

Council Regulation (EEC) No 315/93 of 8 February 1993
laying down Community procedures for contaminants in food

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 100a thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission⁽¹⁾,

In cooperation with the European Parliament⁽²⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee⁽³⁾,

Whereas it is important to adopt measures with the aim of progressively establishing the internal market over a period expiring on 31 December 1992; whereas the internal market shall comprise an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured;

Whereas the differences in rules adopted by the Member States may hinder the functioning of the common market and whereas it is necessary to lay down a procedure for the adoption of harmonized Community rules;

Whereas contaminants may enter into food at any stage from production to consumption;

Whereas it is essential, in the interest of public health protection, to keep these contaminants at levels which are toxicologically acceptable;

Whereas further elimination must be carried out whenever it is achievable through good working practices; whereas compliance with such good practices can be efficiently monitored by public authorities, given the vocational training and experience of their agents;

Whereas this Regulation must apply without prejudice to the provisions adopted in the context of more specific Community rules;

Whereas it is appropriate in terms of health protection to encourage the search for a comprehensive approach to the question of contaminants in food;

Whereas the Scientific Committee for Food set up by Decision 74/234/EEC⁽⁴⁾ must be consulted on all questions which may have an effect on public health,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

1 This Regulation concerns contaminants contained in food.

Changes to legislation: There are outstanding changes not yet made to Council Regulation (EEC) No 315/93. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

‘Contaminant’ means any substance not intentionally added to food which is present in such food as a result of the production (including operations carried out in crop husbandry, animal husbandry and veterinary medicine), manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport or holding of such food, or as a result of environmental contamination. Extraneous matter, such as, for example, insect fragments, animal hair, etc, is not covered by this definition.

2 This Regulation shall not apply to contaminants which are the subject of more specific Community rules.

Upon the entry into force of this Regulation, the Commission shall publish in the C series of the *Official Journal of the European Communities*, for the purposes of information, a list of the rules referred to in the first subparagraph. That list shall be updated, as appropriate, by the Commission.

3 Provisions relating to contaminants shall be adopted in accordance with this Regulation, except those laid down by the rules referred to in paragraph 2.

Article 2

1 Food containing a contaminant in an amount which is unacceptable from the public health viewpoint and in particular at a toxicological level shall not be placed on the market.

2 Furthermore, contaminant levels shall be kept as low as can reasonably be achieved by following good practices at all the stages referred to in Article 1.

3 ^[F1]In order to protect public health and pursuant to paragraph 1, the Commission may where necessary establish the maximum tolerances for specific contaminants. Those measures, designed to amend non-essential elements of this Regulation by supplementing it, shall be adopted in accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny referred to in Article 8(3). On imperative grounds of urgency, the Commission may have recourse to the urgency procedure referred to in Article 8(4).]

These tolerances shall be adopted in the form of a non-exhaustive Community list and may include:

- limits for the same contaminant in different foods;
- analytical detection limits;
- a reference to the sampling and analysis methods to be used.

Textual Amendments

F1 Substituted by [Regulation \(EC\) No 596/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 adapting a number of instruments subject to the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the Treaty to Council Decision 1999/468/EC with regard to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny Adaptation to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny — Part Four.](#)

Article 3

Provisions which may have an effect upon public health shall be adopted after consultation of the Scientific Committee for Food.

Article 4

1 Where a Member State, as a result of new information or of a reassessment of existing information, has reason to suspect that a contaminant in food, although complying with this

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Regulation or specific Regulations adopted pursuant to this Regulation, constitutes a health risk, it may temporarily suspend or restrict application of the provisions in question in its territory. It shall immediately inform the other Member States and the Commission thereof and give reasons for its decision.

[^{F12} The Commission shall examine the reasons given by the Member State referred to in paragraph 1 as soon as possible in the Standing Committee for Foodstuffs, set up by Council Decision 69/414/EEC⁽⁶⁾, and shall deliver its opinion immediately and take any necessary measures aimed at confirming, amending or repealing the national measure, in accordance with the regulatory procedure laid down in Article 8(2).]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by [Regulation \(EC\) No 596/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 adapting a number of instruments subject to the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the Treaty to Council Decision 1999/468/EC with regard to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny](#)
[Adaptation to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny — Part Four.](#)

Article 5

1 Member States may not prohibit, restrict, or impede the placing on the market of foods which comply with this Regulation or specific provisions adopted pursuant to this Regulation for reasons relating to their contaminant levels.

2 Where Community provisions concerning the maximum tolerances referred to in Article 2 (3) have not been adopted, the relevant national provisions shall be applicable subject to compliance with the provisions of the Treaty.

3

- a When a Member State maintains the provisions of its domestic laws, it shall inform the Commission and the other Member States thereof within a period of six months after the adoption of this Regulation.
- b Should a Member State deem it necessary to adopt new legislation, it shall communicate to the Commission and the other Member States the measures envisaged and give the reasons justifying them. The Commission shall consult the Member States within the Standing Committee on Foodstuffs if it considers such consultation to be useful or if a Member State so requests.

Member States may take such envisaged measures only three months after such communication and provided that the Commission's opinion is not negative.

In the latter event, before the expiry of the period referred to in the second paragraph, the Commission shall initiate the procedure provided for in [^{F1}Article 8(2)] in order to determine whether the envisaged measures may be implemented subject, if necessary, to the appropriate amendments.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by [Regulation \(EC\) No 596/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 adapting a number of instruments subject to the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the Treaty to Council Decision 1999/468/EC with regard to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny](#)
[Adaptation to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny — Part Four.](#)

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Article 6

Each year the Commission shall submit to the Standing Committee on Foodstuffs a report on the overall development of Community legislation on contaminants.

Article 7

Four years after this Regulation comes into force, the Commission shall forward to the Council a report on the experience gained accompanied, should the need arise, by any appropriate proposal.

^{F2}Article 8

1 The Commission shall be assisted by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health, set up by Article 58 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002⁽⁶⁾, hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee'.

2 Where reference is made to this Article, Articles 5 and 7 of Decision 1999/468/EC⁽⁷⁾ shall apply, having regard to the provisions of Article 8 thereof.

The period laid down in Article 5(6) of Decision 1999/468/EC shall be set at three months.

^{F13} Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 5a(1) to (4) and Article 7 of Council Decision 1999/468/EC⁽⁸⁾ shall apply, having regard to the provisions of Article 8 thereof.]

^{F34} Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 5a(1), (2), (4) and (6) and Article 7 of Decision 1999/468/EC shall apply, having regard to the provisions of Article 8 thereof.]]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by Regulation (EC) No 596/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 adapting a number of instruments subject to the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the Treaty to Council Decision 1999/468/EC with regard to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny Adaptation to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny — Part Four.
- F2** Substituted by Regulation (EC) No 1882/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 September 2003 adapting to Council Decision 1999/468/EC the provisions relating to committees which assist the Commission in the exercise of its implementing powers laid down in instruments subject to the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the EC Treaty.
- F3** Inserted by Regulation (EC) No 596/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 adapting a number of instruments subject to the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the Treaty to Council Decision 1999/468/EC with regard to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny Adaptation to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny — Part Four.

Article 9

This Regulation shall enter into force on 1 March 1993.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

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- (1) OJ No C 57, 4.3.1992, p. 11.
- (2) OJ No C 129, 20.5.1991, p. 104 and Decision of 20 January 1993 (not yet published in the Official Journal).
- (3) OJ No C 223, 31.8.1992, p. 24.
- (4) OJ No L 136, 20.5.1974, p. 1.
- (5) [^{F1}OJ L 291, 19.11.1969, p. 9.]
- (6) [^{F2}OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1.]
- (7) [^{F2}Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission (OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23).]
- (8) [^{F2}[^{F1}OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23.]]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by Regulation (EC) No 596/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 adapting a number of instruments subject to the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the Treaty to Council Decision 1999/468/EC with regard to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny Adaptation to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny — Part Four.
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[View outstanding changes](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to :

- Regulation applied (with modifications) by [S.I. 2023/959 reg. 4\(a\)Sch. 1](#)
- Art. 1(1) words inserted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 3](#)
- Art. 1(1) words omitted in earlier amending provision S.I. 2019/639, reg. 3 by [S.I. 2020/1504 reg. 8\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- Art. 1(1) words omitted in earlier amending provision S.I. 2019/639, reg. 3 by [S.I. 2020/1504 reg. 8\(2\)\(c\)](#)
- Art. 1(1) words substituted in earlier amending provision S.I. 2019/639, reg. 3 by [S.I. 2020/1504 reg. 8\(2\)\(a\)](#)
- Art. 1(2) word omitted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 4\(a\)](#)
- Art. 1(2) words omitted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 4\(b\)](#)
- Art. 2(3) substituted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 5](#)
- Art. 2(3) word omitted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 6](#)
- Art. 3 words substituted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 8](#)
- Art. 4 omitted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 9](#)
- Art. 5 omitted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 9](#)
- Art. 6 omitted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 9](#)
- Art. 7 omitted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 9](#)
- Art. 8 omitted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 9](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole legislation item and associated provisions

- Signature words omitted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 10](#)
- Art. 2(4)-(8) inserted by [S.I. 2019/639 reg. 7](#)
- Art. 2(4)(c) omitted in earlier amending provision S.I. 2019/639, reg. 7 by [S.I. 2020/1504 reg. 8\(3\)\(a\)](#)
- Art. 2(7) words substituted in earlier amending provision S.I. 2019/639, reg. 7 by [S.I. 2020/1504 reg. 8\(3\)\(b\)\(i\)](#)
- Art. 2(7)(b) words substituted in earlier amending provision S.I. 2019/639, reg. 7 by [S.I. 2020/1504 reg. 8\(3\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#)
- Art. 2(7)(d) omitted in earlier amending provision S.I. 2019/639, reg. 7 by [S.I. 2020/1504 reg. 8\(3\)\(b\)\(iii\)](#)
- Art. 2(7)(d) words substituted by [S.I. 2019/1013 reg. 25](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. S.I. 2019/1013 revoked immediately before IP completion day by S.I. 2020/1504, regs. 1(2), 21(e))
- Art. 2(8)(d) omitted in earlier amending provision S.I. 2019/639, reg. 7 by [S.I. 2020/1504 reg. 8\(3\)\(c\)](#)