

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5468/06
by Anne Ferreira (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Meeting of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in Chiba, Japan

The Codex Alimentarius ad hoc intergovernmental task force on foods derived from biotechnology met from 27 November to 1 December. On this occasion it discussed a draft annex to the Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant DNA Plants.

It appears that in the course of the debate, the Finnish Council Presidency came out in favour of a Commission proposal for a decision to commence discussions with the United States on acceptance of contamination levels, having regard to the differences between the United States and the European Union regarding procedures and authorisation thresholds.

Without prejudging the conclusions, such a proposal and its acceptance by the Presidency is very surprising, coming as it does only a few weeks after the disclosure regarding American rice contaminated by an unauthorised NGO, and all the more so in so far as Community legislation regarding the authorisation of NGOs makes it illegal to market any genetically modified food not authorised by the EU under Directive 2001/18/EC¹ and Regulation 1829/2003/EC². Tolerance of contamination, even where accidental, is illegal and unacceptable.

Does the Commission intend to make public its proposal regarding the stance to be adopted by the Codex Commission, the relevant background documentation and the substance of the deliberations at the above Codex meeting, particularly with the American authorities?

Can the Commission give the reasons for its decision to commence discussions with the United States on this particular point?

¹ OJ L 106, 17.4.2001, p. 1.

² OJ L 268, 18.10.2003, p.1.