

CHAIR'S WELCOME



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Dear All,

The next ENVI meeting will take place on 3 February. On this occasion, we will welcome for the first time in the ENVI Committee, Mr Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market. ENVI Members will thus have the chance to exchange views with the Commissioner on topics within his portfolio, such as chemicals, emissions from the automotive sector, or circular economy.

The ENVI Committee scrutinizes the work of several EU agencies, including that of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), in charge of gathering and spreading information on communicable diseases within the EU or threatening from outside the EU. The Executive Director of the ECDC will appear before our committee to discuss its latest activity, as well as the outbreak of Coronavirus pneumonia. The ECDC is closely monitoring this outbreak and providing risk assessments to guide EU Member States and the EU Commission in their response activities. As the outbreak investigations are ongoing and as this is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, the ECDC is also providing updated information as it becomes available (more info [here](#)).

ENVI Members will also discuss two draft Objections to measures planned to be adopted by the Commission with respect to the non-approval of the propolis extract as a basic substance that could be used in pesticides, and regarding genetically modified soybean.

You can follow the ENVI Committee meeting live at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/envi/home.html>

You can also follow the activities of the ENVI Committee on its official Twitter account [@EP_Environment](#)

Pascal Canfin - 3 February 2020

MEETING ITEMS

Results of the votes of the last ENVI meeting are available [here](#).

Votes:

- *European Semester: Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2020 - postponed*

Considerations:

- Objection pursuant to Rule 112: draft Commission Implementing Regulation concerning the non-approval of propolis extract as a basic substance in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market
- Objection pursuant to Rule 112: Draft Commission Implementing Decision authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified soybean MON 87708 × MON 89788 × A5547-127, pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003

Exchanges of views:

- with Mr Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market
- with Ms Andrea Ammon, Executive Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

ENVI IN NEXT PLENARY

Draft agenda of the Plenary available [here](#).

EXCHANGES OF VIEWS



EoV with Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market

This is the first exchange of views with Thierry Breton, new Commissioner for the Internal Market. Mr Breton's responsibilities, as described in his mission letter, are the following:

- The digital economy and society: enhancing Europe's technological sovereignty, artificial intelligence, European strategy on data, Digital Services Act, preventing and countering disinformation, single market for cybersecurity, joint Cyber Unit, Digital Education Action Plan.
- A future-ready European industry and single market: long-term strategy for Europe's industrial future, new Circular Economy Action Plan, new SME strategy, day-to-day functioning of the single market, level playing field throughout the single market, intellectual property regime, Europe's technological sovereignty in key value chains.
- Defence industry and space: European Defence Fund, open and competitive European defence equipment market, Action Plan on Military Mobility, strong and innovative space industry, implementation of the future Space Programme (covering Galileo, EGNOS and Copernicus).

Thierry Breton's supporting services are DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT), and a new DG for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS).

As regards the competences of the ENVI committee, DG GROW is responsible in particular for chemicals (REACH) and relations with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), cosmetics, emissions from the automotive sector and circular economy (eco-design). Some parts of DG GROW, formerly dealing with pharmaceuticals and medical devices, have now been moved from DG GROW to DG SANTE.



EoV with Andrea Ammon, Executive Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

The European Centre for Disease prevention and Control (ECDC) is a non-regulatory EU agency in charge of gathering and spreading information on communicable diseases within the EU or threatening from outside the EU. The core functions cover a wide spectrum of activities: surveillance, epidemic intelligence, response, scientific advice, microbiology, preparedness, public health training, international relations, health communication, and the scientific journal *Eurosurveillance*. ECDC disease programmes cover antimicrobial resistance and healthcare-associated infections; emerging and vector-borne diseases; food- and waterborne

diseases and zoonoses; HIV, sexually transmitted infections and viral hepatitis; influenza and other respiratory viruses; tuberculosis; and vaccine-preventable diseases.

Current issue: Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

On 31 December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown aetiology was reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province China. On 9 January 2020, the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) reported a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) as the causative agent of this outbreak, which is phylogenetically in the SARS-CoV clade. The ECDC is currently following the outbreak of Coronavirus pneumonia and published a rapid risk assessment on 17 January 2020 and a Risk assessments on 22 and 26 January 2020. The ECDC is providing updated information as it becomes available: [here](#).

CONSIDERATIONS

Objection pursuant to Rule 112: draft Commission Implementing Regulation concerning the non-approval of propolis extract as a basic substance in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market

Exchange of views on the basis of motion for a resolution (see [meeting documents](#))

The Commission received an application for the approval of propolis extract as a basic substance. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) identified propolis extract as a skin sensitiser. According to the draft Commission act, although no other specific concerns were identified, the information provided was not sufficient to demonstrate the absence of genotoxic potential and endocrine activity and the concerns related to the substance cannot be eliminated. The draft act does not approve propolis extract as a basic substance. The objector opposes the draft measure on the grounds that it exceeds the implementing powers provided for in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009, and that it is not compatible with the aim and content of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009. According to the draft resolution, the application at issue concerns approval of propolis extract, as a basic substance and an aqueous treatment to be applied to post-harvest plants, and not as a product that would be directly consumed by humans.

The draft resolution reiterates the need to approve propolis as an active substance and a low-risk pesticide, and calls on the Commission to withdraw its draft implementing regulation and to submit a new draft to the committee.

Rapporteur: [MÉLIN](#) (ID)

Objection pursuant to Rule 112: Draft Commission Implementing Decision authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified (GM) soybean MON 87708 × MON 89788 × A5547-127, pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003

Exchange of views on the basis of motion for a resolution (see [meeting documents](#))

The objectors underline that this GM soybean contains genes conferring resistance to three herbicides (glyphosate, dicamba and glufosinate). Glufosinate is classified as toxic to reproduction. It has not been authorised for use in the EU since 1 August 2018. According to the Objectors, concerns regarding the carcinogenicity of glyphosate remain; because herbicide tolerant GM plants have been designed to withstand repeated sprayings with the complementary herbicides, it can be expected that they will be exposed to higher quantities than their non-GM counterparts. Higher applications of herbicides may lead to a higher burden of residues in the harvest.

The Objectors urge the Commission to review all its current authorisations for GM soybeans in light of the Union's international obligations, including those under the Paris Climate Agreement, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the SDGs. They also call for the implementation of a European vegetable protein production and supply strategy, which would enable the Union to become less dependent on GM soybean imports and to create shorter food chains and regional markets and insists that this be integrated into the upcoming Farm to Fork Strategy.

Co-rapporteurs: [METZ](#) (GREENS), [PIETIKÄINEN](#) (EPP), [SIDL](#) (S&D), [HAZEKAMP](#) (GUE/NGL), [EVI](#) (NI)

NEWS FROM THE POLICY DEPARTMENT

Recent Publications:

- Study on [EU public health policies - state of play, current and future challenges](#) (also its [At a glance](#) version)
- Study on [EU environment and climate change policies - state of play, current and future challenges](#) (also its [At a glance](#) version)
- Briefing on [the Commitments made at the hearing of Stella KYRIAKIDES, Commissioner-Designate on Health](#)
- Briefing on [the Commitments made at the hearing of Virginijus SINKEVICIUS, Commissioner-Designate on Environment and Oceans](#)
- Briefing on [the Commitments made at the hearing of Frans TIMMERMANS, Executive Vice President-Designate on European Green Deal](#)
- Study on [international climate negotiations in view of the COP25 UN Climate Change Conference in Santiago](#)
- Study on [Sampling points for air quality](#) – Representativeness and comparability of measurement in accordance with Directive 2008/50/EC (also available in DE)
- Briefing on [European energy and climate policies towards 2020, 2030 and 2050](#).
- Workshop proceedings on [Robots in Healthcare: A Solution or a Problem?](#)

Upcoming Publications:

- Briefing on the key issues at stake in the 75th session of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC75)
- In-depth analysis on "Strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer".

Upcoming events:

- Workshop for the Health Working Group on the preventable risk factors of cancer; scheduled for 18 February, 12h30-14h.

NEWS FROM THE AGENCIES

European Environment Agency ([EEA](#))



Construction and demolition waste: challenges and opportunities in a circular economy

Construction and demolition waste (C&DW) comprises the largest waste stream in the EU, with relatively stable amounts produced over time and high recovery rates. Although this may suggest that the construction sector is highly circular, scrutiny of waste management practices reveals that C&DW recovery is largely based on backfilling operations and low-grade recovery, such as using recycled aggregates in road sub-bases. This briefing examines how circular economy-inspired actions can help achieve waste policy objectives, namely waste prevention and increase both the quantity and the quality of recycling for C&DW while reducing hazardous materials in the waste. [More here.](#)

European Medicines Agency ([EMA](#))



On 22 January, the Court of Justice, in two judgements, confirmed the right of citizens for access to clinical study and toxicology reports submitted to EMA for the purpose

of the granting of a marketing authorisation for human and veterinary medicinal products. The Court of Justice reiterated the principle of the widest possible public access to documents held by Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies. An exception to that principle may be applied for the protection of commercial interests only if it is proven by the marketing authorisation holder/applicant that the disclosure of documents would pose the risk of a concrete harm to the commercial interests of the persons concerned. The Court of Justice agreed with EMA that such harm was not established in respect of the disclosure of the clinical study and toxicology reports at stake. The judges confirmed that transparency must be the rule and exceptions must be applied and construed narrowly. [More here.](#)

European Food Safety Authority ([EFSA](#))



Nearly one in three foodborne outbreaks in the EU in 2018 were caused by Salmonella. This is one of the main findings of the annual report on trends

and sources of zoonoses published on 12 December by EFSA and ECDC. In 2018, EU Member States reported 5,146 foodborne outbreaks affecting 48,365 people. A foodborne disease outbreak is an incident during which at least two people contract the same illness from the same contaminated food or drink.

Slovakia, Spain and Poland accounted for 67% of the 1,581 Salmonella outbreaks. These outbreaks were mainly linked to eggs. [More here.](#)

European Chemicals Agency ([ECHA](#))

ECHA adds four new substances on the candidate list and assessed safer tattoo inks



ECHA has added three new substances to the Candidate List of substances of very high concern (SVHCs) due to their toxicity to reproduction and a fourth due to a combination of other properties of concern. The Candidate List for authorisation now contains 205 substances.

At the request of the European Commission, ECHA has assessed the safety of pigments used in tattoo inks. ECHA is not proposing to ban tattoos, nor all green and blue tattooing colours. The Agency submitted its scientific opinions to the Commission in June 2019, and the Commission will discuss it with Member States in February. Read more on the [Candidate list](#) and [tattoo inks](#).

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



On 31 December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown aetiology was reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province China. On 9 January 2020, China CDC reported a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) as the causative agent of this outbreak, which is phylogenetically in the SARS-CoV clade.

As of 28 January 2020, 4 587 laboratory-confirmed cases of novel coronavirus infection, including 16 healthcare workers and 106 deaths were reported. More than 4 000 cases have been reported in China and the rest in other countries in Asia, Australia, Europe and North America. Chinese health authorities have confirmed human-to-human transmission outside Hubei. Concerning Europe, on 24 January 2020, the first 3 imported cases were identified in France and on 27 January a case was identified in Germany. Further global spread is likely. As the outbreak investigations are ongoing and as this is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, ECDC is providing updated information as it becomes available. [More here.](#)

Next meetings of the ENVI Committee: 17-18 February 2020 (Brussels).

Future meetings: [2020 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.

More information: envi-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu or [website](#) of the ENVI Committee.

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