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COUNCIL OF EUROPE ADOPTS A RESOLUTION TO MAKE COSMETIC PRODUCTS SAFER FOR USE ON BABIES AND INFANTS

On 14 March 2012, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a Resolution on Cosmetic Products Intended for Infants [CM/ResAP(2012)1]. It recommends that Council of Europe member states implement measures to reduce health risks arising from exposure of infants to cosmetic products and their ingredients.

A variety of cosmetic products are used on infants from an early age: baby skin creams, bath lotions and shampoos, sunscreens, toothpaste and many other products. Cosmetics must be safe, especially considering that these products are frequently 'leave-on' type products (*i.e.* products that are not rinsed off) and may be applied several times a day. Some products may also be ingested due to specific behaviours like licking or sucking of hands, arms and feet. Importantly, young children are often more sensitive to certain toxic effects.

The EU Cosmetic Products Regulation, Regulation (EC) No. 1223/2009, pays particular attention to protecting the health of vulnerable population groups and recommends that a specific assessment be carried out for cosmetic products intended for use on children under the age of three. However, further instructions on how to proceed are not given in this Regulation.

To provide guidance and support to manufacturers and safety assessors, national experts from competent authorities have compiled a set of safety criteria for cosmetic formulations that should be taken into account when placing a product on the market. In particular, they should ensure that toxic ingredients, potent allergens or substances with endocrine-disrupting activity are not present and that preservatives are used at their lowest effective concentrations. These measures supplement the current EU Regulation and Council of Europe member states that are not members of the European Union may also benefit from this practical guide.

The text of this Resolution is available on the Council of Europe website (www.coe.int). A print copy of the Resolution and the supplementary guidance on safety criteria will be released shortly and will be available for purchase from the EDQM (www.edqm.eu).

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Note for the Editor: The EDQM is a leading organisation that protects public health by enabling development, supporting implementation, and monitoring the application of quality standards for safe medicines and their safe use. Our standards are recognised as a scientific benchmark world-wide. The European Pharmacopeia[1] is legally-binding in European member states. Similarly, the EDQM develops guidance and standards in the areas of blood transfusion, organ transplantation and consumer health issues.

[1]There are currently thirty-seven members of the European Pharmacopoeia Commission: *Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom and the European Union* and twenty-four observers: *The World Health Organisation (WHO); 6 member states of the Council of Europe: Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine; 17 other countries in the world: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Israel, Madagascar, Malaysia, Morocco, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Singapore, Senegal, Syria, Tunisia, United States of America*.

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