



FEBRUARY 2021

HOTREC Position on Acrylamide

Hotrec
Hospitality Europe

GENERAL REMARKS

HOTREC is the umbrella Association of Hotels, Restaurants and Cafés in Europe. Under usual circumstances we employ more than 12 million people and represent 2 million companies, 90% of them are micro-enterprises. At present stage, the sector is facing an unprecedented challenge due to the COVID-19 crisis. The major goal is survival, saving jobs and companies.

HOTREC takes good note of the upcoming revision of Regulation (EU) [2017/2158](#) of 20 November 2017, on “Establishing mitigation measures and benchmark levels for the reduction of the presence of acrylamide in food”.

Acrylamide is a topic that deserves HOTREC’s highest attention, taking into account its health implications.

We understand that Member States are considering the following during their discussions:

- The review of existing benchmark levels on mitigation measures and benchmark levels for the reduction of the presence of acrylamide in food
- The establishment of new benchmark levels, in particular for certain foods mentioned in [Commission Recommendation](#) (EU) 2019/1888 of 7 November 2019 on the monitoring of the presence of acrylamide in certain foods
- The establishment of maximum levels

We would like to point out that the hospitality sector considers that the current Regulation (EU) 2017/2158 is flexible enough for small restaurants, especially when dealing with French fries and toasted bread. In fact, the mitigation measures in Annex II Part A of the current Regulation are feasible for small restaurants. This is the reason why we hope that **Arts. 2 & 4 of the Regulation, as well as Annex II/Part A should remain unchanged** (even under the possibility that new foodstuffs will be added to Annex II Part A).

Nevertheless, HOTREC is very concerned with:

- The possibility of **setting the existing benchmarks lower**
- The possibility of replacing existing benchmarks by maximum levels
- The addition of unnecessary food categories

A) BENCHMARKS

Currently, there are benchmarks for acrylamide in certain foodstuffs (e.g. French fries, bread). This means that if a foodstuff exceeds the performance indicators, companies are not forbidden to sell the product, but should consider new mitigation measures and apply them. HOTREC fully supports this strategy and the fact that only companies which operate in facilities under direct control and under the instructions of the food business operator that centrally supplies the foodstuffs (Art 2/3 of the Regulation) need to monitor the acrylamide levels. In practice, it means that it makes sense that for instance companies that are able to prepare French fries exactly in the same way, develop tests and monitor the acrylamide levels. We believe the current situation is appropriate and fair for the hospitality sector.

Any change to Articles 2 and 4 of the Regulation would mean that gastronomy businesses (including restaurants and snack points) would **probably need to run tests** and analyse their products. This is, unfortunately, **impossible to handle**, with small resources and budget (90% of the companies in the sector are micro-enterprises), not to mention the difficulties the sector is already facing in times of pandemic (successive lockdowns, travel restrictions, loss of employment, bankruptcies).

In fact, small companies **do not have the necessary expertise** to do the monitoring. Actually, if monitoring would be legally required, an expert would need to be hired, which would have an economic and administrative impact on the companies.

Furthermore, as our sector produces in small scale, running tests and analysing products **would be useless**, because there is a variation in the acrylamide level of products. In fact, in accordance with recital 10 of the Regulation “(...) *there maybe a specific production, geographic or seasonal conditions or products characteristics for which it is not possible to achieve the benchmark levels despite the application of all mitigation measures*”.

It is also to notice that **the production amount** of, for instance, French fries or bread, in small companies is rather **low** – therefore the impact is relatively small.

In addition, if restaurants follow the mitigation measures suggested in Annex II / Part A, **positive results** can be reached in reducing the presence of acrylamide in food.

For all these reasons, HOTREC asks for an **exclusion of gastronomy businesses from maximum Acrylamide levels in foodstuffs**, (or at least an exclusion for gastronomy businesses that have to comply with Annex II Part A of Regulation (EU) 2017/2158 **from monitoring maximum levels**). Any other option would have as a consequence the **infeasibility of serving certain types of food in restaurants**, which would also not go in line with consumer choice; tradition; culture or even the goal of the hospitality sector to provide healthy and diverse choices of food.

B) FOOD CATEGORIES

HOTREC calls on the **proportionality principle**, in case the EU considers widening the scope of the Regulation to new foodstuffs. This would mean more burdens to the micro-enterprises and SME's.

If this is the case, **mitigation measures similar to the ones presented in Annex II/Part A should be applied**.

Nevertheless, **definitions would need to be made clear**. For instance, “Potato and meat meal” and “Potato and cheese meal” may lead to several interpretations, as they are very common ingredients.

We also take the opportunity to highlight that yeast bread (not croissant) and sourdough bread should be excluded from the list of the Regulation, as the total intake of Acrylamide from these products is minimal due to the relatively high-water content of the bread.

We hope that the European Commission, Member States and the European Parliament can take our arguments into account.