



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Food and feed safety, innovation
Food processing technologies and novel foods

Brussels,
SANTE.DDG2.E2. [REDACTED] 2019) 4166952

Dear [REDACTED],

Subject: French measure suspending E171 (titanium dioxide) in foodstuffs

Thank you for the letter of 8 May 2019 concerning the French Order (ECOC1911549A) of 17 April 2019 suspending the placing on the market of foodstuffs containing the food additive titanium dioxide (E 171), which was notified to the European Commission on 26 April 2019.

We take note of the concerns you express about this measure, in particular about its risk assessment/food safety basis, and the potential impact it would have on the internal market. We also knowledge the efforts TDMA is making to generate new technical and scientific data on titanium dioxide used as a food additive (E 171) to address uncertainties/data gaps for E 171 identified by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The European Commission takes the safety of food consumed by European citizens very seriously. Therefore, the Commission is closely following any new scientific information on the safety of titanium dioxide as a food additive (E 171), with the support of EFSA, to make sure that this substance meets the safety requirements laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008.

Consequently, upon the receipt of a notification of the French Order, the Commission requested EFSA to provide urgent scientific and technical assistance regarding a new opinion of the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES) on the risks associated with ingesting the food additive E171, dated 12 April 2019, which serves as the basis for the French emergency measure.

On 13 May 2019 EFSA issued a statement indicating that the ANSES opinion does not identify any major new findings that would overrule the conclusions in the 2016 and 2018 EFSA opinions on the safety of titanium dioxide as a food additive (E 171). Those two previous EFSA opinions had concluded that current exposure to titanium dioxide from its food additive use would not be of safety concern.

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With respect to the French Order suspending the placing on the market of foodstuffs containing the food additive titanium dioxide (E 171), the Commission organised an extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (Section Novel Food and Toxicological Safety of the Food Chain) on 13 May 2019, to exchange views on that measure. In that meeting, both ANSES and EFSA presented their latest assessments of the safety of titanium dioxide as a food additive (E 171). The eighteen Member States which took the floor highlighted the importance of keeping harmonised rules for food additives in the Union and therefore the relevance of reaching a common position with respect to the French measure on E 171. They also indicated that the advice of EFSA (the risk assessor) on the safety of titanium dioxide as a food additive should serve as a reference.

The input provided by EFSA and the Member States will feed into the reflection concerning the further handling of the French notification by the Commission, in line with Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law and Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 on food additives.

Yours sincerely,

