



Downstream Users of Chemicals Co-ordination group

Impact Assessment Study on the simplification of the labelling requirements for chemicals and the use of e-labelling

Additional DUCC comments

The Downstream User of Chemicals Coordination Group (DUCC), representing 11 European associations whose member companies use chemicals to formulate mixtures, would like to provide some additional comments following our submission on the targeted consultation on the Impact Assessment Study on the simplification of the labelling requirements for chemicals and the use of e-labelling.

Our first comment is that DUCC experts, upon reading the questionnaire, found it focussed mainly on products sold to the general public whereas the introduction to the questionnaire suggested that all products (general public, professionals and industrials) were in the scope of the consultation. We would like to confirm that labelling simplification, and digital labelling should be confirmed as an option for all products.

The current CLP physical labels are often difficult to understand due to inclusion of multiple statements and instructions. It is essential that this initiative leads to a clear improvement in and simplification of physical labels.

DUCC represents a wide range of downstream user industries, ranging from cosmetics and detergents to aerosols, paints, inks, toners, pressroom chemicals, adhesives and sealants, construction chemicals, fragrances, disinfectants, lubricants, crop protection, and chemical distributors industries. We support the comments that have been made by our members (e.g. A.I.S.E.) and raise some other points of interest and considerations for VVA for specific sectors.

Considerations for specific cases:

Lubricants:

Use of lubricants is driven by specification of the car manual, not necessary by ingredients. Therefore complex ingredient names could be listed on-line. Products such as a screen washer liquids and coolants could benefit from the simplification and digitalisation. Quite often these products are at hand for consumers to refill the reservoirs in the car. Similarly, products with smaller pack-sizes.

Distributors:

The biggest issue faced by distributors is **label space**.

In Distribution, the strength of a company lies in merging a lot of inbound streams into central warehouses and then supplying them across Europe. Products will be labelled by suppliers of products in a minimum number of languages – and distributors need to print add-on labels to ensure the appropriate languages are printed. The smaller the pack the more this becomes an issue.



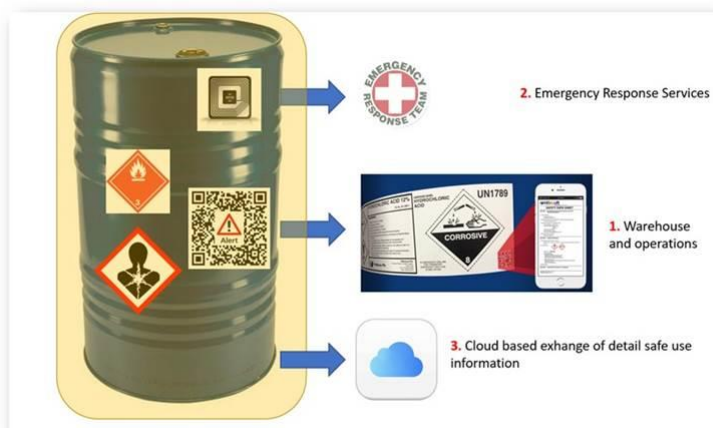
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In a more professional setting, the most important reason for the label is to ensure the end user is aware of the risks while handling the product. Most times, handlers of products will look at the pictograms and the Environment Health & Safety teams will have used the information from the Safety Data Sheets to create and convey correct safe use instructions. During transport and storage activities, handlers will look at the pictograms and if the Hazard and Precautionary Statements are needed, they will not refer to the label, but will look at the Safety Data Sheet.

In distribution settings, in case of an accident or incident, emergency response services will look at the label to understand what is in the package. This may be complicated if there are many languages on pack and a lot of text.

In this specific setting, there may be options for the implementation of RFID-chips. This will allow emergency responders to be able to identify what is in the cans, or in a transport vehicle or even inside a container from a safer distance. This requires a standard to be created which is widely implemented within the EU to ensure emergency responders can read out the chips.

More generally related to supply chain communication. A lot of paper and/or PDF files are still being sent back and forth, due to the lengthy documentation industry must provide. This information needs to be typed over and over again, also due to various software used. Alternatives, and digital solutions could solve this problem. Industry would benefit from having some flexibility and option to send data packages of safe use information via digital means.



Effective use of space

We therefore suggest exploring the possibility of having minimum amount of information on the label (pictograms) with the addition of a tool (e.g. QR code, digital watermarking) that brings the person directly to the Safety Data Sheet or any other cloud based storage area with classification and safe use information.

In distributors sectors, companies have implemented some digital labelling practices. However, we would support for rules to be established to indicate what could be presented online. DUCC agrees that a user should be directed straight to label information without having to negotiate any marketing or signing-up before reaching this.



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Managing Digital / e-labels

There are four important aspects in this regard:

- The use of e-labelling must be and must remain voluntary and not become obligatory
- The database of information / infrastructure used must be wholly controlled and managed by the manufacturers – no third parties or authorities should be involved
- The format of e-labels should be similar for similar industry sectors
- Choice of digital tool is important. QR codes are the obvious first choice, but other tools should be considered (e.g. digital watermarking)

Costs

We are unable to accurately estimate the costs associated with setting up a digital e-labelling option. Once set up and automated then the costs to maintain would be expected to be minimal. We would expect this to help alleviate the current costs to our members for re-labelling products. One of our members advised that the annual cost for re-labelling alone last year was in the region of EUR 15 million, so this is not insignificant.

It is important to note that extending labelling into the digital world should not be seen as an invitation, opportunity or excuse to increase the amount of information contained on the label. The information requirements should remain strictly the same - those required to comply with CLP, REACH etc. legislation.

Policy Options

DUCG supports the policy options which provide the greatest flexibility and potentially the easiest way towards physical label simplification, in other words options 4, with support for option 5 as well for small pack sizes. The potential benefits to e-labelling should be fully available and utilized, especially in terms of time needed to relabel and reclassify products due to hazard reclassification.



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About DUCC

DUCC is a joint platform of **11 European associations** whose member companies use chemicals to **formulate mixtures** (as finished or intermediary products) for professional and industrial users, as well as for consumers.

DUCC focuses on the downstream users' needs, rights, duties and specificities under **REACH** and **CLP**.

DUCC's membership represents several important industry sectors, ranging from cosmetics and detergents to aerosols, paints, inks, toners, pressroom chemicals, adhesives and sealants, construction chemicals, fragrances, disinfectants, lubricants, crop protection, and chemical distributors industries. Altogether, their membership comprises more than **9.000 companies** across the respective sectors in Europe, **the vast majority being SMEs**. The calculated turnover of these companies is more than 215 billion euros in Europe.

For more information on DUCC: www.ducc.eu

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DUCC's public ID number in the **Transparency Register of the European Commission** is: **70941697936-72**