

200 PHRASES

THAT WILL KILL YOUR BEAUTY & COSMETICS LISTING IN THE EU

The list we check before every EU launch — with the reason behind each phrase, what to write instead, and a ready-to-use AI filter for your own listings.



Why we wrote this

Every week we talk to beauty brands that sell well on Amazon.com and want to take the same products to Europe. Most of them assume that if the formula is good and the listing converts in the US, it will work in Germany, France or Italy.

Often, it doesn't.

EU law draws a hard line between a cosmetic and a medicine. A cosmetic can make skin look better. It can't treat, heal or change how the body works. "Treats acne", "repairs DNA", "regrows hair" — each of these turns a cream into an unlicensed medicine. And every claim you make, even "hypoallergenic" or "paraben-free", has to meet EU criteria and be backed by evidence.

Two more things make it harder:

The ingredient lists keep changing. In the last few years the EU banned Lilial and zinc pyrithione, and capped retinol, kojic acid and alpha-arbutin. A product that was fine last year can become unsellable in 27 countries at once.

Green claims just got a lot riskier. From 27 September 2026, generic claims like "eco-friendly", "reef safe" or "climate neutral" are banned across the EU. Beauty listings are full of them.

So we put together the list our team uses before every EU beauty launch: 200 phrases and ingredients that get cosmetics listings suppressed, blocked or flagged. Each one comes with the reason and a safer way to say it.

Use it as a checklist. Or, better, load it into your AI tool and let it check your listings for you. We'll show you how.

Mark & Andrejs

Co-founders, INNELS

The 3 rules behind every phrase in this list

You don't need to memorise 200 phrases. If you understand these three rules, you'll recognise most risky copy on sight.

1. A cosmetic changes appearance, not the body

Under the EU Cosmetics Regulation (1223/2009), a cosmetic is used to clean, perfume, change the appearance of, protect or keep skin, hair, nails and teeth in good condition. Claims about treating a condition or changing a physiological function belong to medicines. "Reduces the appearance of blemishes" is a cosmetic claim. "Treats acne" is not.

2. Every claim must pass six tests

EU Regulation 655/2013 sets six common criteria for all cosmetic claims: legal compliance, truthfulness, evidential support, honesty, fairness and informed decision-making. In practice: you need evidence for the exact words and numbers you use, and you can't make other products — or permitted ingredients — look bad. That's why many "free from" claims fail.

3. The ingredient lists and the label decide the rest

Prohibited and restricted substances are listed in the Annexes of the Cosmetics Regulation, and they're updated regularly. Every product also needs an EU Responsible Person, a safety assessment, a CPNP notification and an EU-format label. On top of that, from 27 September 2026, generic environmental claims are banned (Directive 2024/825), and sunscreens follow their own EU recommendation on claims.

And on top of the law: Amazon

Amazon applies its own listing and restricted-products policies in every EU marketplace. Some phrases in this list are legal but still break Amazon's rules — for example "best seller" or "money-back guarantee".

How to use this playbook

1

Option 1: Read it as a checklist

Go through the 10 sections with your listing open. Anything marked HIGH comes out. Anything marked CHECK stays only if you meet the condition.

2

Option 2: Use it as an AI filter

This playbook comes with a CSV file of all 200 phrases. Upload it to ChatGPT, Claude or any AI tool together with your listing and our ready-made prompt ([Appendix A](#)). You'll get every risky phrase flagged, with a suggested rewrite, in under a minute. Share it with your team, your VA or your copywriter and make it part of your listing workflow.

3

Option 3: Get a human check

A word list catches words. It doesn't check concentrations, your safety assessment, label format or images. For that, run the free [INNELS EU Compliance Checker](#) or ask our EU team to review your listing.

How to read the risk levels

HIGH

Likely to trigger suppression, a block or a legal breach wherever it appears. Remove it.

CHECK

Allowed only if specific conditions are met (evidence, test results, certification or exact wording). Keep it only if you can show the evidence.

Note: "Safer route" wording is a starting point, not a pre-approved claim. In cosmetics, every claim — including the safer ones — must be backed by your own evidence.

A

Medical and disease claims

A cosmetic may clean, perfume, change appearance, protect or keep skin and hair in good condition. The moment it claims to treat a condition, it becomes an unlicensed medicine in the eyes of EU law — and Amazon removes it.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
1	treats acne	HIGH	Acne is a skin condition. Treating it is a medicinal claim.	'For blemish-prone skin' / 'helps reduce the appearance of blemishes' (with evidence).
2	cures eczema / atopic dermatitis	HIGH	Disease claim.	'Soothes and comforts dry skin' (with evidence).
3	treats psoriasis	HIGH	Disease claim.	Remove.
4	treats rosacea	HIGH	Disease claim.	'For skin prone to redness.'
5	heals wounds / scars	HIGH	Wound healing is a medicinal effect.	'Improves the look of skin texture' (with evidence).
6	antifungal / treats nail fungus	HIGH	Medicinal claim.	Remove.
7	cures hair loss / alopecia	HIGH	Alopecia is a medical condition.	'Reduces hair breakage' (with evidence).
8	anti-inflammatory	HIGH	Implies a pharmacological effect.	'Soothing' (with evidence).
9	antiseptic / disinfects	HIGH	Medicinal or biocidal claim.	'Cleanses.'
10	kills 99.9% of bacteria	HIGH	Biocidal claim. A cosmetic's main purpose cannot be killing germs.	'Cleanses thoroughly.'
11	relieves itching / pain	HIGH	Symptom relief = medicinal claim.	'Soothes the feeling of dry skin' (with evidence).
12	treats warts / cold sores	HIGH	Disease claim.	Remove.
13	cures cellulite	HIGH	Presented as a condition to be cured.	'Skin looks smoother' (with evidence).
14	treats melasma / hyperpigmentation	HIGH	Melasma is a skin condition.	'Evens the look of skin tone.'
15	heals sunburn	HIGH	Burn treatment = medicinal.	'Cools and soothes skin after sun exposure.'

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
16	treats insect bites	HIGH	Medicinal claim.	Remove.
17	prevents infection	HIGH	Medicinal claim.	Remove.
18	hormonal acne treatment	HIGH	Disease + hormonal claim.	Remove.
19	medicated / medicinal	HIGH	Positions the product as a medicine.	Remove.
20	prescription-strength / pharmaceutical grade	HIGH	Implies a medicinal product.	Describe the actual standard you can prove, e.g. ISO 22716 GMP.

B

Drug-like effects on the body

EU regulators look at what your claim says the product does inside the body. Changing a physiological function is what medicines do. The more 'biological' your copy sounds, the closer you are to the line.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
21	boosts collagen production	CHECK	Physiological claim. Borderline with medicines.	'Skin looks firmer' (with evidence).
22	repairs DNA	HIGH	Claims a biological repair mechanism.	Remove.
23	regenerates cells / cell renewal	CHECK	Physiological claim.	'Gently exfoliates to reveal fresher-looking skin.'
24	Botox-like / Botox in a bottle	HIGH	Compares to a medicine and uses a trademark.	'Visibly smooths expression lines' (with evidence).
25	non-surgical facelift	HIGH	Compares to a medical procedure.	'Skin looks lifted' (with evidence).
26	penetrates deep into the dermis	HIGH	Implies an effect beyond the skin surface.	'Absorbs quickly.'
27	stimulates hair growth / regrows hair	HIGH	Medicinal claim (the territory of minoxidil).	'Hair looks thicker and fuller.'
28	blocks DHT	HIGH	Hormonal mechanism = medicinal.	Remove.
29	detoxifies the skin	CHECK	Vague, implies a biological effect.	'Deep-cleansing.'
30	balances hormones	HIGH	Hormonal claim.	Remove.
31	repairs the skin barrier	CHECK	Needs careful wording and evidence.	'Helps restore skin's moisture barrier' (with evidence).
32	increases blood circulation	CHECK	Physiological claim.	'Leaves skin looking refreshed.'
33	fat-burning / slimming cream	HIGH	Claims to act on body fat.	'Skin looks smoother and firmer' (with evidence).
34	breast enlargement	HIGH	Claims to change body tissue.	Remove.
35	grows lashes / lash growth serum	HIGH	Growth claim. Often linked to medicinal ingredients.	'Lashes look longer and fuller.'
36	stops sweating permanently	HIGH	Permanent physiological change.	'Reduces perspiration for up to 48h' (with evidence).

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
37	skin whitening / bleaching	HIGH	Linked to banned ingredients and a regulatory red flag.	'Brightening' / 'evens skin tone.'
38	reverses ageing	HIGH	Implies a biological reversal.	'Reduces the look of fine lines.'
39	boosts skin immunity	HIGH	Immune function claim.	'Helps protect skin from dryness.'
40	anti-allergy / antihistamine	HIGH	Medicinal claim.	Remove.

This list is also a filter.

Upload the CSV version to ChatGPT or Claude together with your listing, and get every risky phrase flagged in under a minute. The ready-made prompt is in [Appendix A](#).

→ [The CSV came in the same email as this PDF.](#)

C

Anti-ageing and results promises

Anti-ageing claims are allowed in the EU, but only about appearance and only with evidence that matches the exact words, numbers and timeframes you use.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
41	removes wrinkles	HIGH	Absolute result, not provable for a cosmetic.	'Reduces the appearance of wrinkles' (with evidence).
42	erases fine lines	HIGH	Absolute result.	'Fine lines look softened.'
43	permanent results	HIGH	Cosmetic effects are not permanent.	Remove.
44	look 10 years younger	HIGH	Exaggerated, unprovable promise.	Remove.
45	instant facelift	HIGH	Compares to a medical procedure.	'Instantly smoother-looking skin' (with evidence).
46	visible results in 7 days	CHECK	Your study must show results in that exact timeframe.	Keep only if your test proves it.
47	92% saw visible results	CHECK	Consumer test claims must disclose method and sample.	'92% of 30 women agreed after 4 weeks (self-assessment).'
48	reduces wrinkles by 50%	CHECK	Needs an instrumental study matching the figure.	Keep the study; state conditions.
49	miracle cream	HIGH	Implies an unrealistic effect.	Remove.
50	eliminates cellulite	HIGH	Absolute result.	'Skin looks smoother.'
51	removes stretch marks	HIGH	Absolute result.	'Improves the look of stretch marks' (with evidence).
52	removes dark circles	CHECK	Absolute wording.	'Reduces the look of dark circles.'
53	shrinks pores	CHECK	Pores don't physically shrink.	'Pores look smaller.'
54	lashes 200% longer	CHECK	Exaggerated figure. Needs matching evidence.	Use your test result, e.g. 'lashes look up to 30% longer'.
55	stops hair loss	HIGH	Medicinal claim.	'Reduces hair loss due to breakage' (with evidence).
56	before & after (retouched)	HIGH	Retouched results are misleading. Amazon restricts them.	Unretouched images from your study only.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
57	works for all skin types	CHECK	Needs evidence across skin types.	Name the skin types tested.
58	100% effective	HIGH	Promise of results.	Remove.
59	safe during pregnancy	HIGH	Absolute safety claim for a vulnerable group.	Remove.
60	safe for newborns / babies	CHECK	Products for under-3s need a specific safety assessment.	Only if your safety assessment covers under-3s.

D Proof and authority claims

Under EU rules, every claim needs evidence you can show on request. Authority claims — doctors, labs, the FDA — are where US listings fail most often.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
61	dermatologist tested	CHECK	Allowed with a documented dermatological test.	Keep the test report on file.
62	dermatologist recommended	CHECK	Needs real evidence of recommendation. Must not imply a medicine.	Keep the survey or data on file.
63	clinically proven	CHECK	Needs robust studies on this exact product.	Say what was tested and how.
64	clinically tested	CHECK	Needs documented testing.	Keep the study on file.
65	FDA approved	HIGH	The FDA doesn't approve cosmetics. Meaningless in the EU.	Remove.
66	FDA registered	CHECK	Misleading in an EU context.	Mention EU compliance instead.
67	EU approved / CPNP approved	HIGH	CPNP is a notification, not an approval.	'Notified in the EU CPNP' (if true) — or leave it out.
68	certified safe by the EU	HIGH	No such certification exists.	Remove.
69	recommended by doctors	CHECK	Needs proof. Must not imply a medicinal effect.	Remove unless you hold the evidence.
70	medical grade	HIGH	Implies a medicine or medical device.	Remove.
71	hospital grade	HIGH	Same as 'medical grade'.	Remove.
72	ophthalmologist tested	CHECK	Needs a documented test.	Keep the report on file.
73	allergy tested	CHECK	Must not imply zero risk of reaction.	'Tested on sensitive skin' + test details.
74	scientifically proven	HIGH	Absolute proof claim.	Remove, or state the specific study result.
75	patented formula	CHECK	You must hold the patent.	Add the patent number.
76	award-winning	CHECK	Must name a verifiable award.	Name the award and year.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
77	#1 recommended by experts	HIGH	Unverifiable.	Remove.
78	as seen on TV / celebrity favourite	CHECK	Endorsement claims need proof and permission.	Remove unless documented.
79	cosmeceutical	HIGH	Implies a drug-cosmetic hybrid. Not a legal category.	'Skincare.'
80	third-party lab tested	CHECK	Needs the lab report.	'Tested by [lab] for [what].'

E

Free-from and sensitive-skin claims

The EU's claims guidance is strict here: a 'free from' claim must not suggest that a legally allowed ingredient is harmful, and you can't claim to be free from something that's banned anyway.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
81	paraben-free	CHECK	EU guidance treats it as denigrating a group of permitted ingredients.	Avoid. Describe your preservative system positively instead.
82	hydroquinone-free / mercury-free	HIGH	You can't claim to be free from a substance that is banned anyway.	Remove.
83	sulfate-free	CHECK	Must be true and must not imply sulfates are unsafe.	'Formulated with mild cleansing agents.'
84	silicone-free	CHECK	Must not denigrate silicones.	Only as neutral information.
85	fragrance-free	CHECK	No masking fragrances either.	Only if no ingredient is used for scent.
86	alcohol-free	CHECK	Must specify which alcohol (fatty alcohols are different).	'Free from ethanol', if accurate.
87	preservative-free	CHECK	False if any ingredient has a preservative function.	Only if fully accurate.
88	chemical-free	HIGH	Everything is made of chemicals. Misleading.	Remove.
89	non-toxic	HIGH	Implies other cosmetics are toxic.	Remove.
90	toxin-free	HIGH	Same as 'non-toxic'.	Remove.
91	free from endocrine disruptors	HIGH	Denigrating and unprovable.	Remove.
92	no nasties / no harmful chemicals	HIGH	Denigrates permitted ingredients.	Remove.
93	hypoallergenic	CHECK	Only if designed to minimise allergy risk, with evidence. Can't imply zero risk.	Keep only with supporting data.
94	allergy-free / won't cause allergies	HIGH	Nobody can guarantee zero reactions.	Remove.
95	for sensitive skin	CHECK	Needs evidence.	Keep only with a sensitive-skin test.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
96	non-comedogenic	CHECK	Needs a comedogenicity test.	Keep only with the test.
97	non-irritating / zero irritation	CHECK	'Zero' is an absolute claim.	'Tested for skin tolerance' + details.
98	tear-free	CHECK	Needs an eye-irritation assessment.	Keep only with evidence.
99	safe for everyone	HIGH	Absolute safety claim.	Remove.
100	no side effects	HIGH	Medical language and an absolute safety claim.	Remove.

Would your current listing pass?

Paste your Amazon product link into the free INNELS EU Compliance Checker and get your compliance score in minutes.

[→ check.innells.com](https://check.innells.com)

F

"Natural", "clean", organic and vegan

There is no EU legal definition of 'natural' or 'clean' cosmetics, and the EU organic regulation doesn't cover cosmetics. That doesn't make these words free to use — they still have to be true and not misleading.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
101	100% natural	CHECK	Only if every ingredient is natural (preservatives often aren't).	State the natural origin %, e.g. '98% ingredients of natural origin (ISO 16128)'.
102	all natural	CHECK	Same as '100% natural'.	Use the ISO 16128 percentage.
103	natural (with synthetic ingredients)	HIGH	Misleading.	Use the natural origin %.
104	clean beauty	CHECK	No definition. Must not denigrate other products.	Say what the formula does and doesn't contain.
105	organic (without certification)	CHECK	Must be substantiated. Buyers read it as certified.	Use a recognised standard (e.g. COSMOS, NATRUE).
106	certified organic (without certificate)	HIGH	False certification claim.	Only with a valid certificate.
107	bio / öko (DE, FR, NL)	CHECK	Read as 'organic' by buyers.	Same as 'organic'.
108	USDA Organic seal	CHECK	Not a recognised cosmetics standard in the EU.	Check whether it applies; prefer an EU-recognised standard.
109	made with organic ingredients	CHECK	Must be proportionate.	State the % of organic ingredients.
110	vegan	CHECK	No EU legal definition.	Use a recognised label (e.g. The Vegan Society, V-Label).
111	cruelty-free	CHECK	Animal testing is banned for all cosmetics in the EU, so the claim can mislead.	Use a third-party scheme (e.g. Leaping Bunny) and its wording.
112	not tested on animals	CHECK	Same issue. Must cover every ingredient.	Only with scheme certification.
113	plant-based	CHECK	Must be accurate for the whole formula.	State the % of plant-derived ingredients.
114	botanical / herbal formula	CHECK	Must reflect the actual formula.	Name the key botanical ingredients.
115	pure	CHECK	Must be objectively true.	Be specific.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
116	raw / unrefined	CHECK	Must reflect the actual process.	Only if accurate.
117	food-grade	CHECK	Irrelevant for cosmetics and potentially misleading.	Remove.
118	halal	CHECK	Needs certification.	Only with a certificate.
119	Ayurvedic remedy / traditional medicine	HIGH	Medicinal connotation.	'Inspired by Ayurvedic tradition.'
120	handmade / homemade	CHECK	Still needs a safety assessment, Responsible Person and CPNP notification.	Fine only once the product is fully compliant.



Green claims (new rules from 27 September 2026)

From 27 September 2026, the EU bans generic environmental claims, offset-based 'climate neutral' claims and self-made sustainability labels. Beauty is one of the categories with the most green claims — and the most exposure.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
121	eco-friendly	HIGH	Generic environmental claim. Banned from 27 Sept 2026 without proof of excellent performance.	Make a specific, provable claim: 'bottle made from 100% recycled plastic'.
122	green / environmentally friendly	HIGH	Generic claim. Also banned on products in France.	Specific and provable claims only.
123	sustainable	HIGH	Generic claim.	Specify what, how much and how you measured it.
124	climate neutral / carbon neutral	HIGH	Banned when based on offsetting.	Remove.
125	CO2 compensated	HIGH	Offset-based claim.	Remove.
126	planet-friendly	HIGH	Generic claim.	Remove.
127	reef safe / reef friendly	HIGH	No standard behind it. Generic environmental claim.	Remove, or state which UV filters are not used.
128	ocean-friendly	HIGH	Generic claim.	Remove.
129	biodegradable formula	CHECK	Needs standardised tests and conditions. Banned on packaging in France.	'Formula is [x]% biodegradable (OECD 301)', if tested.
130	microplastic-free	CHECK	Must be true under the EU microplastics restriction definition.	Only after checking every ingredient, including glitter and polymers.
131	plastic-free packaging	CHECK	Must include caps, pumps, seals and labels.	Only if 100% accurate.
132	recyclable	CHECK	Must be recyclable in practice.	'Recyclable where facilities exist' + local sorting info.
133	compostable	CHECK	Must specify home vs industrial and meet standards.	'Industrially compostable (EN 13432)', if certified.
134	refillable	CHECK	Only if a refill is actually available.	Link to the refill product.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
135	zero waste	HIGH	Absolute environmental claim.	Remove.
136	ethically sourced	CHECK	Social claims fall under the same scrutiny.	Name the certification or program.
137	fair trade (without certification)	HIGH	Certification trademark.	Only with certification.
138	your own 'eco' or 'clean' badge	HIGH	Self-made sustainability labels are banned from 27 Sept 2026.	Use certified or public-authority labels only.
139	waterless / water-saving	CHECK	Must be specific and provable.	State the actual saving and how it's measured.
140	conscious beauty	CHECK	Vague social or environmental claim.	Remove, or be specific.

H Sun protection claims

Sunscreen claims in the EU follow a Commission Recommendation that many US brands have never read. Several standard US phrases are simply not allowed.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
141	sunblock	HIGH	No product blocks 100% of UV radiation.	'Sunscreen' / 'sun protection'.
142	total protection / 100% UV protection	HIGH	Absolute protection claim.	State the SPF category, e.g. 'high protection SPF 30'.
143	waterproof	HIGH	Not allowed.	'Water resistant' — only with testing.
144	sweatproof	HIGH	Absolute claim.	Remove.
145	all-day protection / no need to reapply	HIGH	Suggests reapplication isn't needed.	Add reapplication instructions.
146	SPF 70 / SPF 100	HIGH	The EU label caps at '50+'.	'SPF 50+' / 'very high protection'.
147	broad spectrum	CHECK	US term. The EU uses the UVA logo.	UVA logo (UVA protection at least 1/3 of SPF).
148	SPF without the UVA logo	CHECK	EU recommendation expects UVA protection alongside SPF.	Test UVA and add the logo.
149	prevents skin cancer	HIGH	Disease claim.	Remove.
150	prevents sunburn completely	HIGH	Absolute claim.	'Helps protect against sunburn.'
151	prevents sun-induced ageing	CHECK	Needs to be supported by your UV protection data.	'Helps protect against UV-induced signs of skin ageing' (with data).
152	stay in the sun longer	HIGH	Encourages extended exposure.	Remove.
153	instant protection	CHECK	Needs evidence.	Follow standard application instructions.
154	SPF foundation protects like sunscreen	CHECK	Needs full SPF testing at normal-use amounts.	State the tested SPF only.
155	chemical-free sunscreen	HIGH	All UV filters are chemicals.	'With mineral UV filters.'

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
156	baby sunscreen, safe from day one	HIGH	Babies should be kept out of direct sun.	Follow EU guidance on infant sun exposure.
157	blue light / HEV protection	CHECK	Needs a specific test method.	Keep only with test data.
158	after-sun repairs sun damage	HIGH	Repair claim = medicinal.	'Cools and soothes skin after sun.'
159	tan accelerator / tan faster	CHECK	Must not suggest tanning is safe.	Add sun-protection warnings.
160	self-tan protects from the sun	HIGH	Self-tanners give no UV protection.	Add the warning: 'Does not protect from the sun'.

I

Ingredients that block listings

EU cosmetics law works with lists: prohibited substances (Annex II) and restricted ones with limits and warnings (Annex III). The lists change — retinol, kojic acid and alpha-arbutin were all capped recently. One Annex update can make a bestseller unsellable in 27 countries at once.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
161	hydroquinone	HIGH	Prohibited in cosmetics (except artificial nail systems).	Remove or reformulate.
162	mercury compounds	HIGH	Prohibited.	Remove.
163	tretinoin / retinoic acid	HIGH	Prescription medicine. Prohibited in cosmetics.	Reformulate with permitted retinoids within limits.
164	retinol above EU limits	CHECK	Capped at 0.3% RE in face and hand products, 0.05% in body lotions, with a warning.	Check concentration and add the required warning.
165	kojic acid above 1%	CHECK	Capped at 1% in face and hand products.	Check concentration.
166	alpha-arbutin above limits	CHECK	Capped at 2% in face cream, 0.5% in body lotion.	Check concentration.
167	Lilial (butylphenyl methylpropional)	HIGH	Banned since 2022 as a reproductive toxin.	Check your fragrance supplier's IFRA/allergen documents.
168	zinc pyrithione	HIGH	Banned in cosmetics since 2022.	Reformulate (common in US anti-dandruff shampoos).
169	triclosan	CHECK	Restricted to specific product types and concentrations.	Check against Annex V.
170	benzoyl peroxide	HIGH	Medicinal. Prohibited in cosmetics except nail systems.	Remove.
171	minoxidil	HIGH	Medicinal substance.	Remove.
172	steroids (e.g. clobetasol, hydrocortisone)	HIGH	Medicines.	Remove.
173	loose glitter / microbeads	HIGH	Intentionally added microplastics are restricted in the EU.	Switch to compliant alternatives.
174	formaldehyde	HIGH	Prohibited as an ingredient. Releasers need warnings.	Check for formaldehyde releasers and warning labels.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
175	methylisothiazolinone (leave-on)	HIGH	Banned in leave-on products.	Reformulate.
176	salicylic acid (high % or kids' products)	CHECK	Concentration limits. Not for under-3s (except shampoo).	Check concentration and target age.
177	PPD and other hair dye substances	CHECK	Restricted, with mandatory warnings.	Check limits and warning text.
178	prostaglandin analogues in lash serums	CHECK	Classed as medicinal or unsafe by some national authorities.	Check each target country before launch.
179	CBD	CHECK	Allowed only from permitted sources and forms.	Check the exact CBD ingredient against CosIng and national rules.
180	titanium dioxide in sprays / loose powders	CHECK	Restricted in inhalable forms.	Check product form and particle size.

Same product. Different country. Different rules.

Market Explorer shows which EU marketplaces make sense for your product — revenue forecast, break-even and compliance costs — before you commit a budget.

→ marketexplorer.innells.com

Amazon policy, hype and US-style labels

These phrases break Amazon's listing rules or show that the product was never adapted for the EU. Both are a fast route to suppression.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
181	best seller / #1 best seller	HIGH	Amazon prohibits this in listings.	Remove.
182	guaranteed results	HIGH	Promise of results.	Remove.
183	money-back guarantee	CHECK	Amazon prohibits guarantee information in listings.	Remove from the listing.
184	risk-free	HIGH	Misleading.	Remove.
185	free gift / free shipping	HIGH	Promotional and shipping info are not allowed in listings.	Use Amazon promotions tools.
186	sale / discount / % off	HIGH	Pricing language is prohibited in titles and bullets.	Use coupons and deals.
187	limited time only	HIGH	Time-pressure language.	Remove.
188	cheapest / lowest price	HIGH	Pricing claims are not allowed.	Remove.
189	dupe of [brand] / compare to [brand]	HIGH	Uses someone else's trademark. Triggers IP complaints.	Describe your product on its own terms.
190	Amazon's Choice	HIGH	You can't claim Amazon badges in your copy.	Remove.
191	★ ✓ ♥ in titles	CHECK	Special characters are not allowed in titles.	Plain text only.
192	viral on TikTok / trending	CHECK	Unverifiable and promotional.	Remove from the listing.
193	the best / #1 in Europe	CHECK	Needs independent proof.	Say what makes it different.
194	Drug Facts panel	HIGH	US OTC drug format.	Rebuild the label to EU cosmetics rules.
195	OTC / over-the-counter	HIGH	US drug category.	Remove.

#	PHRASE	RISK	WHY IT'S RISKY IN THE EU	SAFER ROUTE
196	'Active ingredients:' section	CHECK	US drug-label format.	Full INCI list in descending order.
197	US ingredient names (e.g. 'Water, Vitamin E')	CHECK	The EU requires INCI names.	'Aqua, Tocopherol'...
198	'Distributed by [US company]' only	HIGH	The EU label must name an EU Responsible Person.	Appoint an EU Responsible Person and add their address.
199	no PAO symbol or expiry date	CHECK	Required on EU labels.	Add the PAO symbol (e.g. 12M) or best-before date.
200	English-only label	CHECK	Label languages are set by each country.	Translate mandatory information for each target market.

Your AI listing filter

Three steps, about a minute:

1

Open ChatGPT, Claude or the AI tool you already use.

2

Upload
INNELS_EU_Banned_Phrases_B
eauty_Cosmetics.csv.

3

Copy the prompt below, paste your listing at the end, and send.

COPY PROMPT

You are an EU compliance reviewer for Amazon beauty and cosmetics listings.

I have attached a CSV file with risky phrases for the EU market. Each row has: the phrase, its category, a risk level (HIGH or CHECK), why it is risky, and a safer route.

Target marketplaces: [e.g. Amazon.de, .fr, .it, .es, .nl]

Please review my listing below:

1. Check every sentence against the CSV. Match the meaning, not only exact words (for example, "wakes up your hair follicles" matches "stimulates hair growth").
2. For every match, return a table with: my original text | matched phrase | risk level | why | suggested rewrite.
3. Also flag anything that sounds like a medical, physiological, safety, sun-protection or environmental claim, even if it is not in the CSV. Also flag any ingredient from the CSV that appears in my INCI list.
4. Keep suggested rewrites to appearance-based cosmetic claims. Mark every rewrite "needs evidence", because every cosmetic claim must be substantiated.
5. Finish with a short summary: number of HIGH items, number of CHECK items, and the three changes I should make first.

My listing (title, bullet points, description, A+ text, INCI list):
[paste here]

What the filter can't do

It catches words and meanings. It does not check ingredient concentrations, your safety assessment, CPNP notification, label format, or the claims in your images and packaging. AI tools can also miss things. Treat the result as a first pass, not a sign-off.

10 checks before you publish in the EU

- ☐ **1** No medical or disease words anywhere — title, bullets, A+, images, video.
- ☐ **2** No claims about changing how the body works (collagen production, hair growth, DNA, hormones).
- ☐ **3** Every claim — including numbers, percentages and timeframes — is backed by a study you can show.
- ☐ **4** No "free from" claims that denigrate permitted ingredients or mention banned ones.
- ☐ **5** No generic green claims ("eco-friendly", "reef safe", "climate neutral") and no self-made badges.
- ☐ **6** Every ingredient checked against the latest Annex II and III updates, including concentration limits and warnings.
- ☐ **7** Sunscreens: no "sunblock", "waterproof" or SPF above "50+"; UVA logo and reapplication instructions present.
- ☐ **8** EU Responsible Person appointed, safety assessment done, product notified in CPNP.
- ☐ **9** Label rebuilt to EU format: INCI names, PAO or expiry, batch number, Responsible Person address, local languages.
- ☐ **10** No Amazon-prohibited language: best seller, guarantees, promos, prices, "dupe of", special characters in titles.

About INNELS

INNELS is an Amazon and marketplace agency based in Copenhagen and Riga. We help brands from the US, Canada and Europe launch and grow on Amazon and other marketplaces across the EU and UK — from market selection and compliance to listings, advertising and operations.

NEXT STEP

Check your listing for free →

check.innells.com

Find your best EU markets →

marketexplorer.innells.com

Talk to our EU team →

innells.com

Disclaimer: This playbook is a practical guide based on EU cosmetics regulations, national rules and Amazon policies as of September 2026. It is not legal advice. Rules and ingredient annexes change; always verify claims and ingredients with your Responsible Person and safety assessor before publishing.

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BEAUTY & COSMETICS EDITION