

EN
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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(20.8.2026)

Food additives are subject to a premarket safety assessment and may be authorised only if, based on the available scientific evidence, their proposed use does not raise a safety concern for consumer's health and the other conditions¹ laid down in the legislation² are met.

Authorised 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 that were already permitted in the Union before 20 January 2009³. The safety of glycerol (E 422) was confirmed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in 2017⁴ within this re-evaluation programme.

Nevertheless, in 2024 and 2025, some Member States reported an acute exposure concern in relation to the use of glycerol in slush ice drinks. In response to a request from the Commission, EFSA assessed the safety of acute exposure to glycerol (E 422) from beverages taking into account new information on the use of glycerol (E 422) in slush ice drinks⁵ and published its opinion⁶ on 5 May 2026.

Against this background, in June 2026 the Commission launched discussions with Member States on reviewing the authorisation conditions for glycerol (E 422) in light of the recent EFSA opinion. The aim, in line with the applicable legislation, is to assure that the use levels of glycerol as a food additive do not pose safety concerns for any population group, including young children. In this context, the Commission is not considering restrictions on the sale of slush ice drinks or additional labelling requirements.

¹ There is a reasonable technological need that cannot be achieved by other economically and technologically practicable means; its use does not mislead the consumer; and there are advantages and benefits for the consumers. There are additional specific conditions for food additives used as sweeteners and colours.

² 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).

³ Commission Regulation (EU) No 257/2010 of 25 March 2010 setting up a program 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).

⁴ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2017.4720>.

⁵ The use levels in slush ice drinks presented in 2024 and 2025 were significantly higher than the use levels accounted for flavoured drinks in the EFSA 2017 opinion.

⁶ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2026.10057>.