

## Consultative meeting with EuPIA

In its meeting the 19/02, the ECMA Food Safety Committee had an excellent opportunity to discuss a number of issues and developments with the European Ink Manufacturers Association, represented by Mike Simoni (Chairman EuPIA PIFOOD Printing Inks for Food Packaging).

### A summary of the main outcome:

- Although an accurate information exchange in the supply chain is well covered in the EuPIA Guidelines (\*), best practices are not yet adopted by all ink suppliers. An especially difficult area for all supplier categories is the weak information provided on the not listed self-evaluated substances (NLS) and the non-intentionally added substances (NIAS). (See FC update 18/07/2022)

Ink manufacturers are also sometimes not making a clear distinction between the different categories of substances in their statements of composition, leading to the perception no information is provided on the NIAS. Most NIAS are well known to the ink manufacturers.

As indicated in the ECMA supplier questionnaire in the section on inks (See FC update 28/06/2023) the sharing of appropriate information requires separate lists, with the Intentionally used IAS substances, the NLS, the NIAS (impurities and degradation) and the dual use substances which may be present in the food as authorised food additives or food flavourings.

Aside the identity of the substances, carton makers need also to obtain the existing restrictions and the concentrations (or for the NIAS the expected concentrations) in the inks, in order to perform a cost-effective risk assessment by a worst-case calculation (WCC).

(\*) EuPIA Customer Guidance Note for using ink statements of composition when considering compliance of food packaging.

[https://www.eupia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-09-](https://www.eupia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-09-03_EuPIA_Customer_Guidance_Note_for_Using_Statements_of_Composition.pdf)

[03\\_EuPIA\\_Customer\\_Guidance\\_Note\\_for\\_Using\\_Statements\\_of\\_Composition.pdf](https://www.eupia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-09-03_EuPIA_Customer_Guidance_Note_for_Using_Statements_of_Composition.pdf)

EuPIA Guidance for Risk Assessment of Non-Intentionally Added Substances (NIAS) and Non-Evaluated or Non-Listed Substances (NLS) in printing inks for food contact materials.

[https://www.eupia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-05-11-EuPIA\\_NIAS\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.eupia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-05-11-EuPIA_NIAS_Guidance.pdf)



- Ink suppliers can provide the concentration of substances in the delivered ink, but not the concentration in the cured ink film, this is converter controlled. It is nevertheless reasonable to expect - when suppliers are selling inks into the carton sector - tests have been done confirming compliance, in case the inks are used and cured in a correct way. Some ink suppliers are referring in this respect to company tests carried out. As actors in the supply chain, with common interests in food safety, it is important to go beyond avoiding responsibility and to provide support to customers. Carton makers need an active supporting role from their suppliers. If the ink is used in such a way, the manufactured cartons will be compliant.

Ink suppliers can well handle this type of questions. Go and ask!

- The use instructions provided by the ink manufacturer are often covered to a large extent in the technical datasheets. Some individual ink suppliers are prepared to share with customers, for a given ink layer thickness, the maximum area-volume ratio to remain compliant. Is a useful tool. This is business to business communication. Go to your ink supplier and ask.

- PTFE is nearly the only source for PFAS in inks. Only very small residual amounts of the low molecular weight PFOA may be present. PFAS are not necessary in inks, they can be formulated out and replaced by waxes which do not pose regulatory concerns. Carton makers need to have a discussion and if the supplier is indicating, PFAS are still used, the question needs to be, how long it will take to have PFAS out (without a higher cost).

As a rough indication, for the currently delivered inks to carton manufacturers already 85% is PFAS free.

- A survey indicated some time ago for the label market, 75% of the ink manufactures were no longer using BPA containing resins. No accurate data are available for the carton sector.



To be precise it is not about the presence of BPA, it is all about the polymeric resins that are formed using BPA monomers. Under certain conditions, particularly high temperature conditions, the material can depolymerise creating BPA. What carton makers should be asking for is not “BPA free”, but “not containing BPA based polymers” or better “not containing polymers based on BPA and the other bisphenols with a similar toxicological profile.”

- EuPIA did a vast study with Fraunhofer to determine appropriate testing conditions for inks.

(See FC Update 25/01/24)

So far shared from this study, is the confirmation that an accelerated test for 10 days at 40 °C with MPPO is a good approach for 6 months storage at room temperature.

Longer storage times may need a longer testing time at 40°C. (to be continued)

Based on the Fraunhofer study EuPIA will update its Guidance on migration test methods.

- Mineral oil requirements in France. (See FC update 13/05/2022)

For different reasons it is “not possible” to confirm compliance with the MO levels in the French legislation (limits 2025): For printed articles it is not possible to identify the source of the mineral oil, although the legislation is only about the inks. Substances can easily be misidentified as mineral oil. Paraffinic waxes covered by the Plastics Regulation (FCM 95) and low molecular weight components of PE waxes are from a regulatory perspective no mineral oil. With the current detection limits is not feasible to verify the 2025 requirements.

All this means it is not possible to demonstrate compliance via analytical means, but it is possible by a chain of custody approach. Based on the information from suppliers, stating that no mineral oils are present, compliance can be confirmed and this can be communicated further down in the supply chain. On this topic, the Packaging Ink Joint Industry Taskforce (PIJITF) will soon adopt a position.

- In case the currently discussed Unintentional Trace Contaminant (UTC) limits for PCBs in organic pigments would be adopted (See FC update 08/12/2023) it would be catastrophic; it would directly affect 80% of the products the ink industry supplies to carton makers. A balance must be found between consumer and environment safety, without destroying the ink industry.

ECMA is closely following the developments via the PIJITF and a separately created industry platform around the topic.

- Allergens (wheat) in printing powders. (See FC update 25/01/24)

In the discussion different opinions were expressed. From the EuPIA side it was stated, toxicological expertise is needed, to determine at which threshold there is a risk of an allergenic reaction. If the concentration of the allergen is far below the levels which may cause concern, there is no need to communicate. ECMA Committee experts, however, argued, that the market context is different, with customers asking to communicate on traces. Carton makers are also using different materials and to verify “compliance” all sources need to be added up. As shared previously, in the BRC/FSSC schemes, information sharing on any presence is required.

Alternatives for wheat exist, certain printing powders are based on potatoes. (to be continued)

## Review of the EU Food Contact Materials legislation

At the workshop organised by Ernst & Young and DG Sante the 15/03, the 3 different policy options to support the required IT infrastructures for exchanging food safety information in supply chains, were presented: a centralised system with an EU body responsible for the management and decision making and decentralised IT systems with the member states or industry in charge. (See E&Y slide below)

Different criteria were considered and assessed qualitatively to identify the technical impacts related to the implementation and the run of each IT system, and based on the coordination effort, cost efficiency, the efficiency of the data consolidation, and for the run phase, the scalability, the data management and service delivery, Ernst & Young expressed a rather clear preference for option 1.

The Commission seems however in favour of option 3, with the industry in charge. In this set up the databases remain strictly at the companies with however the creation of a kind of central IT access point and a well-defined harmonised format for making information available.

Based on the discussion at the workshop, E&Y will now finalise this report.


From the Commission’s side, a type of policy note was announced for summer on the review of the FCM legislation, while the real legislative work is likely to take place in 2026.



**Introducing the policy options**

The study team was tasked with developing three policy options to support an IT infrastructure for information exchange and verification of compliance

		Governance	
		Centralized	Decentralized
IT	Centralized	<p><b>Policy Option 1</b> A unique EU-level database used by all stakeholders in the FCM supply chain, and managed by an EU entity.</p>	<p><b>Policy Option 2A</b> Decision-making is shared between Member State each of them manages their <b>own database</b>, which are connected to central database at the EU level.</p>
	Decentralized		<p><b>Policy Option 2B</b> Decision-making is shared between Member State each of them manages their <b>own database</b> for the country / FCM activity they oversee, with interoperability between systems.</p> <p><b>Policy Option 3</b> Decision-making is shared between Industries each of them manages their <b>own database</b>.</p>

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**Council of Europe  
Draft Technical Guide on documentation supporting compliance and safety of food contact materials and articles.**

The following documents are available:  
<https://www.edqm.eu/en/food-contact-materials-and-articles>  
 1) Draft text for consultation.  
 2) Comment form.

Aside the publication of the Resolution CM/Res (2020)9 on the safety and quality of materials and articles for contact with food and the Technical Guide on Paper and Board, the Council of Europe has in recent years also been working on the development of guidance related to the declaration of compliance and the required content in the supporting documentation. An ad hoc working group in which ECMA has been participating concluded its work in December 2022. The text has since been discussed in a plenary meeting of the CoE and now the final draft is open for consultation via the EDQM website until the 30/04. In general, the text reflects the information needs converters have. A few specific comments will be prepared in the next FS Com meeting (19/04).

**PTS Conference Paper and Board for Food Contact. (6-7/03)**

The ECMA presentation “Current food safety topics and developed guidelines within the carton sector” is available from the members only section of the ECMA website. (See ECMA Food Contact Network update: March 2024). Also, 2 other previous congress presentations at Smithers and Fresenius are posted. Some slides may be reused at the company level.

