



14 MEPs in favour of a European ban on titanium dioxide

Brussels, 17/12/2019 (Agence Europe)

A handful of Greens/EFA MEPs are mobilising to ban titanium dioxide (E171) in human food. On Tuesday 17 December, 14 parliamentarians, a majority of them French, called on the new Health Commissioner to speak out in favour of a general ban on the European market.

Titanium dioxide (E171) is a food additive that can contain up to 3.2% nanoparticles per unit weight. It is used in powder form for its colouring (white pigment) and opacifying properties.

This substance is currently not subject to any use limit (maximum level) in Europe, although Regulation 1333/2008 on food additives provides for it to be used in an amount proportional to the colouring objective. In 2016, the European Food Safety Agency concluded that the substance did not pose a significant health risk, but indicated that it did not have sufficient data to make a decision on its effects on the human reproductive system. However, in April 2019, the French government signed an order to ban it on the French market as of 1 January 2020, after the French Food Safety Agency (ANSES) had again insisted on the lack of data.

An opportune time

The 14 members of the Greens/EFA group (including a Belgian and a Luxembourger) believe that now is the right time to launch the debate. According to an answer to a parliamentary question dated 22 November, the Commission has already held two exchanges of views with the Member States on the measure taken by France (on 13 May and 26 September). *"The Member States have given their opinion on the extension of the French measure to the whole of the EU and on other alternative risk management measures. On the basis of these opinions, the Commission will consider the next steps"*, says former Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis.

"Ms Kyriakides will present a major European plan next year for the fight against cancer. Why not start now to treat the factors that contribute to the development of cancer by banning this carcinogenic additive?", replied French MEP Michèle Rivasi (Greens/EFA) in the press release. (Original version in French by Sophie Petitjean)