

CEFIC GUIDELINES FOR THE USE AND PROTECTION OF RESPONSIBLE CARE LOGO IN EUROPE

These Guidelines have been developed by Cefic as general guidelines for the use and protection of the Responsible Care logo in Europe. Although Cefic makes every effort to ensure the completeness of the information provided, the information may not be exhaustive in all cases. This information is not intended to replace an individual assessment made by the users of the Responsible Care logo (taking into account, for example, their national legislation and enforcement risks at national level). No representations or warranties are made with regards to the accuracy or completeness of their contents, and no liability will be accepted by Cefic for damages of any nature whatsoever resulting from the interpretation, use or reliance on these Guidelines.

1. Introduction

The Responsible Care Logo visualises the principles of the [Responsible Care initiative](#) which are included in the [Responsible Care Global Charter](#).

The Responsible Care Logo is the common brand for national associations and member companies to identify their participation in this initiative.

In Europe, Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council, has been entrusted by the ICCA with the role of granting the national chemical industry federations across Europe, whether members or associated members, the right to use the Responsible Care logo, after having satisfied itself that the programme developed by the national association meets the Responsible Care philosophy, is in accordance with the ICCA Global Charter and is correctly and adequately implementing the eight fundamental features of the initiative. National associations will then grant to their member companies, who have fulfilled the national Responsible Care programme requirements, the right to use the logo. Cefic takes care of the registration of the logo as a trademark for all its member national associations.

2. The Responsible Care Logo

The visual representation is of two hands pointing upwards cupped around a collection of symbols which represent a hypothetical chemical structure. The logo expresses the key message of sound management of chemicals under the Responsible Care principles which are included within the Global Responsible Care Charter. It has also a logotype represented by the words “Responsible Care” and of a tagline that has been changed over time.

3. Why Cefic revised the user guidelines

In 2026, Cefic revised the guidelines to take account of the fact that the Responsible Care logo may be identified as a “sustainability label” according to the EU Directive 2024/825 on empowering consumers for the green transition (referred in the document as “*Greenwashing Directive*”), that amends Directive 2005/29 on unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market.

The objective of the revised guidelines is to clarify the risks of non-compliance with the revised Directive associated to the use of the logo in communications directed to the consumer, i.e. business-to-consumer (“B2C”) communications. The Directive defines a “sustainability label” as “any voluntary trust mark, quality mark or equivalent [...] that aims to set apart and promote a product, a process or a business by reference to its environmental or social characteristics, or both [...]”. It prohibits the use of a sustainability label unless it is established by public authorities; or based on a “certification scheme”¹. The new rules of EU Directive 2024/825 are applicable as of 27 September 2026.

4. EU Directive 2024/825 and the Responsible Care logo

As of 27 September 2026, displaying a sustainability label that is not based on a certification scheme or not established by public authorities is a commercial practice that is listed as misleading business-to-consumer commercial practice, as per Directive 2005/29/EC.

The Directive does not distinguish between industry sectors, or between the business activities or operations of Responsible Care Members within those sectors. The above limitation is relevant to all users of the Responsible Care logo, whether Members market consumer products (e.g., detergents, cosmetics, paints, lubricants) or bulk chemicals to other businesses (i.e., “B2B”) if the Responsible Care logo is used in communications to consumers. Transport and distribution service providers may be in scope to the extent that they promote their products, services or businesses as a whole to consumers.

A communication is in scope of the Directive if it is directed at consumers in the EU, independently of where the Responsible Care Member is based. Whether a communication is directed at a consumer in the EU is subject to a case-by-case assessment, which among other things, can include the context of the communication (e.g., whether the communication is an advertisement shown in the EU or a website with an EU domain) and the language of the communication (e.g., whether the communication is in an EU language). Therefore, for communications directed at consumers in the EU, the risks for non-EU companies using the Responsible Care logo are similar than for EU companies using the Responsible Care logo. It is up to national associations of extra-EU regions to make their own assessment on whether they comply with all the requirements of the Greenwashing Directive, for instance in case they have a third-party verification scheme that complies with the requirements laid out by the Directive.

¹ According to the Directive, “certification scheme” means a third-party verification scheme that certifies that a product, process or business complies with certain requirements, that allows for the use of a corresponding sustainability label, and the terms of which, including its requirements, are publicly available and meet the following criteria: (i) the scheme is open under transparent, fair, and non-discriminatory terms to all traders willing and able to comply with the scheme’s requirements; (ii) the scheme’s requirements are developed by the scheme owner in consultation with relevant experts and stakeholders; (iii) the scheme sets out procedures for dealing with non-compliance with the scheme’s requirements and provides for the withdrawal or suspension of the use of the sustainability label by the trader in case of non-compliance with the scheme’s requirements; and (iv) the monitoring of a trader’s compliance with the scheme’s requirements is subject to an objective procedure and is carried out by a third party whose competence and independence from both the scheme owner and the trader are based on international, Union or national standards and procedures.

5. New Responsible Care logo user guidelines

Since in Europe, the Responsible Care initiative is currently not based on a certification scheme, Cefic advises utmost caution with the use of the Responsible Care logo. The below guidelines reflect Cefic's generic advice based on the provisions of the EU Greenwashing Directive.

They do not take into account the national rules adopted at EU Member State level, nor the actual (public or private) enforcement risk in each jurisdiction. **National associations and companies should assess their risks and adapt their use of the Responsible Care logo based on national implementing rules, taking into account that some Member States have implemented a more restrictive approach².**

5.1 Prohibited Uses of the Responsible Care logo

- **On product packaging** or in any manner that suggests product certification.
- **In any materials for the advertising, marketing, or distribution of specific products.**
- **In product-related documentation**, such as technical specification sheets, material safety data sheets, or transport emergency cards (TREMcards).
- **In a modified form** - the registered version must always be used without alteration.
- **By any non-Responsible Care member entity.**
- **In communications promoting a business, a process or a product to consumers.**

5.2 Advised use of the Responsible Care logo

- **Online communications:** unless national implementing legislation of the relevant market where communications are targeted provides otherwise, the Responsible Care logo may be used on webpages that are clearly directed at professional users and investors. Many companies already have an “investors-only” or “customers-only” section of their websites that is difficult to navigate to and requires a login or password to use. It can be argued, if the Responsible Care logo is used in those website sections, or in similar restricted sections (where “customers” are professional users, rather than consumers), that the communication does not target consumers, although third party claims to the contrary cannot be excluded. This also applies to any use of the logo, e.g., in text, imagery, or video: the use of the logo is allowed only if they are clearly directed at professional users and investors only. There is a risk that an authority will consider the Responsible Care logo to be a consumer-facing communication if it is used on an open access webpage, or the main landing pages of a website. Third parties may as well make a claim to that effect.
- **Sustainability reports:** The logo may be used in mandatory corporate sustainability reports, such as reports under the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive because they are out of scope of the Greenwashing Directive. For what concerns

² For example, in France, according to the information we received via our RC network, the national implementing rules would include in their scope business-to-business communications as well, on top of purely business-to-consumer communications. This example is not exhaustive and does not exclude that other Member States might also implement the Directive in a more stringent way. We advise national federations and individual companies to assess the national legislation of relevant EU markets they might target their communications towards.

voluntary ESG reports it is currently less clear, although it is likely that national authorities will consider the text of voluntary reports out of scope of the Greenwashing Directive if a third party has provided an assurance statement that the report complies with a recognized voluntary reporting framework e.g., the Global Reporting Initiative (“GRI”) framework, or the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (“TCFD”) framework. For more detail reference is made to the European Commission’s FAQ Guidance³

- **Corporate Stationary (e.g., letterheads, email signatures, envelopes, and business cards):** the use of the Responsible Care logo on corporate stationery is allowed where the communication is clearly and exclusively directed at professionals (e.g., a direct email exchange between the Responsible Care Member and professional). This may not be the case for envelopes and businesses cards, as those are — to a certain degree — “public facing” documents. The same applies to gifts, office equipment, and other stationary items like notebooks and briefcases that arguably promote the Responsible Care Member without discrimination between consumers and professionals.
- **Brochures:** the logo may be used on in-house brochures e.g., as part of internal communications to promote the Responsible Care initiative to employees, because employees acting in the course of their employment are not consumers. The Responsible Care logo may be used in other brochures if they are clearly and exclusively directed at professionals (e.g., a sales catalogue for bulk, professional-grade chemicals).
- **Plaques and posters on office or plant buildings:** Responsible Care logo may be used on plaques and posters *inside* corporate buildings, as those communications are direct at employees acting in the course of their employment, who are by definition not consumers. Plaques or posters displayed on the outside of corporate buildings, or in public spaces within corporate buildings (e.g., a consumer facing retail space) can be problematic.
- **Legally-required reports to authorities:** the logo can be used in legally-required reports to authorities, where relevant and appropriate.
- **Bulk storage tanks, transport containers, etc.:** a Responsible Care Member may in principle use the logo on bulk storage tanks, transport containers, etc. where the product is sold or advertised B2B, and where the logos on the tanks, containers, etc. are not visible to the public during transport.

In addition, when using the Responsible Care logo, Responsible Care Members must not state or imply that the logo represents a certification for a business or a product, and must explain what the logo represents (*i.e.*, that a Responsible Care Member has voluntarily committed to the Responsible Care Charter). A Responsible Care Member using the logo should provide detailed information on its own commitments and actions under the initiative, and provide, or direct the reader to more information on the initiative itself e.g., on Cefic’s website.

5.3. Responsible Care logo

To further reduce the risk that an authority would consider the Responsible Care logo as a sustainability label, the logo should be used as follows:

- a. The logo should not be displayed in green, as the colour may be associated with sustainability claims or environmental pledges.
- b. The full version of the logo with the tagline “Driving Safety & Sustainability” should be avoided, as the term “sustainability” may be interpreted as an environmental claim.

We advise using the version featuring the hands only:



5.4 References to “Responsible Care” in ordinary, non-logo text

It is advised to use the term “Responsible Care” in ordinary font within a larger sentence or paragraph in corporate communications.

It is also possible to refer to the Responsible Care initiative as such, and not to the Responsible Care logo or trademark. This should be done in a way that does not result in the Responsible Care wording to stand out from the text as a graphic element. Responsible Care Members can therefore communicate about the Responsible Care initiative without the logo so long as the communication makes clear that the Responsible Care Members merely commit to certain principles of business operations and does not state or imply that the Responsible Care initiative is a third-party certification for the product or business. They should explain what membership of the initiative means and avoid making or implying a claim that they operate in any way that is “responsible” or “careful” outside of the Responsible Care initiative scheme commitments. Responsible Care Members should also ensure that they provide information about the Responsible Care initiative alongside any reference to “Responsible Care,” or provide a link to more information [[Responsible Care - Cefic](#)].

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