

OVER 800 INDUSTRY LEADERS, HEALTH PRACTITIONERS AND ACADEMICS UNITE AGAINST A BAN ON ETHANOL-BASED PRODUCTS VITAL FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

A.I.S.E. press release

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Broad coalition of signatories warn EU and Member State decision-makers that reclassifying ethanol in biocidal products would undermine Europe's health security, food safety, and economic stability.

842 companies, organisations, associations, and individuals, representing over 20 sectors from healthcare and food and beverage, to pharmaceuticals, transport, agriculture, cosmetics, and energy, have joined forces today to call on EU and national decision-makers to take urgent action to prevent a de facto ban on ethanol-based biocidal products.

[Read the Joint Statement here](#)

Coordinated by A.I.S.E, the European trade association for detergents and maintenance products, the signatories represent all 27 EU Member States and beyond, underlining the widespread concern and pan-European, cross-sector impact of this decision.

Industry and science united in warning

*"A reclassification of ethanol in biocidal products would be disastrous for public health in Europe", said **Florian Vernay, President of A.I.S.E.** "Ethanol-based disinfectants, hand sanitisers and other products are proven safe and effective and used by millions of Europeans every day. Decisions about their future must be based on real use data, not data on abusing alcoholic drinks."*

*"European authorities must fight to protect the availability of ethanol; a de facto ban would have disastrous consequences for public health", said **Alexandra Peters, President of Clean Hospitals.** "Ethanol-based hand sanitisers and disinfectants have been used safely for decades. Furthermore, if we have another pandemic, all local emergency production of alcohol for healthcare is ethanol because it can easily be made from commonly available ingredients. If we have a public health emergency without available ethanol, there will be many additional lives lost because of it."*

*"Alcohol based hand sanitisers are a fundamental, safe, and irreplaceable aspect of hand hygiene in hospital settings, which in turn is the single most important factor for infection prevention", said **Professor Didier Pittet, Former Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Patient Safety and Director of the Infection Control Programme at Geneva University Hospitals.** "If health practitioners in Europe lose access to ethanol-based solutions, the results will be catastrophic: more illnesses and more deaths. Clearly, this must be avoided."*

*“Ethanol-based disinfectants are vital to keeping Europe’s food safe. Every day, producers across the EU depend on ethanol to disinfect equipment, containers, utensils, and surfaces, protecting consumers and preventing contamination”, said **Dirk Jacobs, Director General of FoodDrinkEurope**. “Viable alternatives offering the same level of safety, efficacy, and residue-free performance simply do not exist.”*

Ethanol: a cornerstone of public health and safety

Ethanol is the essential ingredient in hand sanitisers, surface disinfectants, antiseptics and many other biocidal products that keep us all safe. It is indispensable to public health, economic prosperity and industrial resilience across the EU. No alternative substance matches its proven efficacy, safety and availability.

At risk of misclassification

The European Chemicals Agency’s (ECHA) Biocidal Products Committee is currently considering whether to recommend, at its meeting on 26 November 2025, an EU-wide reclassification of ethanol in biocidal products as a Carcinogenic and Reproductive Toxicant (CMR) Category 1A based on data that looks only at oral abuse and overconsumption of alcoholic beverages rather than the use of ethanol-based biocidal products, which are safe.

Such a move would contradict the established guidance and recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as advice from the European Commission, European Centre for Disease Prevention and from international partners, including in the United States.

If implemented, this reclassification would in practice remove ethanol-based products from public use and severely restrict their availability in professional settings under the EU’s Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR). Derogations under the BPR are not the solution as there is no possibility for authorisation for public use, and derogations for professional use would be time limited, granted only on a case-by-case basis by individual EU Member States after a complex risk assessment process. This authorisation process for professional purposes would, along with reducing the availability of life-saving products, impose a significant bureaucratic burden precisely on those who can least bear it, for examples, hospitals or even individual departments, supermarkets, farms, medical laboratories, restaurants, and transport networks. This runs directly counter to the European Commission’s commitment to simplify regulation, remove red tape, and better support European business and citizens.

A.I.S.E and the signatories remain open to dialogue with EU and national authorities to safeguard the continued use of ethanol: a safe, indispensable, and life-saving substance.

About A.I.S.E. - A.I.S.E. represents an industry that supplies essential detergents, cleaning and maintenance products, disinfectants and biocidal products across Europe. Based in Brussels, the association has been the voice of the cleaning and hygiene products industry since 1952. Membership includes 30 national associations across Europe, 20 corporate members, and 19 value chain partners, collectively representing a network of companies supplying household and professional cleaning products and services. www.aise.eu/handsupforethanol

Join the conversation: **#HandsUpForEthanol**

Contact

- Nicole Vaini, Head of EU Affairs, +32 479 153 912, nicole.vaini@aise.eu
- Aisling O’Kane, Senior Communications Manager, +32 485 996 042, aisling.okane@aise.eu

