

Press release – Parliament objects to legislation on food products that might be harmful to kids



The first objection concerns the Commission's proposed amendment to the legislation laying down specifications for food additives as regards titanium dioxide (E 171). It was approved with 443 votes to 118 and 135 abstentions.

Parliament calls on the Commission to apply the precautionary principle and to remove E171 from the EU list of permitted food additives that are currently used mainly to colour confectionery, bakery and pastry products as well as chewing gum, candies, chocolates, and ice cream. As these products are very popular with children, MEPs are particularly concerned about them being potentially very exposed to the additive. They underline that France banned sales of food products containing titanium dioxide as of 1 January 2020 and that 85 000 citizens across Europe have signed a petition to support the French ban.

The second objection concerning the Commission's proposal to amend the rules setting maximum levels of acrylamide in certain foodstuffs for infants and young children was also approved with 469 votes to 137 and 90 abstentions.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) previously confirmed that acrylamide, which is a processing contaminant that occurs naturally when some foods are heated, potentially increases the risk of developing cancer in all age groups. In the resolution, MEPs request that the Commission lower the proposed maximum level allowed for two food products often given to infants and young children, as they are the most exposed, based on their body weight. They also underline that biscuits and rusks that are not specifically produced for infants and young children, but are often given to or even marketed to them, should face the same, more stringent demands.

Next steps

As Parliament has adopted these two objections, the Commission cannot approve the proposed actions and is now obliged to amend or withdraw them.