Preservatives in the EU

What are preservatives?

A preservative is a natural or synthetic ingredient that is added to products to prevent them from spoiling.

Preservatives ensure that cosmetics and personal care products, as well as pharmaceuticals and foods, remain safe during their period of use by consumers.

Preservatives must undergo rigorous evaluation, including safety assessments and quality testing, to ensure that they are safe for use.

Why do we need them?

Without preservatives, cosmetic products, just like food, can become contaminated, leading to product spoilage.

Microbial contamination of products, especially those used around the eyes and on the skin, can cause irritation or infections. Preservatives help prevent such problems.

What is the European Commission doing about them?

- It ensures an updated list of scientifically evaluated safe preservatives for their use in cosmetic products on the EU market
- It supports and guides national authorities to monitor products already on the EU market
- It encourages scientific research and innovation so that new and more efficient preservatives for cosmetic products are discovered