



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 10 April 2008 (11.04)
(OR. fr)**

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AGRILEG 53

NOTE

from : French delegation
to : Council
Subject : Chemical decontamination of fresh meat

Delegations will find attached a note from the French delegation. This note will be submitted to the Agriculture and Fisheries Council as an "Other business" item at its meeting on 14 April 2008.

Subject: Chemical decontamination of fresh meat

The French authorities would like to draw the attention of the Council and the Commission to their concern regarding the planned authorisation by the Commission of the chemical decontamination of fresh meat.

The recent scientific opinions of the European Food Safety Authority and of the Commission's Scientific Committees on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER) and Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) have not made it possible to dispel all the uncertainties regarding use of the substances in question. These opinions pointed in particular to the lack of adequate data concerning the risk of inducing antimicrobial resistance mechanisms and of the loss of effectiveness of the products as a result of incorrect use.

In these circumstances, work should continue before considering the arrangements for any authorisation of the use of certain chemical decontaminants under entirely safe conditions.

The question still remains, moreover, as to whether such authorisation is advisable. The purpose of chemical decontamination is to make up for any pre-existing defects of hygiene by cleansing carcasses at the end of the production chain. It runs counter to the priority constantly attributed within the European Union to compliance with sound hygienic practices which the hygiene package is intended to reinforce. On the contrary, efforts must continue to be made to ensure control throughout the food chain, and particularly at the critical points.

The high level of quality of Community produce is a comparative advantage that is clearly perceived by European and non-European consumers alike, and it must be preserved and encouraged. European consumers do not want widespread placing on the market of poultrymeat or the meat of other species that has undergone this kind of chemical treatment, the more so since the conditions for full and fair information concerning all the foodstuffs concerned do not obtain.

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