UPC vs EAN-13: THE SUNRISE DATE

January 2005 is known among GS1 Standards users across the world, as the Sunrise Date for full acceptance of EAN-13 and UPC-A barcodes worldwide.

With the exception of the United States and Canada, retail products from around the world were marked with EAN-13 symbols prior to 2005. To sell those products in the U.S. and Canada, manufacturers were required to re-label their products with a 12-digit UPC barcode symbol. This created additional expense and time-to-market issues.

The Sunrise Date is referred to an industry initiative established by GS1 US (formerly the Uniform Code Council). As of January 1st 2005, retailers and trading partners that scan UPC barcodes (12-digit length) should have expanded the data structures associated with the UPC to a 13-digit field length, to process EAN-13 symbols.

Additionally, GS1 US recommended that all manufacturers, retailers, and distributors update and expand their databases and applications to accept 14-digit data structures. These data structures would support the Global Trade Item Number (GTIN), allowing complete item identification to support efficient and seamless global trade.

Expanding system capability to scan and process EAN-13 symbols as well as UPC symbols, allowed companies to handle a greater range of products. The number of products identified with EAN-13 symbols increased quickly after January 1, 2005 because UPC prefixes were no longer issued to new companies based outside of the U.S. and Canada, at least not widely. These new companies need only to use EAN-13 symbols to mark their products.

- Since that date most retailers have been able to handle products marked with EAN-13 symbols. However, if you are thinking of exporting to the U.S. or Canada, we always recommend that you check with your trading partners to make sure this will cause no problems.

- In case that they ask specific for a 12-digit UPC barcode, you can always contact your local GS1 office, in order to allocate a unique GS1 UPC prefix to your company.

Either you use EAN-13 or UPC-12, you should always make sure that your barcodes have been issued by an authorized GS1 source and they are included in the Global GS1 Registry, GEPIR (www.gepir.org). GEPIR is a free accessible internet platform, that allows the validity of barcodes to be easily confirmed by trading partners, customs office, consumers, etc.
Today, most retailers worldwide check the validity of barcodes, before they even import the products to their supply chain. Delhaize, Kroger, Ahold, Walmart, Safeway, Hannaford, Food Lion, Albertsons are only few of them, along with Google, eBay, Amazon, Alibaba and other e-tailers.

**WHO ASSIGNS VALID GS1 BARCODES?**

GS1 is a neutral, not-for-profit, global organization that develops and maintains the most widely used supply chain standards system in the world.

With local Member Organisations in over 110 countries, GS1 engages with communities of trading partners, industry organisations, governments and technology providers to understand and respond to their business needs through the adoption and implementation of global standards.

**In Greece, the only valid source for GS1 Barcodes is GS1 Association Greece. GS1 Association Greece is authorized to administer the GS1 system of Standards as sole member and representative of GS1 Global.**

**GS1 Standards** improve the safety, and visibility of supply chains, reduce costs and deliver exceptional efficiency in many different industries. They give a common language to identify, capture and share supply chain data – ensuring important information is accessible, accurate and easy to understand.

Core sectors are retail, healthcare, transport, logistics and foodservice.

Among all GS1 Standards, **GS1 Barcode** is the most recognizable, playing a crucial role in the supply chain, ensuring products reach retail shelves at the right time, helping trading partners exchange critical data - from manufacturer to consumer - creating a common language that underpins systems and processes all over the world.

GS1 is driven by **over 3 million user companies**, which execute more than **6 billion transactions daily** in **150 countries** using GS1 standards. It is funded and governed by its members, so everything is done in their interests.

**For more information, please visit** [www.gs1greece.org](http://www.gs1greece.org).

**GS1 Association Greece**
Alexioupolioles 32, 16452 Athens
**T** +30 210 9904260
**E** info@gs1greece.org