

EN
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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
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Food additives are thoroughly assessed for their safety by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and are permitted only if they do not, on the basis of the scientific evidence available, pose a safety concern to the health of consumers at the level of use authorised in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008¹. Permitted additives are kept under continuous observation and their safety is re-evaluated whenever necessary in light of changing conditions of use and new scientific information. In addition, the Commission set up a programme for the re-evaluation of the safety of food additives authorised for use in the EU prior to 20 January 2009², for which EFSA takes into account any relevant new scientific and technical information³. To date, EFSA published 134 scientific opinions on the re-evaluation of the safety of food additives, covering 241 individual food additives. EFSA aims to complete the re-evaluation of the remaining 74 food additives (23%)⁴ within the next few years.

EFSA, as the EU risk assessment body⁵, is responsible for the re-evaluation of the safety of permitted food additives. For the re-evaluation, EFSA examines data submitted by business operators and/or other interested parties through open calls for data and data available through updated literature searches. For example, as part of the re-evaluation of the salt of aspartame-acesulfame (E 962), any new and relevant evidence that has become available since the 2013 opinion on the safety of aspartame will be assessed.

Based on the outcome of EFSA's re-evaluations, the Commission considers risk management measures when necessary.

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on food additives (OJ L 354, 31.12.2008, p. 16).

² Commission Regulation (EU) No 257/2010 of 25 March 2010 setting up a programme for the re-evaluation of approved food additives in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on food additives (OJ L 80, 26.3.2010, p. 19–27).

³ Article 4 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 257/2010.

⁴ The Commission provides information to the public on the status of the re-evaluation via a dedicated webpage http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_improvement_agents/additives/re-evaluation_en.

⁵ Regulation (EC) No 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 and laying down procedures in matters of food safety (OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1–24).