



CEPE Position on the proposed harmonized classification of talc

February 2026

Summary:

A harmonized classification for talc (CAS 14807-96-6) as a Carcinogen Category 1B (H350 - May cause cancer) substance would have considerable negative consequences for the paints, coatings, printing inks and artists' colours industries. Talc is widely used in these products as a functional filler, providing several key performance benefits. It is far from easy to substitute as no drop-in alternatives exist. We ask the authorities to take the latest Eurotalc studies and arguments into full consideration during their deliberations on talc during the CLH process. We also request that the latest discussions on how to address PSLTs in EU chemicals legislation (ref. Particle Platform workshop) are included in the discussions as we understand and believe this topic to be very relevant to the toxicological assessment of both talc and potential alternatives.

Eurotalc has submitted a new assessment of epidemiological data questioning the conclusion of RAC regarding ovarian cancer. It is essential that the decision to classify talc as a Carcinogen Category 1B substance is based on robust scientific evidence and that all elements, including the latest studies provided by Eurotalc are taken into consideration. We respectfully request the EU Commission and ECHA to fully review the proposed classification considering this new data.

A Carcinogen Category 1B classification for talc means in practice that our industries must substitute it. REACH Annex XVII entry 28 bans the sale of products for supply to the general public containing > 0.1% talc. For industrial and professional uses, our customers would not accept a paint or printing ink classified as a category 1 CMR mixture, so again substitution will be necessary.

Talc is used in almost all CEPE sectors: decorative, protective, aerospace, marine, powder, automotive, general industrial, vehicle refinish, artists' colours. Hundreds of thousands of formulations are impacted, and tens of thousands of customers will be required to qualify talc-free versions of our members' products. Replacing it would be

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very challenging, expensive, and take time. This applies to the whole market, including industrial SMEs (both paint and ink manufacturers and their customers manufacturing articles). These costs will be extremely difficult for EU companies to bear in the current economic climate.

In addition, our members need to be sure that they avoid any regrettable substitutions for talc if they are to substitute it. Nearly all the candidate alternative substances are qualified as PSLTs (Poorly Soluble Low Toxicity Particles), from current understanding of this terminology. The ongoing PSLT discussions make it difficult to select suitable alternatives, as some candidate alternatives may equally face future scrutiny and result in similar CLH classifications in the mid-term. We therefore ask the EU Commission to address the PSLT matter concurrently with the talc harmonized classification decision to ensure that our industries do not engage in regrettable substitutions.

CEPE, The European Council of the Paint, Printing Ink, and Artist's Colours Industry represents the interests of Paint, Printing Ink, and Artist's Colours manufacturers in Europe. As the voice of the sector to the European Union, we discuss with all stakeholders to improve the framework conditions in Europe. We support policy making based on science that leads to a more competitive, healthier, and sustainable future.