

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER SAFETY (SCCS)

Request for a scientific opinion: α -Arbutin INCI name Alpha-Arbutin (CAS 84380-01-8; EC 283-934-3) with the chemical name 4-Hydroxyphenyl-alpha-D-glucopyranoside.

1. Background

α -Arbutin INCI name Alpha-Arbutin (CAS 84380-01-8; EC 283-934-3) with the chemical name 4-Hydroxyphenyl-alpha-D-glucopyranoside is a cosmetic ingredient that is not regulated under Cosmetic Regulation No 1223/2009. It is used as antioxidant, for skin bleaching and skin conditioning.

The structurally related compound beta-Arbutin (CAS 497-76-7) is also used as a depigmentating agent in cosmetic products. The safety of beta-Arbutin has been assessed previously (SCCP/1158/08); its effect seems to be due to the fact that it hydrolyses to Hydroquinone. However, Hydroquinone (CAS 123-31-9) is listed in Annex II/1339 of the Cosmetic Regulation No 1223/2009. It means it is banned as cosmetic ingredient with the exception of entry 14 in Annex III. Its permitted use is restricted to professional use in artificial nail systems in a concentration in the final product up to 0.02%. Since Hydroquinone could not be used as a skin whitener after introduction of a ban, other substances have been used for that purpose, including alpha-Arbutin and beta-Arbutin.

As the SCCP opinion (SCCP/1158/08) stated concerns with other substances resulting in the release and/or formation of hydroquinone, a safety assessment of Alpha-Arbutin (CAS 84380-01-8; EC 283-934-3) has been considered as necessary. A Dossier on alpha-Arbutin was submitted in January 2011 in response to the EU Commission's Call for Scientific Data on alpha-Arbutin published in November 2010.

2. Terms of reference

(1) Does the SCCS consider on the basis of the provided scientific data, the use of α - arbutin to be safe for consumers in cosmetic products in a concentration up to 2% in face creams and up to 0.5 % in body lotions?

(2) Does the SCCS have any further scientific concerns with regard to the use of α - Arbutin in cosmetic products?

3. Deadline:

4. Supporting documents