

Flavouring substance benzene-1,2-diol

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EU proposes to ban the flavouring benzene-1,2-diol – WTO SPS consultation

[Draft](#) Commission Regulation (EU) amending Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1334/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the removal of the flavouring substance Benzene-1,2-diol (FL No. 04.029) from the Union list

[Draft Annex](#)

Update

The European Commission has informed the World Trade Organization Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO SPS) Committee that it intends to remove benzene-1,2-diol from the list of substances that may be used in the EU to flavour foods ([G/SPS/N/EU/761](#)). Its removal is proposed due to safety concerns.

What is changing?

Regulation [1334/2008](#) (Annex I) lists flavouring substances that are authorised to be used in foods in the European Union. The European Commission proposes to remove benzene-1,2-diol (FL No. 04.029) from that list.

Why?

The European Food Safety Authority has reviewed a number of smoke flavouring products (EFSA 2023a–d) and concluded that benzene-1,2-diol raises safety concerns regarding its genotoxicity.

Timeline

The removal of benzene-1,2-diol from the EU list is expected from approximately the fourth quarter 2024. Foods containing this substance exported before the Regulation applies may stay on the EU market until their use-by date.

Recommended Actions

Comments or concerns about potential impacts can be submitted via the [National SPS notification authority](#) of the country concerned to the [EU SPS Enquiry Point](#) until **2 July 2024**.

Companies that export food products containing these flavourings can look for alternative substances in the [Food Flavourings Database](#).

Background

Regulation [1334/2008](#) prohibits adding certain undesirable natural substances to food. It also lays down maximum levels for some substances that are naturally present in flavourings, but which may raise concerns for human health. The Regulation defines different types of flavourings, and lists the substances for which evaluation and approval is required.

The Union list of flavouring substances approved for use in and on foods (Regulation [872/2012](#)) was adopted in 2012.

When EFSA evaluates flavouring substances, it allocates them a unique identification number called an FL-number. FL comes from “FLAVIS”, the EU’s flavouring information system. The FL-number is not used for labelling purposes.

Resources

EFSA (2023a) [Scientific opinion on the renewal of the authorisation of Zesti Smoke Code 10 \(SF002\) as a smoke flavouring Primary Product](#). EFSA Journal, 21(11): 8364.

EFSA (2023b) [Scientific opinion on the renewal of the authorisation of Smoke Concentrate 809045 \(SF-003\) as a smoke flavouring Primary Product](#). EFSA Journal, 21(11): 8365.

EFSA (2023c) [Scientific opinion on the renewal of the authorisation of SmokEz C10 \(SF005\) as a smoke flavouring Primary Product](#). EFSA Journal, 21(11): 8367.

EFSA (2023d) [Scientific opinion on the renewal of the authorisation of SmokEz Enviro23 \(SF006\) as a smoke flavouring Primary Product](#). EFSA Journal, 21(11): 8368.

Regulation [1334/2008](#) on flavourings and certain food ingredients with flavouring properties for use in and on foods

Regulation [872/2012](#) adopting the list of flavouring substances provided for by Regulation 2232/96

Sources

[Draft](#) Regulation as regards the removal of the flavouring substance Benzene-1,2-diol (FL No. 04.029) from the Union list

[Draft Annex](#)

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