

Food additives: sweeteners and other than colours and sweeteners

2004/0237(COD) - 05/07/2006 - Final act

PURPOSE : to amend Directive 95/2/EC on food additives other than colours and sweeteners and Directive 94/35/EC on sweeteners for use in foodstuffs.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Directive 2006/52/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT : there have been technical developments in the field of food additives since the adoption of Directives 95/2/EC and 94/35/EC. These Directives should be adapted to take account of those developments.

This Directive adapts the authorised levels of nitrates and nitrites permitted in meat, in line with a ruling by the Court of Justice in 2000, and a subsequent scientific opinion from the European Food Safety Authority. The level of nitrosamines (which are formed from nitrates and nitrites) will be kept as low as possible by lowering the levels of nitrites and nitrates added to food. Specific provisions are however provided for some traditional meat products, which rely on certain technological processes and would disappear from the market if forced to comply with the general provisions. However, for such traditional products a description of the production process has been included so that they can be easily recognised and defined.

Furthermore, the amended legislation authorises seven new additives :

- § erythritol;
- § soybean hemicellulose;
- § ethyl cellulose;
- § hexylresorcinol;
- § tertiary butyl hydroquinone (TBHQ);
- § pullulan;
- § starch aluminium octenyl succinate.

Each of these additives underwent a safety evaluation by the Scientific Committee on Food or the European Food Safety Authority prior the Commission proposing their authorisation. The authorisations of several other additives have also been extended to allow them a wider range of use in foods (e.g. sodium hydrogen carbonate in sour milk cheese).

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 15/08/2006. Member States shall bring into force by 15 February 2008 the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive in order to:

- a) permit trade in and the use of products complying with this Directive by 15 February 2008;
- b) prohibit trade in and use of products which do not comply with this Directive by 15 August 2008.

However, products placed on the market or labelled before 15 August 2008 which do not comply with this Directive may be marketed until stocks are exhausted. Member States shall forthwith communicate to the Commission the text of such laws, regulations and administrative provisions, together with a correlation table between them and this Directive.