

EN
E-002615/2026
Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(24.9.2026)

A food additive may be included in the Union lists of Authorised additives¹ only if it does not pose a safety concern to the health of the consumer, 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 it has advantages and benefits for the consumer. For food additives belonging to the functional class of sweeteners, additional specific conditions² must be met.

Among those additional conditions, the ‘30 % energy-reduction threshold’³ referred to by the Honourable Member was included in the Food Additives Regulation⁴ to ensure a significant energy-reduction and thus clear benefits from replacing sugars by sweeteners in foods. This guarantees a meaningful reformulation that provides a legitimate nutritional advantage by comparison with foods containing sugars. The restriction also ensures that the use of sweetener food additives is limited to certain products within specific food categories, as set out in Annex II of the Food Additives Regulation. The Commission considers that the rationale underpinning this restriction remains relevant and does not intend to review Article 7(a) of the Food Additives Regulation.

In the broader context of improving dietary habits, the Commission supports efforts to reduce sugar consumption, including through the food industry-led EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices and through Food 2030⁵, as well as support to national reformulation initiatives⁶. The Annex on Added Sugars of the 2015 EU Framework for National Initiatives for Selected Nutrients⁷ indicates as preferred outcome that the reduction of added sugars also leads to a reduction of the sweet taste.

¹ In Annexes II and III to 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 A food additive may be included in the Union list in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 for the functional class of sweetener only if it serves one or more of the following purposes:

(a) replacing sugars for the production of energy-reduced food, non-cariogenic food or food with no added sugars; or

(b) replacing sugars where this permits an increase in the shelf-life of the food; or

(c) producing food intended for particular nutritional uses as defined in Article 1(2)(a) of Directive 89/398/EEC.

³ Article 3(2) f of Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 defines ‘energy-reduced food’ as a food with an energy value reduced by at least 30 % compared with the original food or a similar product.

⁴ 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, pp. 16–33.

⁵ the research and innovation policy framework deployed under the Horizon Europe programme.

⁶ European Commission, Communication on an EU cardiovascular health plan: the Safe Hearts Plan, COM(2025) 1024 final, 16 December 2025.

⁷ Available at https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/added-sugars-annex-eu-framework-national-initiatives-selected-nutrients_en.