Legal framework for cafés

Obligations under the European Union law, status 24 October 2026

Before you start

This document is a template, not legal advice or an official approval. It is based on EU law as of 24 October 2026: Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 and Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011. National rules are not covered (see the notice below).

This template covers only the EU framework that applies in every Member State. National rules of your country (registration with the food authority, temperature limits, the form of allergen information, health certificates, VAT, cash registers, employment and lease contracts) are not covered. Check them with your local food authority before you use the template.

Main legislation

- Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs – Article 5 (procedures based on HACCP principles), Article 6(2) (notify each establishment to the competent authority for registration), Annex II (premises, Chapter I; equipment and containers used for allergens must be cleaned before use for food not containing them, Chapter IX point 9; training, Chapter XII; food safety culture appropriate to the nature and size of the business, Chapter XIa, added by Regulation (EU) 2021/382). Consolidated text: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2004/852/2021-03-24
- Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 – Article 18 (traceability: be able to identify every supplier and every business you supply), Article 19 (withdraw unsafe food and inform the authorities).
- Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 – Article 9(1)(c) and Article 44(1)(a): allergen information is mandatory also for non-prepacked food and mass caterers; Article 44(2) lets each Member State set the form; Annex II lists the 14 allergens.

Registration

Notify each establishment to the competent food authority, in the manner it requires, with a view to registration (Article 6(2) of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004); national law usually requires this before you start trading.

Staff health and training

Food handlers must be supervised and instructed or trained in food hygiene (Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, Annex II, Chapter XII). National rules on medical certificates differ.

Temperatures

What	Rule	Source
Temperatures	set your own critical limits in the HACCP plan; the cold chain must not be interrupted (Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, Annex II, Chapter IX); national limits may apply	no national rule covered

Allergen information

Allergen information for food served in a café is mandatory (Article 44(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011). The form (written list, numbers on the menu, information on request) is set by national law under Article 44(2); until you have checked it, provide the information in writing before the order.