

To
Mr Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for
Environment, Maritime Affairs & Fisheries
European Commission, Brussels

Call for action:
**Time to strengthen REACH in order to eliminate hazardous
chemicals in textile products**

The current situation with differing rules, regulations and restrictions on hazardous chemicals in textile products is not sustainable. The processes are not standardised and there are hundreds of different voluntary requirements from companies and demands from different stakeholders. This leads to a situation where producers spend more time trying to monitor and fulfil all the different demands than focusing on long-term detoxification of textile products. The requirements in the companies' RSLs (restricted lists of substances) are often similar but not always and the details, such as limits and methods of analysis, may differ.

TEKO, Swedish Textile and Clothing Industries' Association and the Swedish Trade Federation (Svensk Handel) believe that time has come to regulate the presence of more hazardous chemicals in textile products on EU level through REACH. We argue that:

- Our experience shows that common rules on EU-level are necessary in order to reduce the presence of hazardous chemicals in textile products efficiently.
- Common rules would bring substantial benefits for businesses, consumers and the environment. Producers will know from the start which rules apply and anyone following these rules will gain access to the entire European market. It will provide a level playing field, allowing companies to compete on equal terms.
- Legislation on EU level means applying common rules on a market of over 500 million inhabitants. It will increase predictability and incentives both for the chemical industry and for the textile industry to develop products that meet the requirements.
- A common regulation, such as REACH, means more accurate, efficient and cost effective check-ups throughout the supply chain for manufacturers, importers and retailers.
- Uniformed methods of analysis and control would further reduce costs.

We urge the EU Commission to take this important step towards the goal of a non-toxic environment.

Stockholm, February 24, 2015

SVENSK HANDEL



Karin Johansson

TEKO,
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Elin Lydahl

Svensk Handel - The Swedish Trade Federation - represents more than 12 000 Swedish businesses with a total of 23 500 workplaces employing 300 000 professionals within retail and wholesale including import, export and e-commerce. Our members comprise the full range of Swedish retail and wholesale; multinational companies active all over the European Union and elsewhere, national retail chains and local SMEs. The Swedish Trade Federation is a member of EuroCommerce.

TEKO, Swedish Textile and Clothing Industries' Association is the Swedish trade and employers' association for companies working in the textile and fashion industry. We have about 200 member companies with a combined work force of 7 000 employees. Their operations range from global corporations with a hundred years in business to newly established sole proprietorships. Their common denominator is that they work in one of the three fields represented by TEKO: Fashion and apparel, Technical Textiles and Interior Textiles, many with a focus on export.

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DG Environment
Director General Karl Falkenberg
Head of Unit Bjorn Hansen, Director A3. Chemicals
The Swedish Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson