EUROTALC

Latest developments on the harmonized classification of talc proposal and next steps
July 2026

Executive Summary

In July 2025, the European Chemicals Agency's (ECHA) Committee for Risk Assessment (RAC) proposed classifying talc as a Carcinogen Category 1B under the European Union's **classification, labeling, and packaging** (CLP) Regulation. Industry considers this proposal legally unjustified, scientifically questionable, and disproportionate. If adopted as proposed, this classification would have far-reaching consequences across industries relying on talc, including automotive, ceramics, cosmetics, paper, paints and coatings, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, plastics, among others.

On 1 July 2026, the European Commission, Member State Competent Authorities, and industry representatives discussed the dossier at the CLP Open Session of the 58th CARACAL meeting. Several Member States (including the dossier submitter, the Netherlands) acknowledged the immense complexity of the case. They expressed support for delaying the decision by one year to address unresolved scientific questions, particularly surrounding Poorly Soluble Low Toxicity (PSLT) particles and exposure routes. The possibility to move forward with the STOT RE classification independently was raised.

The industry is actively advocating for a one-year postponement of the European Commission's decision on talc. Downstream users are invited to engage with their national authorities and EU associations to support this delay. The delay is critical to await key scientific evaluations (including ECHA and EFSA reviews) and to ensure any regulatory action is strictly limited to the inhalation of the respirable fraction of talc rather than a blanket substance-wide ban.

EUROTALC's Interpretation

EUROTALC, supported by its legal and scientific advisors, and following exchanges with representatives from the European Commission, has carefully reviewed the latest available evidence. On that basis and **pending an EU-wide resolution on poorly soluble low toxicity (PSLTs) particles and the resolution of the intrinsic properties legal challenges, inhalation is the only route with supported evidence.**

A route-by-route analysis demonstrates the following:

- **Inhalation (respirable dust) is the only route for which there is limited evidence** (one highly contested animal study [NTP 1993], no human evidence). Consequently, regulatory assessment should be **limited to talc in powder form containing 1% or more of particles with an aerodynamic diameter ≤ 10 µm**, i.e. the respirable fraction, thus enabling continued safe use of industrial talc. This approach remains subject to the upcoming 2027 ECHA scoping study on PSLT particles, along with intrinsic properties and overload considerations.
- **Evidence of dermal exposure (skin) does not support classification**. No chronic animal studies exist for this route; systemic absorption via intact skin is considered scientifically unlikely, and talc has no genotoxic or mutagenic activity.
- **Evidence of oral exposure (ingestion) does not support classification**. Animal studies consistently show that talc particles are poorly absorbed intestinally, with no relevant systemic toxic effects observed. This conclusion is corroborated by multiple independent regulatory bodies including UK HSE (2026), Health Canada, the Danish EPA, the US EPA, the MAK Commission, the US FDA, and JECFA. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is currently conducting a re-evaluation of talc (E 553B), expected to conclude within the next 12 months.

Next Steps

The European Commission will discuss the talc dossier again at a dedicated CARACAL session in September 2026 (exact date to be confirmed). In the meantime, downstream users are encouraged to support the request for a one-year postponement, and endorse a regulatory approach focused solely on inhalation exposure and the talc respirable fraction.

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