



# **Essential Use Concept and Chemicals Authorisation in the European Union**

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# Essential Use Concept (Commission Communication C/2024/2894)

- The overall aim of the essential use concept is to **facilitate decision-making** and **increase regulatory efficiency** to achieve a fast phase-out of the **most harmful substances** in **non-essential uses** while allowing uses still essential for society and continued availability of products serving human and animal health needs.

# Essential Use Concept

- The concept is a tool to help to determine when a use of a most harmful substance is justified from a societal point of view.

## Essential use concept

A use of a **most harmful substance** is essential for society if the following two criteria are met:

- 1) that use is necessary for health or safety or is critical for the functioning of society,  
**and**
- 2) there are no acceptable alternatives.

## Most harmful substances

A most harmful substance has one or more of the following hazard properties: (examples)

- CMR Cat. 1A or 1B
- Endocrine disruption Cat. 1
- PBT/vPvB

## **Necessary for health or safety**

The use of a most harmful substance is necessary for health or safety if the use and the technical function of the substance in that use are necessary in order to: (examples)

- Prevent, monitor or treat illness
- Manage health crises and emergencies
- Ensure personal safety
- Ensure public safety

# **Critical for the functioning of society**

The use of a most harmful substance is critical for the functioning of society if the use and the technical function of the substance in that use are critical in order to: (examples)

- Manage societal risks and impacts from natural crises and disasters
- Protect and restore the natural environment
- Perform scientific research and development
- Protect cultural heritage

## Acceptable alternatives

Acceptable alternatives are substances, materials, technologies, processes or products, which, from a societal point of view:

- (i) are capable of providing the function and the level of performance that society can accept as sufficiently delivering the expected service; AND
- (ii) are safer (their overall chemical risks to human or animal health and the environment throughout the whole life-cycle are lower in comparison to the most harmful substance).



# Authorisation of chemicals

Industrial chemicals are subject to authorization if identified as Substance of Very High Concern, i.e. they are classified as: (examples and simplified)

- CMR Cat. 1A or 1B
- Endocrine disruptors
- PBT/vPvB

# Authorisation of chemicals

Active substances for use in pesticides are always subject to approval, but cannot be approved if classified as: (examples and simplified)

- CMR Cat. 1A or 1B
- Endocrine disruptor in humans
- PBT/vPvB

unless exposure is negligible (or they are essential – biocides).

**Thank you very much  
for your attention!**