



Paris, 13 November 2018

POLITICAL OPINION

on the reform of the European Food Safety Authority proposed by the European Commission

Having regard to Regulation (EC) n° 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and laying down procedures in matters of food safety,

Having regard to Regulation (EC) n° 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market,

Having regard to the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2018 on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain, COM(2018) 179 final,

Having regard to the Communication from the European Commission of 12 December 2017 on the European Citizens' Initiative "Ban glyphosate and protect people and the environment from toxic pesticides", C(2017) 8414 final,

The Senate European Affairs Committee:

Whereas it is indispensable that the European Union should benefit from the expertise of an independent agency for the assessment of risks relating to the food chain;

Whereas the EFSA must provide an impartial and reliable assessment of the risks relating to the products and substances submitted to it;

Whereas this independence must be guaranteed not only by the political authorities, but also by food sector operators;

Whereas this independence is derived, on the one hand, from consideration of all available scientific studies and, on the other, from the integrity of the experts;

Whereas the transparency of the assessment process must allow confidence in the EFSA's opinions;

Whereas this confidence is necessary both for operators in the food chain, who need an impartial opinion on the risks related to their products, and for citizens who will consume those products or be exposed to them;

Welcomes the Proposal for a Regulation tabled by the European Commission and supports, in particular, the creation of a register of studies;

Considers that it is necessary to increase the budget of the EFSA and that this increase should take effect despite a difficult budgetary context;

Considers that coherent communication about risks requires better coordination between the agencies;

On the transparency of the risk analysis process

Maintains that the studies submitted by food sector operators must be published at the moment when the EFSA agrees to examine the authorisation or the renewal application, while respecting any intellectual property rights;

Calls for an appeal procedure to be established in the event of any disagreements between the EFSA and a food sector operator as to the confidentiality of certain data, with a view to avoiding immediate recourse to judicial solutions;

Calls for the publication of detailed minutes of the meetings held within the framework of the committee procedure;

Managing conflicts of interest

Emphasises the need for external control and publication of the assessments made by the EFSA of the public declarations of interest submitted to it;

Calls for an independent evaluation of the rules on conflicts of interest within the EFSA and for the publication of the results;

On the quality of studies

Calls for peer-reviewed academic studies to be given greater consideration within the framework of assessments and for their probative value to be reassessed;

On the appointment of experts

Calls for the EFSA to have the faculty to publish a call for expressions of interest for the purposes of drawing up a list of experts who may be appointed by the board, in parallel with the lists provided by the Member States;

Calls for regulation of the possibility for a Member State to propose scientists of other nationalities.