

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000591/26
to the Commission**

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(11 February 2026)

Subject: Protecting allergic consumers by harmonising EU ingredient labelling

For allergic or hypersensitive people, buying suitable food, drinks, medicine and cosmetics is often difficult and sometimes even dangerous. EU law currently requires that additives be shown in the ingredients list by their functional class followed by either the specific name or the E-number. However, it does not make the E-number universally mandatory. Currently, there is also no formal EU legislative act requiring disclosure on food labels of the raw material source (e.g. whether from wood, cotton or bamboo).

Would the Commission therefore clarify:

1. Does it intend to assess the feasibility of making E-numbers mandatory, in order to improve clarity and consistency for consumers?
2. Does it plan to examine whether disclosure of the raw material source of certain additives (e.g. plant-, mineral- or animal-derived, or whether wood, cotton or bamboo has been used) should be required where such differences may be relevant for allergic or hypersensitive consumers?

Supporter ⁽¹⁾

Submitted: 11.2.2026

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(17 April 2026)

The Food Information to Consumers Regulation ('the FIC Regulation') ⁽¹⁾ sets out the principles and requirements for food information, ensuring that consumers can make informed choices.

Food additives must be indicated in the list of ingredients by their functional class, followed by either their specific name or E-number. The use of E-numbers is not mandatory; operators may choose between the specific name or E-number.

Substances or products causing allergies or intolerances listed in the annex to the FIC Regulation must be clearly indicated and emphasised in the ingredients list.

This also applies to food additives listed in the annex as well as to food additives derived from substances listed in the annex. If an allergen from which a food additive is derived is present in the finished food, even in an altered form, it must be declared, ensuring adequate consumer protection without the need to specify the raw material source.

The EU allergens list is based on scientific opinions ⁽²⁾ by the European Food Safety Authority. These substances represent the most common food allergens, and there is ample evidence for their inclusion. This list may be re-examined and, when necessary, updated considering the most recent scientific knowledge.

Allergic consumers are primarily concerned by specific allergens rather than broader source categories of additives. Therefore, the Commission considers that the current legal framework adequately addresses allergenic concerns and does not necessitate the introduction of mandatory E-numbers or the disclosure of raw material sources.

¹ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Maria Zacharia (NI).

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 304 22.11.2011, p. 18: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2011/1169/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ The EFSA Journal (2004) 32, 1-197 and EFSA Journal 2014;12(11):3894.