (**RPS**) as laid down in Regulation (EC) 715/2007. Within this regulation, the Commission is asked to monitor the real world emissions of Euro 5/6 vehicles, and revise test procedures if necessary. The current development of the RDE procedure in this specific area is of particular interest to Members and the general public in light of the recent Volkswagen case.

The RDE procedure is being approached by the Commission in 4 "packages", the last two of which are scheduled to be adopted later, in 2016. The first RPS measure was adopted on 19 May by the Technical Committee on Motor vehicles (TCMV) and transmitted to Parliament late in September (no objections were raised). A second draft measure, aims to establish the **quantitative RDE requirements to limit the tailpipe emissions of light passenger and commercial (Euro 6) vehicles**. The EP did not receive this informal Commission draft measure in a timely manner, which raised comments by MEPs during the debate on 13 October. The draft measure was transmitted to Parliament and Member States on 23 October and the TCMV adopted its opinion on 28 October. The Commission reported that quantitative RDE requirements adopted by the TCMV would be introduced in two steps:

1) car manufacturers will have to bring down the discrepancy to a conformity factor of maximum 2.1 (110%) for new models by September 2017 (for new vehicles by September 2019);

2) this discrepancy will be brought down to a factor of 1.5 (50%), taking account of technical margins of error, by January 2020 for all new models (by January 2021 for all new vehicles).

The official adopted text has not yet been transmitted to Parliament at this stage.

Enhancing innovation and economic development in future European farm management

Consideration of draft opinion (see meeting documents)

The Rapporteur, in his draft opinion, stresses the need to strike the right balance between ensuring an adequate food supply while at the same time preserving the environment and valuable resources for future generations. He considers that this could be done by reducing food waste and by supporting farmers who use more sustainable agricultural practices. The rapporteur also considers that a fairer income distribution in the food supply chain and transparent market conditions would help farmers to be better equipped to implement greening measures and/or organic farming. In addition, the draft opinion highlights the importance of research and innovation in supporting the agri-food sector.

Rapporteur: Zoffoli (S&D) *Procedure file*
Shadows: Petir (EPP), Torvalds (ALDE), Eck (GUE), Jalkh (ENF)

Exchange of views on the carcinogenicity of the consumption of red meat

Exchange of views with WHO representative

WHO has been invited for an exchange of views on the determination on the potential risk of carcinogenicity of the consumption of red meat and processed meat. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the specialized cancer agency of the WHO, works with international experts to identify priorities from among agents suspected of causing cancer. The IARC Monographs identify environmental factors that can increase the risk of human cancer. These include chemicals, complex mixtures, occupational exposures, physical agents, biological agents, and lifestyle factors. Since 1971, more than 900 agents have been evaluated, of which more than 400 have been identified as carcinogenic, probably carcinogenic, or possibly carcinogenic to humans.

In October 2015, 22 scientists from ten countries met at the IARC, to evaluate the carcinogenicity of the consumption of red meat and processed meat. These assessments have been published in volume 114 of the IARC Monographs (not yet publicly available).

After thoroughly reviewing the accumulated scientific literature, the 22 experts classified the **consumption of red meat as probably carcinogenic to humans** (Group 2A), based on limited evidence that the consumption of red meat causes cancer in humans and strong mechanistic evidence supporting a carcinogenic effect. This association was observed mainly for **colorectal cancer**, but associations were also seen for **pancreatic cancer** and **prostate cancer**. **Processed meat** was classified as **carcinogenic to humans** (Group 1), based on sufficient evidence in humans that the consumption of processed meat causes colorectal cancer. The consumption of meat varies greatly between countries, with from a few percent up to 100% of people eating red meat, depending on the country, and somewhat lower proportions eating processed meat. The experts concluded that each 50 gram portion of processed meat eaten daily increases the risk of colorectal cancer by 18%.

NEWS FROM THE AGENCIES

European Environment Agency (EEA)

The European Union is on track towards meeting and over-achieving its 2020 target for reducing greenhouse emissions by 20%. The "Trends and projections in Europe 2015" report reveals that greenhouse gas emissions in Europe decreased by 23% between 1990 and 2014 and reached the lowest levels on record. Latest projections by Member States show that the **EU is heading for a 24% reduction by 2020** with current measures in place, **and a 25% reduction with additional measures already being planned in Member States.** The EU is already working towards its 2030 goal of an emissions reduction target of at least 40% — which is the EU's contribution towards the new global climate change agreement in Paris in December. More

European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

To further ensure that **testing on animals** is only done as a last resort, ECHA has started requesting additional information from registrants who submit new testing proposals for vertebrate animal tests. This follows the European Ombudsman's recent decision about ECHA's role in evaluating testing proposals. More

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

ECDC monitors very closely the evolution of **health threats** in Europe such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), the spread of diseases linked to the current migration wave and the seasonal flu. More

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

EFSA's experts investigated whether an association could be found between intake of **isoflavones** from food supplements and adverse effects on three target organs (mammary gland, uterus and thyroid gland) in **peri- and post-menopausal women**; they concluded that scientific evidence does not suggest any harmful effects on these three organs at levels typically found in food supplements. Isoflavones are naturally occurring substances which are found, e.g. in soy, red clover and kudzu root. Their extracts are used as ingredients in nutritional supplements for post-menopausal women. More

European Medicines Agency (EMA)

The EMA has published its fifth report on the **sales of veterinary antibiotics in Europe**, showing encouraging trends in terms of responsible use of antibiotics in animals but also varying patterns in the trends in sales between countries. More

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Contact the ENVI Secretariat: envi-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu or visit the website of the ENVI Committee.

Next meeting of the ENVI Committee
1 December 2015 (Brussels)
See also the 2015 meeting dates for future meetings.

Further information sources
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