



Summary – disinfectants following the coronavirus outbreak

At the start of the coronavirus outbreak, there was a shortage of disinfectants in Switzerland. In order to mitigate this shortage, the notification authority for chemicals issued general rulings permitting exceptional authorisations for disinfectants. As a result, many new disinfectants were placed on the market within a short time, to a large extent from manufacturers who had no previous experience with chemicals legislation. Due to the rapid spread of the virus, however, this had been explicitly desired by the federal authorities.

Subsequently, cantons were asked to investigate alcohol-based disinfectants. The aim was to undertake analytical investigations to establish whether the products fulfilled the requirements of their authorisation (or of the general ruling). The investigations also involved samples obtained by customs during the period in question as part of VOC checks.

The findings should be assessed in the light of the special situation prevailing at the time of the product investigations. The main findings were as follows:

- None of the products posed a risk to health.
- 97% of the products may be considered to be effective. For 3%, further investigation would be required to establish efficacy.
- For 80% of the products, their active ingredient content complies with legal requirements.
- 90% of the products display a warning symbol (in 6% of cases, however, this is in the wrong colour, while for a further 6% a transport symbol was used).

Given these findings, it can be concluded that the objective of the general rulings has been fulfilled. Within a short time, the population was supplied with sufficient quantities of effective disinfectants, which featured at least minimum hazard warnings.

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