

## TOO MUCH ACRYLAMIDE IN CHIPS?

**Laboratory tests on 18 brands of potato crisps commercialised in Italy show that EU food products contain alarming levels of the confirmed carcinogenic substance**

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*With the new Regulation on acrylamide applicable in the EU from April 11, 2018, the food industry is still a long way off the new benchmark levels referred to in the legislation. Recent laboratory tests conducted by «il Salvagente», an Italian consumer magazine and member of the NGO SAFE – Safe Food Advocacy Europe, triggered a red flag: seven out of the eighteen analysed samples of potato crisps showed the presence of acrylamide clearly above the new benchmark level set by the European Union’s legislation.*

On November 20, 2017 the European Commission issued Regulation (EU) 2017/2158 which establishes **new benchmark levels for the presence of acrylamide in food products and mitigation measures to reduce its concentration, although it does not introduce a legal limit to actively protect consumers against non-complying products**. The Commission Regulation sets out activities to reduce the levels of acrylamide and requires food business operators to apply mitigation measures throughout the whole production process, therefore affecting the selection of raw materials, storage and transport, recipe and process design and information to the end users. Furthermore, **the Regulation lowers the benchmarks levels for the presence of acrylamide in the various categories of products; in the case of potato crisps, the level has been reduced from 1000 µg/kg to 750 µg/kg.**

Potato fried products present one of the highest concentration of acrylamide and are one of the most appealing snacks for children. The Italian consumer magazine «il Salvagente» **recently conducted laboratory tests on 18 samples of potato crisps from different brands and producers**, to assess acrylamide’s level in this category of products. Laboratory results, which were published in the last issue of «il Salvagente», showed that acrylamide found in seven samples of potato crisps commercialised in Italy raises health concerns. In particular, **while the new benchmark level set out by the European Union’s legislation is of 750 micrograms per kilogram of product, acrylamide presence in 7 out of the 18 tested samples was at least above 800 µg/kg. The highest concentration of acrylamide found in a sample was of 1600 µg/kg (Auchan), a value that is more than double the benchmark level**, but other concerning results included 1300 µg/kg (Lidl), 1200 µg/kg (Amica Chips), 1000 µg/kg (Pam), 950 µg/kg (San Carlo Classica), 990 µg/kg (Coop) and 800 µg/kg (Amica Chips Eldorada). When dwelling on these numbers, **it is concerning to see that, three months before the Regulation becomes applicable in the European Union, the food industry is so far from keeping acrylamide below the benchmark levels set out by EU law**. Indeed, without a maximum legal limit, products containing acrylamide above the thresholds set in the Regulation are exempt from serious consequences and their products cannot be withdrawn from the market.

**According to Floriana Cimmarusti, Secretary General at SAFE – Safe Food Advocacy Europe: «The EU needs to introduce maximum levels of contaminants in food because relying on benchmarks does not protect the health of consumers.** As stated in whereas (15) of the new Regulation, following the entry into force of the Regulation **the Commission “should consider setting maximum levels for acrylamide in certain foods”**. Therefore, as the legislation will be applicable from April 11, we look forward to seeing the Commission working on this and hope that the introduction of maximum levels will firstly apply to baby foods». According to SAFE’s Secretary General: «The Regulation is a step forward, as it goes beyond the voluntary approach that prevailed until now and has proved to be completely ineffective. Yet, faced with the current exposure levels, we could have benefit from more determination: **setting a maximum level to reduce acrylamide in some products, starting with baby foods, would have been a change of pace in dealing with a food contaminant which continues to threaten consumer health**».

Editorial staff at «il Salvagente» explained that: **«After several years of negotiations, the goal of effectively reducing the presence of acrylamide in food products has not been achieved.** This creates an alibi for companies – which consumers struggle to understand – and an obstacle to food safety, since **in the absence of a legal limit these products cannot be recalled from the market**».

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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### **About SAFE – Safe Food Advocacy Europe**

SAFE is a non-profit independent organisation based in Brussels whose main objective is to ensure that consumers' health and concerns remain at the core of the EU's food legislation. SAFE monitors the EU food legislation process and cooperates with EU legislators and its stakeholders to draft comprehensive food regulations. For more information please visit the website: <https://safefoodadvocacy.eu>

### **About Il Salvagente**

Il Salvagente is a consumer Italian magazine specialised in laboratory tests to detect frauds against consumer. You can request the original materials of the investigation by contacting the editors. For more information please visit the website: <https://ilsalvagente.it> or phone the editorial staff: +39 06 915 012 20.