

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003183/25
to the Commission
Günther Sidl (S&D)
(6 August 2025)**

Subject: Conclusions and recommendations of the French food agency ANSES on isoflavones in soy products

According to media reports, the French food agency ANSES issued a drastic recommendation in March to the effect that catering kitchens (especially in kindergartens, schools, nursing homes, etc.) should not serve soy-based foods owing to their excessively high isoflavone content. According to ANSES, isoflavones are harmful to health, although this does not reflect the current scientific consensus and knowledge regarding the health-promoting properties of soy products. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) itself reviewed the safety of isoflavones in 2014 ⁽¹⁾.

1. Has EFSA been informed of the findings and the resulting recommendation by ANSES?
2. What conclusions has EFSA drawn in this regard?
3. Will EFSA again conduct its own investigations into isoflavones in soy-based foods?

Submitted: 6.8.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(23 September 2025)**

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is aware of the opinion issued by the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES), regarding health risks associated with isoflavones in soy-based foods, published in March 2025 ⁽¹⁾.

The scope of this recent ANSES assessment differs from that of the EFSA assessment completed in 2015, which was limited to the safety assessment of the use of isoflavones in food supplements, exclusively in peri- and post-menopausal women, and to the potential harmful effects these substances may exert on the breast, the uterus and the thyroid. Therefore, the conclusions from the 2015 EFSA opinion are not applicable to the general population but only to this subgroup of consumers of food supplements.

Given that the EFSA and ANSES assessments differ significantly with respect to the population and the types of dietary sources of isoflavones considered, EFSA has not issued any new conclusions following the recommendations made by ANSES.

According to Article 29 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 ⁽²⁾, the EFSA may issue a scientific opinion on its own initiative or if requested by the Commission or Member States.

¹ <https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000262979/franzoesische-behoerden-mahnen-zu-vorsicht-beim-konsum-von-sojaprodukten-wegen-phyto-oestrogenen>
⁽¹⁾ <https://www.anses.fr/sites/default/files/NUT2022SA0221.pdf>.

⁽²⁾ 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) <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2002/178/2024-07-01>.