

## **Outcome of the discussions at the Standing Committee on 18 November 2019 as regards the findings of mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons in infant formula and follow-on formula**

### **Background**

Following the [findings by Foodwatch](#) of the presence of mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) in infant formula and follow-on formula and the request from a Member State to have a harmonised EU risk management approach in relation to these findings, the Commission services requested the relevant competent authorities to sample the batches of infant formula which have been found to contain MOAH and to perform investigations on the source of contamination and to report the outcome of these controls and investigations to the Commission and to EFSA.

The European Commission has asked EFSA to carry out a rapid risk assessment on the risks for public health related to the presence of mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) in infant formula and follow-on formula, taking into account the analytical results received.

### **Outcome of the discussion at the Standing Committee**

At the meeting of the Standing Committee, [the outcome of the Rapid Risk Assessment](#) was presented by EFSA and the follow-up to outcome of the Rapid Risk Assessment extensively discussed.

EFSA concluded, in the absence of any additional information on the presence of 3-7 ring polycyclic aromatic compounds (3-7 PAC), the detection of MOAH in food should be considered of potential concern for human health.

EFSA recommended that analytical methods to identify 3-7 PAC should be routinely applied when MOAH are detected in food. The evaluation of the analysis chromatograms related to the monitoring of MOH in food is important for risk assessment purposes. Such chromatograms should therefore be made available upon request of risk assessors.

The Committee acknowledged that even when the Joint Research Centre (JRC) "[Guidance on sampling, analysis and data reporting for the monitoring of mineral oil hydrocarbons in food and food contact materials](#)" is applied, as the JRC Guideline is not a Standard Operating Procedure for MOAH analysis in a particular matrix (type of food), only analytical results obtained by applying equivalent analytical procedures for the whole analytical process (including sample preparation) can be compared.

Therefore, the JRC shall organise, on request of and in co-operation with DG Health and Food Safety, on 5 December 2019 a workshop on the determination of MOAH in infant formula, at which all interested parties shall be invited to participate. The workshop is organised to ensure a further harmonisation of the procedure for the determination of MOAH in infant formula (identification and quantification of MOAH in such samples, including sample preparation, all other analytical steps and signal/data treatment) which should result in obtaining comparable results and address the uncertainties as regards the characterisation of the MOAH fraction as highlighted in the EFSA Rapid Risk Assessment.

It is appropriate and important that laboratories (official and commercial) apply the JRC guidance on sampling, analysis and data reporting and in addition the conclusions of the abovementioned workshop on 5 December 2019, when analysing MOAH in infant formula and follow-on formula (and in food in general).

**The Committee agreed to the following conclusions:**

Member States, food business operators, consumer organisations, NGO's and other interested parties are requested to continue to provide to EFSA occurrence data on the presence of MOAH in infant formula, sampled, analysed and reported in accordance with the abovementioned JRC guidance on sampling, analysis and data reporting and the conclusions of the workshop on 5 December 2019.

As soon as sufficient occurrence data on the presence of MOAH in infant formula are provided to EFSA, in accordance with the JRC guidance on sampling and analysis and the conclusions of the workshop on 5 December 2019, EFSA shall be requested to update without delay the Rapid Risk Assessment on the possible risk for public health due to the contamination of infant formula and follow-on formula by mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH).

Appropriate harmonised risk management measures as regards the presence of MOAH in infant formula and follow-on formula shall be discussed and agreed in the Standing Committee upon availability of EFSA's updated Rapid Risk Assessment.

**Given the current uncertainties related to the analysis of MOAH in infant formula and consequently the uncertainties as regards the potential risk for public health, the Committee agreed that for the time being no action is to be taken as regards withdrawal or recall of infant formula and follow-on formula following findings of MOAH until harmonised risk management measures are agreed when EFSA's updated Rapid Risk Assessment is available.**