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Explanatory meeting on the EU acquis

Ionisation treatment of food

These slides accompany the explanation of the acquis to Albania and North Macedonia and can only be used for that purpose. Their content is subject to further development of the acquis and interpretation by the Court of Justice of the European Union

DG SANTE G4

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Health and Food Safety

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Ionisation treatment of foods and food ingredients

- Treatment of foodstuffs with ionising radiation of is the treatment by a certain type of radiant energy known as ionising radiation.
- Ionising radiation is used:
  - For sanitary and phytosanitary purposes to kill bacteria and to eliminate organisms harmful to plant or plant products such as insects and other pests.

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Ionisation treatment of foods and food ingredients

- Ionising radiation is used:
  - To delay fruit ripening, to stop vegetables (such as onions and potatoes) from sprouting or germination
  - It cannot replace proper food handling and irradiated foods still require appropriate refrigeration and to be cooked prior to consumption when necessary.

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Legal framework

- **Directives 1999/2/EC** (framework Directive) and **1999/3/EC** (implementing Directive) set out the legal framework to improve the free movement of irradiated foodstuffs within the single market
- Currently only one category of foodstuffs is authorised for irradiation at EU level:

  Dried aromatic herbs, spices and vegetable seasoning

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Legal framework

- National authorisations for other foodstuffs thus exist in **seven** Member States (BE, CZ, FR, IT, NL, PL, UK) while other Member States may restrict or ban irradiated foodstuffs because they are not in the EU list.
- Although existing authorisations in certain Member States allow the irradiation of a number of foods and food ingredients, only few are irradiated in practice.

List of Member States' authorisations of food and food ingredients which may be treated with ionising radiation							
	Authorised at the given maximum overall average absorbed radiation dose (kGy)						
	BE	CZ	FR	IT	NL	PL	UK
Deep frozen aromatic herbs	10	10	10				
Potatoes	0,15	0,2		0,15		0,1	0,2
Yams		0,2					0,2
Onions	0,15	0,2	0,075	0,15		0,06	0,2
Garlic	0,15	0,2	0,075	0,15		0,15	0,2
Shallots	0,15	0,2	0,075				0,2
Vegetables, incl. pulses	1	1					1
Pulses		1			1		
Fruit (incl. fungi, tomato, rhubarb)	2	2					2
Strawberries	2	2					
Dried vegetables and fruits	1	1	1		1		
Cereals	1	1					1
Dried fruit		1					
Flakes and germs of cereals for milk products	10	10	10				
Flakes from cereals		1			1		
Rice flour	4	4	4				
Gum arabic	3	3	3		3		
Chicken meat		7			7		
Poultry	5	5	5				
Poultry (domestic fowls, geese, ducks, guinea fowls, pigeons, quails, and turkeys)	7	7					7
Mechanically recovered poultry meat	5	5	5				
Offal of poultry	5	5	5				
Frozen frog legs	5	5	5		5		
Dehydrated blood, plasma, coagulates	10	10	10				
Fish and shellfish (incl. eels, crustaceans and molluscs)	3	3					3
Frozen peeled or decapitated shrimps	5	5	5				
Shrimps					3		
Egg white	3	3	3		3		
Casein, caseinates	6	6	6				

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State of play

- The commercial application of irradiation is growing worldwide in particular in the Asia-Pacific region (especially in China) and the Americas
- Globally the volume of agricultural and food products currently irradiated represents a minimum of 700,000 tons per year, of which only 1% is treated in the EU.
- However the rapid increase of food irradiation (particularly in China and some other Asian countries) since 2010 suggests that the true total is currently around 1 million tonnes per annum, worldwide.

State of play

- An average 6,500 tons of foodstuffs are irradiated each year in the EU since 2010
- The quantity decreased almost 43.4% from 2010 to 2017
- Data from 2016-2017 shows that this comprises mainly frogs' legs (57%), dried aromatic herbs, spices and vegetable seasoning (21%)

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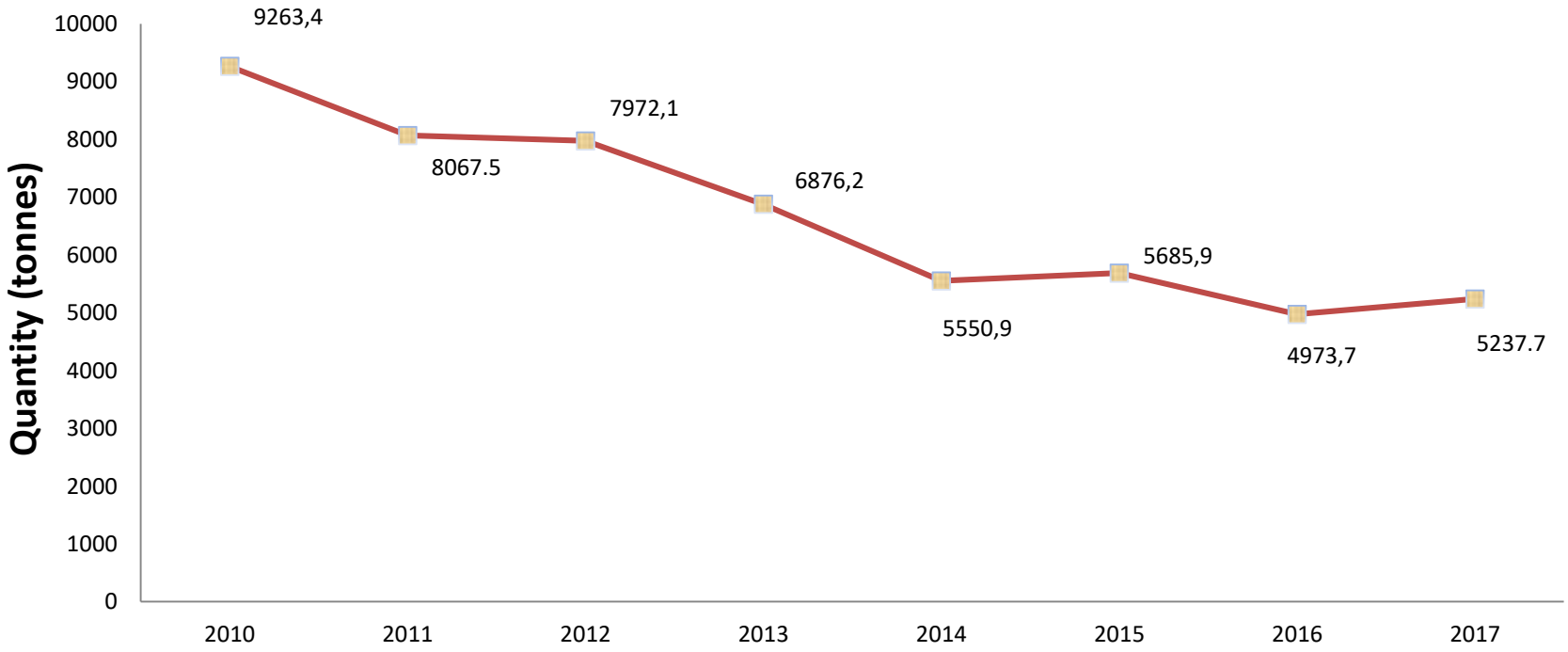
Quantities of foodstuffs treated by ionising radiation in approved irradiation establishments within the European Union since 2010



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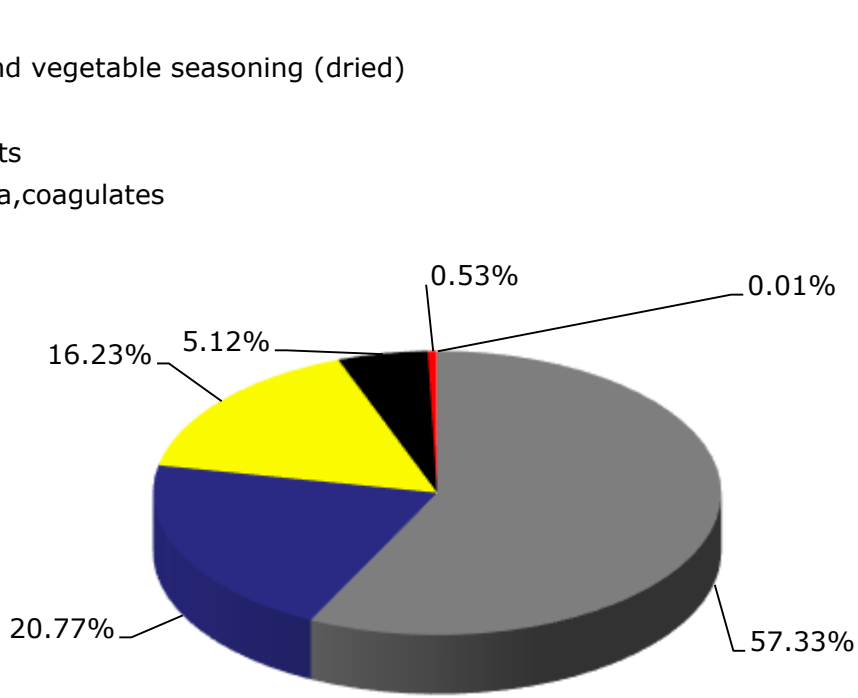
Distribution by category of irradiated foodstuffs in the EU in 2016-2017



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State of play

- The development of an internal market is impeded by regulatory differences between Member States
- Irradiation technology is not well known or understood among the general public
- Public perception is highly negative

List of Member States' approved irradiation facilities

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According to article 7(3) of Directive 1999/2/EC

"Each Member State shall forward to the Commission:
- the names, addresses and reference numbers of the irradiation facilities which it has approved, the text of the approval document, and any decision suspending or withdrawing approval. (…)"

C 37/6 EN Official Journal of the European Union 30.1.2019

NOTICES FROM MEMBER STATES

List of approved facilities for the treatment of foods and food ingredients with ionising radiation in the Member States

(According to Article 7(4) of Directive 1999/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the approximation of the laws of the Member States concerning foods and food ingredients treated with ionising radiation ([1]))

(This text cancels and replaces the text published in the Official Journal of the European Union C 405 of 4 November 2016, p. 6)

(2019/C 37/03)

Member State	Approved irradiation facilities	
	Source, Reference No, Name, Address	Further details of approval

According to article 7(4) of Directive 1999/2/EC

On the basis of the data supplied in accordance with paragraph 3, the Commission shall publish in the Official Journal of the European Communities: - the details of the facilities as well as any changes in their status (…)

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Approved facilities in third countries

According to article 9 of Directive 1999/2/EC

" A foodstuff treated with ionising radiation may not be imported from a third country unless it was treated in an irradiation facility approved by the Community.

Commission experts inspect the irradiation facilities in order to check whether they comply with the requirements of Directive 1999/2/EC.

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Approved facilities in third countries

According to article 9 of Directive 1999/2/EC

Commission shall publish that list of approved facilities and any amendments thereto in the Official Journal of the European Communities. "

24.5.2012 EN Official Journal of the European Union L 134/29

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 21 May 2012

amending Decision 2002/840/EC adopting the list of approved facilities in third countries for the irradiation of foods

(notified under document C(2012) 3179)

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2012/277/EU)

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Better Regulation Policy

European Commission through its better regulation policy is committed to regularly assess the existing EU legislation notably to check whether:

- Its intended objectives have been achieved,
- Such objectives remain fit for purpose,
- A future legislation that meets better the policy goals at minimum cost and deliver maximum benefits to citizens, businesses and workers while avoiding all unnecessary regulatory burdens should be considered.

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Evaluation of legislation related to ionisation treatment of food and food ingredients

- The evaluation of the legislation on food ionisation takes place within that framework.
- It will consider past and current performance and provide an assessment through five different criteria:

➢ Relevance,

➢ Effectiveness,

➢ Efficiency,

➢ EU-added value and

➢ Coherence

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Study to support the evaluation of legislation related to ionisation treatment of food and food ingredients

- An study is performed by an external contractor
- Input into the evaluation
- It will perform an analysis of EU market covering the following topics:

➢ The current state of play of irradiated foodstuffs on the market

➢ The main reasons for the continuous decline of irradiated foodstuffs on the EU market

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Study to support the evaluation of legislation related to ionisation treatment of food and food ingredients

- The study will support the Commission services providing with an independent, evidence-based study to help examine the series of evaluation questions
- Will inform the Commission in its decision-making to decide the possible future actions in the light of the experience gained and technical progress made during the implementation of the current EU legislation
- The contractor invites stakeholders to contribute to the study

Time line

- Study launched in September 2018
- A first workshop was held in November 2018
- A second workshop will be held in January 2020
- Reflection by stakeholders on the final findings
- Study will be completed in March 2020

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Thank you

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