Maximum levels of inorganic arsenic in fish and seafood

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EU adopts maximum levels of inorganic arsenic in fish and seafood

Commission Regulation (EU) 2025/1891 of 17 September 2025 amending Regulation (EU) 2023/915 as regards maximum levels of inorganic arsenic in fish and other seafood

Update

The European Commission has adopted maximum levels for inorganic arsenic in fish and certain other seafood.

Impacted products

Fish, seafood

What is changing?

The European Union (EU) has adopted maximum levels for inorganic arsenic in certain fish, crustaceans, bivalves, and cephalopods. The maximum levels are shown in Table 1. This amends Regulation 2023/915.

Why?

The European Food Safety Authority has updated its earlier risk assessment of chronic dietary exposure to inorganic arsenic in food (EFSA 2021, 2024). EFSA concludes that the current exposure to inorganic arsenic continues to raise health concerns for consumers. The consumption of fish and certain other seafoods contribute to that exposure. EFSA recommends maximum levels of inorganic arsenic for those products.

Timeline

The Regulation enters into force on **7 October 2025**.

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What are the major implications for exporting countries?

Suppliers of fish and certain other seafood to the EU market will need to add arsenic to the list of contaminants subject to analysis, to ensure compliance with new maximum levels.

Recommended Actions

Exporters should review existing levels of arsenic in fish and seafood intended for the EU market and, if levels exceed the EU's proposed limits, seek to identify and isolate sources of contamination. Information on recommended methods and performance criteria for analysis of arsenic in foodstuffs can be found in Regulation 2016/582.

Background

Arsenic is present at low concentrations in rocks, soil, and natural groundwater. Human activity, including mining and burning of fossil fuels, and the use of fertilisers and pesticides containing arsenic, has contributed to increasing levels of arsenic in the environment. Humans are mostly exposed to arsenic through food and drinking water.

Inorganic arsenic is associated with lung, bladder, and skin cancers. EFSA (2021) assessed the chronic dietary exposure of the European population to inorganic arsenic, and confirmed that terrestrial foods – particularly rice, rice-based products, grains and grain-based products, and drinking water – remain the main contributors to exposure (see Maximum levels of arsenic in certain foods). It also identified fish and other seafood as sources of exposure for the adult population in certain countries.

Resources

EFSA (2021) Chronic dietary exposure to inorganic arsenic. EFSA Journal, 19(1): 638.

EFSA (2024) Update of the risk assessment of inorganic arsenic in food. EFSA Journal, 22(1): e8488.

Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/915 on maximum levels for certain contaminants in food

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Sources

Commission Regulation (EU) 2025/1891 as regards maximum levels of inorganic arsenic in fish and other seafood

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Tables & Figures

Table 1
Maximum levels of arsenic (inorganic) in certain foods

Foods	Maximum level (mg/kg wet weight)
Fish[1]	
Anglerfish, monkfish (*Lophius* spp.) Giant stargazer (*Kathetostoma giganteum*) Flatfishes (*Pleuronectiformes* spp.) Haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*) Herring (*Clupea* spp.) Rays (*Rajidae*) Shark (all species)	0.50
Crustaceans[2]	
Crabs and crab-like crustaceans (*Brachyura* and *Anomura*)[3] Prawns and shrimps (all species)	0.10
Langoustines (*Nephrops norvegicus*) Rock lobsters (*Jasus* spp.)	1.5
Other crustaceans	0.20
Molluscs	
Scallops[4]	0.10
Other bivalve molluscs	0.50
Cephalopods	0.050

1. Applies to muscle meat or whole fish, if intended to be eaten whole.
2. Muscle meat from appendages and abdomen (cephalothorax excluded).
3. Muscle meat from appendages only.
4. For *Pecten maximus*, adductor muscle and gonad only.

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Source: based on Annex to Regulation 2025/1891

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