

# Press kit



**NATRUE**

The International Natural and Organic Cosmetics  
Association

*Nature cannot be reinvented*

**2021**



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## Protect and promote natural and organic cosmetics to the benefit of consumers worldwide

**NATRUE is an international non-profit association based in Brussels. Since its creation in 2007, NATRUE has been engaged in the promotion and protection of natural and organic cosmetics around the world. Currently thousands of cosmetic products developed and marketed by hundreds of brands carry the NATRUE seal.**

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### NATRUE's mission

**Promoting and protecting natural and organic cosmetics for the benefit of consumers worldwide means:**

- Guarantee that consumers have access to authentic natural and organic cosmetics certified to verifiable and transparent criteria;
  - Advocate for natural and organic ingredients to protect and promote the production of natural and organic cosmetics;
  - Help consumers to identify natural and organic cosmetics and to easily obtain information about brands and NATRUE certified products in [NATRUE's online database](#);
  - Contribute to better regulation concerning the definitions and claims used in natural and organic cosmetics.
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Natural and organic products came to the forefront in the early 1970s. Supported by the development of environmental and ecological movements worldwide, the natural and organic sector offered more natural and sustainable alternatives to traditional consumption patterns.

Natural and organic products represented a niche market in many countries until the beginning of the 2000s. However, as consumer awareness about natural and organic ingredients kept growing, so did the demand for these products, particularly in the food and cosmetic sectors. Nowadays, the fast development of e-commerce channels and the growing popularity of specialized natural and organic shops have contributed to consolidating the presence of natural and organic cosmetics in the worldwide market. However, the fast development of the natural and organic cosmetic sector clashes with the lack of regulation for “natural” and “organic” claims in cosmetics, which can leave consumers unprotected in the face of greenwashing. In order to guarantee the authenticity and qualities consumers expect of natural and organic cosmetics, the pioneers of the natural care sector in Europe joined forces in 2007 to create NATRUE, an association whose mission is to protect and promote natural and organic cosmetics to the benefit of consumers worldwide. To support this objective, the NATRUE Label was created in 2008 to help consumers easily identify natural and organic cosmetics that meet consumer expectations of “natural” and “organic” claims through verifiable criteria.



## The requirements of the NATRUE Label

In a context where cosmetics regulations were becoming more and more complex, many cosmetic companies in the natural and organic sector felt the need to be represented and to speak with a single voice at international regulatory level. In 2007, the need for better regulation and the lack of an international definition for “natural” and “organic” cosmetics led finally to the creation of NATRUE, the International Natural and Organic Cosmetics Association. A year later, the NATRUE Label was created to help producers and consumers to identify natural and organic cosmetics compliant with the rigorous NATRUE standard. NATRUE was founded by the pioneers and largest producers of natural and organic cosmetics in Europe: Weleda, WALA, Laverana, PRIMAVERA, LOGOCOS and CEP.

14 years after its creation, NATRUE is a trusted and respected association and label that has consolidated its position as a benchmark for the protection and promotion of natural and organic cosmetics in Europe and worldwide.

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### What makes the NATRUE Label special

- The rigorous criteria of the NATRUE label only allow non-GMO natural, derived natural and nature-identical ingredients in the formulation of natural and organic cosmetic products. NATRUE believes that nature cannot be reinvented, nor can natural and organic ingredients be replaced by ingredients of petrochemical origin.
- At least 75% (or 8 out of 10 products) of a brand or sub-brand must be eligible to certification to the NATRUE standard in order to obtain the label. With this strict rule, NATRUE ensures that only companies truly committed to promoting natural and organic cosmetics and to fighting greenwashing can certify their products under the NATRUE Label scheme.
- NATRUE distinguishes 13 different categories of cosmetic products to best acknowledge their characteristics at formulation level. NATRUE’s classification supports cosmetic innovation and ensures maximum levels of natural and organic content adapted to each type of cosmetic product across two certification levels: natural cosmetics and organic cosmetics.
- In order to better represent the percentage of natural or organic ingredients in a cosmetic, the NATRUE Label criteria exclude added water from the calculation of the natural or organic content in a product, unless it is derived from a plant.
- When the NATRUE logo appears on-pack, the consumer can be reassured that the product it contains has been subject to a certification process where its compliance with the strict NATRUE criteria has been fully controlled and verified. The certification process for all NATRUE certified products is carried out by external, accredited and independent certification bodies.
- In its role of international association, NATRUE actively contributes to the work of European regulatory decision-making bodies and groups in the cosmetics area. NATRUE advocates that any future regulatory definition of natural and organic cosmetics must be strict to prevent the market being filled with cosmetic products “inspired by nature” to the detriment of products that provide real guarantees for “natural” and “organic” claims.

## Natural, derived natural and nature-identical substances

The NATRUE Label can only be granted to natural and organic cosmetics made with non-GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms), 100% natural, derived natural or nature-identical substances. In other words, substances which are:

- 100% natural (unmodified and obtained only by physical processes or fermentation) or derived natural ingredients (resulting of allowed chemical reaction processes on natural ingredients);
- certain nature-identical preservatives, pigments and minerals (these substances are reproduced in the lab but they can be found in nature).

Non-authorized substances:

- substances from petrochemical origin (except a restricted list of nature-identical preservatives) or from GMOs;
- synthetic perfumes, silicones, parabens or microplastics.

To obtain the NATRUE label, cosmetic products must not only comply with requirements at formulation level, but also with strict criteria regarding the ingredients and materials used both inside and outside of the product. Aspects related to manufacturing processes, sustainability at packaging level, commitment to biodiversity and environmental protection and biodegradability of substances are also covered in the NATRUE Label criteria.

Unlike other private standards, the NATRUE criteria establish that added water is not counted in the total content calculation of natural and organic ingredients in order to avoid artificially inflating the percentage of "naturalness" of a cosmetic product.

## Two levels of certification

NATRUE defines two levels of certification for natural and organic cosmetic products depending on the percentage of natural and organic ingredients that the product contains: natural cosmetics and organic cosmetics (at least 95% of the natural or derived natural substances must be organic).

- **Natural cosmetics:** depending on the product category, a minimum level of natural substances and maximum levels of processed substances of natural origin (derived natural substances) must be respected.
- **Organic cosmetics:** over and above the basic requirements laid for natural cosmetics with organic content, at least 95% of the natural substances and derived natural substances must come from controlled organic farming and/or wild collection.

Ingredients from animal origin (excluding dead vertebrate animals) are allowed under the NATRUE standard as long as they comply with the requirements laid out for ingredients.

## 13 product categories

NATRUE has established a classification of 13 types of cosmetic products with adapted requirements for minimum levels of natural substances and maximum levels of derived natural substances. While setting a rigorous and reliable standard, NATRUE also acknowledges that the inherent differences in the formulation and functions of these 13 product categories require different types of criteria within the same level of certification:

1. Oils/water-free cleaning and skin care products



2. Parfums, Eaux de Parfum, Eaux de Toilette, Eaux de Cologne
3. Skin care emulsions (water/oil) and oleogels
4. Decorative cosmetics containing water
5. Deodorants and antiperspirants
6. Skin care emulsions (oil/water) and gels
7. Sunscreens
8. Hair treatment products
9. Cleansing products containing surfactants
10. Oral care
11. Decorative cosmetics, water-free
12. Soaps
13. Waters

### **NATRUE's 75% rule against greenwashing**

At least 75% of all cosmetic products of a brand or sub-brand (or 8 out of 10 products) must be compliant with the NATRUE Label criteria in order to be granted the NATRUE Label. Only products that have successfully completed the NATRUE certification process are allowed to use the NATRUE seal on their products.

NATRUE demands a high level of commitment from producers and does not allow a “selective certification” of certain products within a product line, which could mislead consumers as they might think that the whole line is certified as natural or organic cosmetics under the NATRUE Label. NATRUE's 75% strict rule provides therefore a high benchmark for producers committed to keeping greenwashing off the shelves.

### **Controlled criteria by third-party, accredited certifiers**

In order to guarantee the independence and transparency of the certification process, NATRUE does not certify directly any candidate product: the certification process is carried out entirely by a network of third-party, independent NATRUE Approved Certifiers (NACs), which are external and accredited certification bodies responsible for the certification process of products looking to be certified with the NATRUE Label. All NACs must undergo a strict accreditation process by IOAS, NATRUE's partner. Brands that want to have their products certified with the NATRUE Label might choose a NAC based on its availability, services and product specialization.

### **Access to detailed information in NATRUE's website**

-  [NATRUE criteria](#) and Annexes
-  [NATRUE's public online database](#) (with information about products and brands)
-  [Certification and approval process](#)
-  [List of NATRUE Approved Certifiers](#)

## Beyond the label: the role of NATRUE as an international association

**NATRUE's primary mission is to protect and promote natural and organic cosmetics for the benefit of consumers worldwide. To achieve its objectives, NATRUE participates in and contributes to relevant regulatory decision-making bodies' groups and meetings at European and international level. NATRUE also works closely with international organizations, associations and agencies to advocate for better regulation for natural and organic cosmetics.**

### NATRUE's advocacy work

NATRUE participates in and contributes to relevant regulatory decision-making groups, stakeholder meetings and consultations at European and international level:

**NATRUE is a member of the European Commission's Cosmetics Working Group**, where all emerging and evolving regulations affecting cosmetics are addressed (including cosmetic claims and ingredients regulation). "Natural" and "organic" claims are particularly discussed in this working group, which is formed by expert representatives of the cosmetic industry.

**NATRUE is also regularly invited by the European institutions** to participate in and contribute to various Institutional Working Groups and Public Consultations on a number of issues such as fragrance allergens, endocrine disruptors, sustainability and more.

**NATRUE is a member of the European Standardization Organization (CEN)**, where all emerging and evolving European standards are discussed and agreed or rejected. If the European Commission mandates CEN to develop a standard, upon its adoption, the standard becomes a European harmonized standard and is referenced as such in the relevant EU Regulations. If a CEN Member tables a standard which is subsequently agreed and adopted, it is not a European harmonized standard, but each Member State can sign up to it individually and integrate it into national law.

**NATRUE is a member of and contributes to ISO TC 217/WG 4**, a multi-stakeholder Cosmetics Group at the International Standardization Organization (ISO). Working Group 4 (WG4) is currently developing Guidelines for technical definitions and criteria for Natural and Organic Cosmetics.

**NATRUE at the European Parliament:** In November 2014, NATRUE held a two-day event, presenting its vision, mission and goals, achievements and challenges in the European Parliament. The focus was on the need for a strict regulatory definition of Natural and Organic Cosmetics.

### Position papers

NATRUE's position papers are informative documents about NATRUE's position as agreed by its members on a specific topic at a specific time. NATRUE's Secretariat drafts all position papers in close collaboration with NATRUE's Working Groups. Position papers are updated as issues and regulations evolve.



### **NATRUE's position papers (available for download)**

<https://www.natrue.org/why-us/fact-sheets-position-papers/>

- 🌿 Fragrance allergens
- 🌿 NATRUE statement on Animal Testing
- 🌿 China and Animal Testing Q&As
- 🌿 Pesticide Residues
- 🌿 Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals
- 🌿 Hydrolates Statement
- 🌿 New Plant Breeding Techniques

### **Direct information for consumers: NATRUE's online database**

[NATRUE's public online database](#) is a key consultation tool for consumers as it provides them with updated and detailed information about all NATRUE certified products and the brands that produce them. Producers can also find in this database lists of all NATRUE certified and approved raw materials that offer them guidance for the formulation of their cosmetic products.

*Number of products certified with the NATRUE label worldwide: over 6,700 products (real-time updated numbers in [NATRUE's online database](#)).*

### **Market studies**

In order to know more about consumer perception regarding natural and organic cosmetics, NATRUE carried out a consumer study in 2015 to further explore the territory of natural and organic cosmetics in Europe. GfK was in charge of collecting and summarizing the results of this study, which are available in [NATRUE's website](#). Over 60% of consumers said they were reassured during their purchases by the presence of labels on natural and organic cosmetics.

## 10 key claims

frequently used to define natural and organic cosmetics

**Currently there isn't a harmonised standard at EU level to support natural and organic claims made in relation to cosmetic products. As a result, it is possible that not every cosmetic product identifying itself as "natural" or "organic" meets consumers' expectations. The threat of greenwashing gives consumers valid reasons to be sceptical about the degree of veracity of claims, particularly in cosmetics that don't offer any verifiable guarantees about their "natural" or "organic" qualities. Certain claims often used for natural and organic cosmetics have indeed become very confusing for consumers. In this article we list the 10 most-used claims and provide some tips on how to better recognize and verify them.**

### 1. Natural

The term 'natural' is very popular and broadly used, but in the absence of an official regulatory definition for natural cosmetics, it does not say much about the product unless properly qualified with verifiable guarantees (for instance, regarding its composition). Private voluntary standards with certification seals such as the NATRUE Label provide defined guarantees for natural and organic cosmetics based on a set of criteria for formulation, processes, ingredients, product packaging, etc.

The NATRUE seal guides consumers in their purchasing decisions and helps them to easily identify authentic natural and organic cosmetic products certified to verifiable criteria that have been controlled by accredited, independent certification bodies.

### 2. Organic

As in the case of 'natural', there is no official definition of the term 'organic' for cosmetic products. The EU Organic Regulation for food produced through organic agriculture does not extend to define how the term 'organic' applies to non-food products like cosmetics. The EU Cosmetic Regulation considers the term 'organic' a claim. Unlike food legislation, the EU Cosmetic Regulation does not establish the percentage of the product that must be organic so it can claim this quality. This means that there is no guarantee regarding the proportion of raw materials that must be organic to consider this claim as not misleading when used on a cosmetic. Moreover, existing cosmetic legislation does not ban or restrict the use of synthetic substances or part-synthetic substances in organic cosmetics.

For NATRUE, organic raw materials are those proven to have been produced and controlled according to an organic standard or regulation approved in the IFOAM Family of Standards. A cosmetic product can only claim the organic level of certification under the NATRUE Label if at least 95% of its natural and derived natural substances come from controlled organic farming and/or wild collection.

### 3. GMO-free

The EU Organic Regulation prohibits organic food products produced from and by GMOs. However, in the EU Cosmetic Regulation there isn't any mandatory requirement for cosmetics claiming to be natural or organic to exclude ingredients from GMO plant origin or to label which ones are from GMOs. Consequently, products claiming to be organic could be formulated with raw materials from GMO plant origin without notifying the consumer of their presence through labelling. The NATRUE Label criteria does not allow the use of ingredients from GMO plants, therefore guaranteeing consumers that all ingredients present in a NATRUE certified product are GMO-free.



#### 4. Chemical-free

The word 'chemical' is colloquially used as a synonym for 'synthetic' (man-made) substances, including petrochemicals. However, from a scientific point of view, all life involves chemical elements and reactions, so claiming that a product is free of chemicals is inaccurate and misleading, because there is no such thing as a 'chemical free' cosmetic. Every cosmetic or personal care product is made of chemicals: for instance, water itself is a chemical substance.

#### 5. Safe

Every cosmetic, conventional, natural or organic, is subject to strict safety assessments required by law as described in the EU Cosmetic Regulation. This means that every cosmetic product placed on the EU market has been assessed for its safety to human health. If there are any concerns over the safety of an ingredient, these are brought to the attention of the EU Commission by the EU Member State authorities, but from a legal point of view, all cosmetic products placed in the EU market are equally safe.

#### 6. Non-toxic

The term 'non-toxic' is undefined, but it is sometimes used to describe cosmetics that are free from petroleum ingredients or ingredients that are perceived as hazardous. However, cosmetics are assessed on risk, and risk is based upon the basic hazard of a substance and how much one is exposed to it. For instance, even water in too little or too large doses could be harmful.

From a scientific point of view, 'toxic ingredients' are those for which there is toxicological evidence for their harm to human health and/or the environment. Substances that are highly toxic without a safe use limit are banned in the EU Cosmetic Regulation. Restricted substances must be first approved for use based upon a positive risk assessment and can only be used in a product up to specific concentrations.

#### 7. Free from

Some ingredients such as silicones or parabens have become undesirable in cosmetics. Some manufacturers trying to find ways to position their products on the market might promote them emphasizing the absence of such ingredients. However, such claims could be considered as misleading if they suggest that one product is safer than another based on the substances it is free from. Moreover, a 'free from X ingredient' claim may be considered denigrating to that substance (or family of substances) if there is no scientific evidence to support that it is unsafe. It is also considered as misleading to claim that a cosmetic is "free from X ingredient" if the use of that ingredient is already banned by law.

An example of a free from claim is "allergen-free". Cosmetics are often made of complex mixtures, so if there's an allergic reaction, it might be difficult to detect which exact substance or combination of substances the consumer might be allergic to. Moreover, consumers may develop an allergy to any type of substance, whether natural or synthetic. Since the development of allergies doesn't follow a fixed pattern (undesired effects may appear in the first use of the product or only after years of exposure), it is not possible to guarantee a complete absence of the risk of an allergic reaction of a given cosmetic, either conventional or natural.

#### 8. Not tested on animals

Similar to the 'free from' claims, misleading claims referring to the absence of animal testing are used sometimes in cosmetics to differentiate them from others. However, animal testing has been banned in the EU since 2013 as per Article 18 of the EU Cosmetics Regulation. Claims referring to 'no animal testing' are regulated in Article 20 of the EU Cosmetic Regulation.



The NATRUE Label extends EU's testing ban globally as its criteria prohibits the use of the NATRUE seal on products in countries where animal testing is required for the product to be placed in the market.

## 9. Vegan

Products not tested on animals are not automatically vegan, and vice-versa. The term 'vegan' is not legally protected at EU level, but it is possible to guarantee that a product is vegan through private standards or definitions. Cosmetics certified to private natural and organic standards such as the NATRUE Label are not vegan by default, although they might share many points in their criteria. Looking at the seals on-pack and the list of ingredients can help consumers verify whether a cosmetic is vegan or not.

## 10. Sustainable

Sustainability is a multifactorial concept, so its measurement is often complex. A more sustainable sourcing of raw materials does not refer exclusively to the way the ingredient is cultivated, but also to the materials and resources used along its whole production, supply chain and even post-use. Consumers of natural and organic cosmetics are often committed to sustainability and look for products and brands that align with this value. While many of them do so in a transparent way, consumers need to remain vigilant to identify products that really guarantee sustainable qualities. Aspects linked to packaging, biodiversity protection and biodegradability of raw materials are covered in the NATRUE Label criteria, which ensure that a NATRUE certified cosmetic product is green "inside and out".

*"Some of the claims explained above are specifically related to natural and organic cosmetics, but many of them also apply to cosmetic products in general. The main issue that consumers currently face is the lack of transparency and clarity regarding the use of these claims. NATRUE advises consumers to remain vigilant and look for products that really meet their expectations. Certain labels can guarantee that the product complies with specific, strict requirements, hence reassuring consumers about the qualities and guarantees of the product."*

*The NATRUE Label provides easy guidance to help consumers identify authentic natural and organic cosmetic products that meet rigorous, verifiable and independently certified criteria. This is why the NATRUE label can only be found on natural and organic cosmetics that represent natural and organic qualities in an authentic way."*

**Mark Smith, NATRUE's Director General**



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## About NATRUE

NATRUE is an international non-profit organization created in 2007 in Brussels. NATRUE protects and promotes authentic natural and organic cosmetics to the benefit of consumers worldwide. In its role as association, NATRUE advocates for better regulation in the natural and organic cosmetic sector. As a benchmark for the certification of natural and organic cosmetics, the NATRUE Label sets a high standard that guarantees quality and integrity. When consumers see the NATRUE Label on a cosmetic product, they can rest assured about its qualities and guarantees.

Currently over 7,000 products from over 320 brands and more than 500 raw materials carry the NATRUE Label. All NATRUE certified products are listed in [NATRUE's public online database](#).

More information about NATRUE is available in English, French, German, Spanish and Italian at [www.natrue.org](http://www.natrue.org) - NATRUE, 40 Rue Washington, 1050 Brussels – Belgium

### *Presentation video about NATRUE in [YouTube](#)*



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### Press enquiries:

Ana LEDESMA • +32 2 613 29 35 • [aledesma@natrue.eu](mailto:aledesma@natrue.eu)