



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate C - Scientific Opinions

C2 - Management of scientific committees; scientific co-operation and networks

**Scientific Committee on Food**

**SCF/CS/PM/GEN/88 final**

25/10/2001

### **Statement**

#### **of the Scientific Committee on Food**

#### **on the recent report on primary aromatic amines in food and packaging samples in a Danish magazine<sup>1</sup>**

(expressed on 26 September 2001)

The Committee was informed by the Commission about reports of analysis of primary aromatic amines (PAAs) in food packaging samples and food in Denmark<sup>1</sup>.

The levels reported largely exceed the German recommended limit value<sup>2</sup> as well as the future Community legal restriction<sup>3</sup>.

The Commission asked the Committee if the study described by the Danish magazine was adequate to allow an assessment of any hazard to consumers.

Aromatic isocyanates are used as starting substances in the production of plastics. In the presence of water, aromatic isocyanates can hydrolyze to form primary aromatic amines, which may migrate into foodstuffs.

PAAs are a family of compounds some of which are carcinogenic, others are suspected carcinogens while still others are considered non-toxic.

The analytical method used in the tests described in the Danish magazine does not allow to identify individual PAAs and the reported data cannot, therefore, be used for hazard assessment.

In order to evaluate the possible implication of the findings on public health, the Committee noted that the following information would be required:

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<sup>1</sup> Reported by a Danish magazine "Boersens Nyhedsmagasin" on 13 August 2001 and also summarized in the "Financial Times" and "Le Nouvel Observateur".

<sup>2</sup> BGVV method " Determination of primary aromatic amines in aqueous test foodstuffs" published in the " Official Compendium of test procedures in accordance with paragraph 35 of the Foods and Commodities Act", EC document reference EMB/658.

<sup>3</sup> Commission Directive 2001/62/EC of 9 August 2001 amending Directive 90/128/EEC relating to plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with foodstuffs (OJ L 221, 17.8.2001, p. 18)

- The identity of the aromatic amines,
- The methodology employed in the survey reported in the press, including the sampling of the food and packaging samples, the handling and treatment of the packaging samples tested.

The Committee notes that this information is, at present, not available and therefore requests the Commission to obtain this information.

Further, the Committee was informed about some ongoing inquiries carried out by Member States Authorities on the determination of PAAs in plastic food contact materials.

The Committee will review the issue when all the data are available.