

Commission seeks to advance with binding acrylamide targets

-- By Simon Marks

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The European Commission will begin talks on setting maximum binding levels on the amount of acrylamide allowed in food after adopting non-binding rules in June.

Rules on how to control acrylamide — a carcinogenic contaminant found in popular food items such as breakfast cereal, potato chips and bread when starchy ingredients are cooked above 120°C — have been in the works for months with food processors arguing for a self-regulatory approach to bring down acrylamide levels and consumer groups pushing for binding rules.

Frans Verstraete, the European Commission's most senior official on the dossier, said today that EU countries will vote by June 19 on new non-binding rules placing more stringent controls on the amount of acrylamide allowed in food. The vote will take place inside the Standing Committee for Novel Food and Toxicological Safety of the Food Chain.

Talks on binding rules will start "after the first regulatory measure has been adopted," Verstraete said, declining to reveal how long it could take for a concrete proposal to appear.

Verstraete also confirmed a [previous POLITICO report](#) that the Commission is set to toughen its rules on acrylamide by lowering the number of micrograms per kilogram of the contaminant that should appear in a host of foods. Instead of using data from between 2009 and 2011 to set target benchmarks the Commission will now use more updated information from 2015 and 2016, Verstraete said.