European Committee of Organic Surfactants and their intermediates

28 September 2026

Need for a pragmatic approach towards implementing Regulation (EU) 2026/405, to maintain competitiveness of European surfactants industry

Regulation (EU) 2026/405 on detergents and surfactants will apply from 23 September 2029, introducing new obligations for companies and market actors. CESIO, the European Committee of Organic Surfactants and their Intermediates[1], supports the Regulation's objectives and the work undertaken to modernise the framework, but remains concerned about how the new provisions might be interpreted and applied for B2B surfactants. To ensure proportionate and consistent implementation, CESIO asks that forthcoming guidance clarify two issues in particular: the continued acceptance of suitable evidence for demonstrating surfactant biodegradability, including robust historical data where appropriate; and the practical application of labelling and information obligations to B2B surfactants used as ingredients, which differ from end-user surfactants. Addressing these points in advance would help avoid unnecessary retesting, duplication of information requirements and avoidable administrative costs, whilst maintaining the high environmental standards already required under EU law.

On biodegradability, CESIO would like to highlight the lack of available and necessary testing methods in the new Regulation when compared to Regulation (EC) No 648/2004. Continuity with existing data approaches should be ensured to prevent market disruptions and to avoid unnecessary testing. The internationally recognised ISO 14593:1999 and ISO 10708:1997 methods were previously available under Regulation (EC) No 648/2004, and their removal creates uncertainty for companies that have generated reliable data using these approaches. It is especially critical to accept the ISO Standard 14593:1999 because its correspondent OECD 310 is accepted under REACH and EU ecolabel, as listed on DID list part B. Furthermore, since the Commission previously amended Regulation 648/2004 in 2006 to introduce the ISO 10708 for use with surfactants that are poorly-soluble in water, it is contradictory and not understandable to not allow its use anymore. At the very least, the old results generated with these methods should continue to be accepted, and, as suggested in Annex I, additional methods and literature should be accepted considering also the long history of safe use.

Regarding the interpretation of labelling or information obligations for B2B (vs other) surfactants, any new administrative burdens that could arise from treating surfactants used as ingredients like final products, should be kept to a minimum, in line with preamble (7) of the Regulation (EU) 2026/405 distinguishing B2B from end user surfactants. Surfactants are also used as B2B ingredients in many other non-detergents products and already adhere to other horizontal legislation, such as EU REACH and CLP (see CESIO factsheet). The relevant information already is or can usually be provided through the existing SDS

[1] CESIO (Surfactants Europe) is a sector group of Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council

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and information sheets (without adding new labels for B2B ingredients). CESIO asks that such clarification and guidance should also be included in a future FAQ.

CESIO supports the modernisation of the Detergents Regulation and recognises the efforts made to limit unnecessary administrative burdens and would like to highlight the importance of maintaining a pragmatic and cost-efficient approach to its implementation in Europe. Future implementation should allow for recognition of all suitable assessment methods for determining biodegradability of surfactants, which have a long history of safe use, and also for maintaining the important distinction between B2B and "end-user" surfactants in labelling. These requests would help to ensure that implementation can remain compatible with existing EU legislation and internationally recognised approaches. It would also help to maintain alignment with the guiding principles outlined in preamble (7) of Regulation (EU) 2026/405.

In a spirit of continued cooperation, CESIO requests that the Commission address the following points in a future Q&A document, as was done for Regulation (EC) No 648/2004 (see existing link here and document). CESIO also invites Member States and other relevant actors to help address these concerns via their respective delegations to help ensure a pragmatic approach towards implementing Regulation (EU) 2026/405 .

Additional supporting details and references are provided in **Annex 1.**

About CESIO

CESIO (the European Committee of Organic Surfactants and their Intermediates) is an industry association that represents manufacturers and marketers in the European surfactants industry. CESIO contributes to better understanding of surfactants and the many ways in which they contribute to economic development and quality of life; and addresses specific issues relating to human health and the environment in order to sustain their beneficial contribution to society. Surfactants have a wide range of end-uses including in household detergents, personal care formulations, industrial and institutional washing and cleaning, as well as technical applications in textiles, leather and paper treatment, agrochemicals, the metal, mining and oil industries, and in plastics, lubricants, paints and coatings.

For more information visit our website www.cesio.eu

ANNEX 1 – List of recommended clarifications to be integrated into any legislative guidance

The below list of topics proposes potential solutions which we think would be in the spirit of the Regulation, and we would welcome an opportunity to discuss these issues with the authorities and all impacted stakeholders.

1. **Biodegradability methods for surfactants**

   EU Member States agreed that the placing on the market of surfactants shall be subject to a high environmental standard, taking into consideration their ultimate biodegradability properties, through an exhaustive set of standardised test methods. If a Member State decides to allow new standards, such a measure might be regarded by some economic operators as a barrier to the free movement of goods. To avoid diverging interpretations, we support maintaining flexibility in the selection of biodegradability test methods, reflecting the wide diversity of surfactant chemistries. We therefore strongly recommend maintaining recognition also of EN ISO 14593:1999 and ISO 10708:1997 methods, in order to ensure continuity with existing data approaches and avoid unnecessary retesting. EN ISO 14593:1999 is technically equivalent to OECD 310, an approved test method under REACH. The deletion of these two methods could otherwise create problems, especially for previous tests done according to them and could remove possibilities to test surfactants according to the most suitable method. If it is not possible to reintroduce these ISO methods, then it should at least be possible after entry into force of the new regulation - at a minimum - to use historical data from studies using these test methods.

2. **Biodegradability tests**

   There is a need to provide clarification on the use of Read-Across, such as done under question 3.3 of the current Commission Q&A document.

- The principle of "Read-Across" of data from one substance to a similar substance is already recognised in international risk assessment activities, including the OECD High Production Volume (HPV) Chemicals Programme. Several guidance documents have been developed which provide guidance on the grouping of substances and read-across (ECHA RAAF 2017; OECD 2017).

  This approach allows establishing the properties of individual substances by "reading-across" from the properties of substances on either side in the same homologous series. This means the grouping of substances whose physicochemical, toxicological or eco-toxicological properties are likely to be similar or follow a regular pattern as a result of structural similarity. Therefore, these substances may be considered as a group or "category" of substances. Application of the group concept requires that physicochemical properties, human health effects and environmental effects/fate may be predicted from data for a source substance within the group by interpolation to other substances in the group (Read-Across approach). This avoids the need to test every substance for the same end point.

  The similarities may be based upon:
  1. A common functional group
  2. The common precursors and/or the likelihood of common breakdown products via physical and biological processes, which result in structurally similar chemicals or
  3. A constant pattern in the changing of the potency of the properties across the category.

3. **Use of old tests or literature data for biodegradability**

   Many surfactants have already been registered, so their biodegradability has already been subject to testing. We suggest that it should remain possible to use such data as well as literature data and Ecolabel DID List data for the purpose of compliance with the Detergent Regulation. Also, the use of scientifically reliable and robust historical data obtained for substances that have been present on the market for many years and for which safety is well known should be permitted even if the data was generated before the implementation of GLP requirements as is currently possible under paragraph 30 of the existing regulation. This could avoid the unnecessary repetition of tests on substances whose results are already well known, allowing producers to concentrate on new parameters or aspects to be developed.

4. **Label information for surfactants**

- We suggest that the labelling requirements in ANNEX V, Part A 1., points g, h(i) and h(iii) only apply to end-user surfactants. For B2B surfactants, which can be used in many different sectors beyond detergents, the information is either already available through the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or Informative Sheet or could be specified if needed on the existing sheets.

  For Annex V Part A 1. (g) Product suitable for detergents: The SDS or Informative Sheet already reports this information where appropriate (e.g. point 1.2 of SDS or exposure scenario). If extra assurance is desired, the compliance to the Regulation could either be added here or under point 12.2 of the SDS, next to biodegradability, or in section 15, where the following phrase could be added: "The surfactant(s) contained in this preparation complies(comply) with the biodegradability criteria as laid down in Regulation (EC) 2026/405 on detergents and surfactants. Data to support this assertion are held at the disposal of the competent authorities of the Member States and will be made available to them, at their direct request or at the request of a detergent manufacturer".

  For Annex V Part A 1. (h (i) regarding rules on the content of the detergent or surfactant: The concentration of the surfactant is listed or could be listed under point 3.1 or 3.2 of SDS (or in the technical specification for a not labelled surfactant).

  For Annex V Part A 1. (h (iii)) regarding the listing of preservatives: Preservatives could be enclosed or in SDS point 3.2 or in technical specifications.

  The addition of the above information also on the label does not improve the safe handling of B2B surfactants, but it would only increase administrative burden and confusion, because this kind of information already is or can be made available in the SDS and/or in the technical specification, and because the B2B surfactant can be used in other applications than detergents.

For more supporting information on surfactants in detergents, please see:

- CESIO factsheet on biodegradability of surfactants in detergents
- CESIO factsheet on B2B surfactants