



Statement by the European Printing Ink Industry

## **Measures against COVID19 affect the supply chain for food and pharmaceutical products**

During the current Coronavirus crisis, the supply of the population with food and pharmaceutical products is vital. It is essential to maintain supply chains for food and pharmaceutical products in order to manage the crisis, without jeopardy by other measures to contain the Coronavirus pandemic. Supporting functioning supply chains for food and pharmaceutical products should therefore be a high priority for policy makers.

In the supply chain for food and pharmaceutical products, it is the packaging that ensures that food and pharmaceutical products can be made available to the end consumer. Furthermore, the packaging is designed to inform consumers about the packed product and its use whilst ensuring that the shelf life is maximised. Packaging is therefore an integral part of the security of the supply of food and pharmaceutical products.

Printing inks applied to packaging for food and pharmaceutical products ensure that relevant information about the packed product is visible on the packaging. In addition, printing inks and varnishes help to protect the packaged food against external influences and maximise shelf life.

Without printing inks, the packaging cannot fulfil its complete purpose. However, the production of packaging for food and pharmaceutical products and the manufacture of printing inks to be applied to this packaging, is or can be increasingly disrupted by

1. Restriction of the cross-border movement of goods
2. Shortages of important printing ink components

### **1. Restriction of the cross-border movement of goods**

Most of the companies within the food packaging supply chain operate on a pan-European or pan-global basis. The companies representing the different members of the supply chain operate across national boundaries and are characterized by a truly European identity and method of operation.

Increasing border controls across the European Schengen area are a crucial measure in the fight against the COVID 19 outbreak. However, the effective supply of materials such as printing inks required to produce packaging for food and



pharmaceutical products is being hindered and, in some cases, prevented. The movement of finished packaging is also experiencing these challenges.

**Consequently, we call on political decision-makers to protect the supply chains for packaging inks and the packaging for food and pharmaceutical products printed with them, and to exempt these items from the restrictions associated with measures relating to the cross-border movement of goods.**

## **2. Shortages of important printing ink components**

Most of the printing inks which are applied on packaging for food and pharmaceutical products are solvent based. The predominant solvent is ethanol which can also be used as a disinfectant. The food packaging supply chain is currently facing a dramatic shortage of ethanol to be used as solvent within packaging inks; this issue has been triggered by the exorbitantly increased demand for disinfectants. The same holds true for isopropanol which is an indispensable solvent in the process of printing fibre-based packaging made from paper or cardboard.

Without these solvents, the manufacture of solvent-based packaging inks is severely disrupted to the effect that packaging for food and pharmaceutical products are at risk of not being printed any more.

**We therefore call on political decision-makers to consider other sources of ethanol and isopropanol in order to cover the increased demand for these solvents as disinfectants, and to safeguard the supply of these solvents for the manufacture of printing inks for food and pharmaceutical packaging.**

### About EuPIA

The European Printing Ink Association EuPIA is the voice of the printing ink industry in Europe. It represents the common interests of about 80 manufacturers of printing inks and varnishes in Europe which stand for more than 90 % of European ink sales (2017: 954,000 tons, 3.03 billion €). The European Printing Ink Industry employs about 12,000 people. EuPIA operates under the umbrella of CEPE, the European Council of the Paint, Printing Ink and Artists' Colours Industry. Contact: Dr Martin Kanert, Executive Manager of EuPIA  
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