

**CEPE explanatory summary on the  
CEPE Guidance on labelling decorative paint with skin sensitizing biocides**

Brussels, 4 November 2014

CEPE represents the interest of the coating and ink industry in Europe. It is committed to the sustainable use of its products and regularly develops guidance documents for its members. A new guidance has been released to specifically address the labelling of biocide skin sensitizing substances. In particular, CEPE has taken the decision to communicate on the presence of the in-can preservative MIT (methylisothiazolinone) in decorative products, below the current legal requirements, in order to allow informed choice by consumers who have been sensitized to that substance.

Nowadays most decorative paints are water based and hence require in-can preservation against bacteria, yeasts and fungi. MIT is an excellent in-can preservative, it is used in combination with other substances to provide the broad spectrum of efficacy needed and there is no easy alternative left. MIT has been used in cosmetics, which has caused a significant increase of allergy cases in the past years, and some cases have been subsequently also reported with our products. This use in cosmetics is questioned and under revision. However, once people have been sensitized a first time to an allergen present in cosmetics, they can develop allergic reactions from other products at lower concentrations.

There is currently no legal requirement to communicate on its presence in paint below 100 ppm (level in effect from June 2015). The EU biocide legislation is reviewing the risks posed by in-can preservatives and MIT will also have to be officially classified in the future. Until this is finalized, CEPE made the decision that a product stewardship action is necessary to inform consumer about its presence below 100 ppm. Any presence below 15 ppm of MIT might not be mentioned, depending on manufacturers' policies. A CEPE Guidance is available for download on the CEPE Website at [www.cepe.org: publications/ coating sectors documents/decorative coatings](http://www.cepe.org: publications/ coating sectors documents/decorative coatings).

CEPE hopes that such voluntary product stewardship measure will prevent new cases of allergies by allowing sensitized consumers to make an informed choice.