

Position paper on EU-regulation of hazardous chemicals in textile products by TEKO, the Swedish Textile and Clothing Industries' Association

The current situation regarding rules and regulations on hazardous chemicals in textile products is not sustainable. The processes are in no way standardised and there are hundreds of different eco-labels and different demands from different companies and stakeholders. This has led to a situation where more time is spent by producers trying to monitor all the demands and requirements than focusing on long-term detoxification of textile products. The requirements laid down are often similar but the details vary. The sheer diversity of current labels and certifications in place are a hindrance to the free movement of goods, one of the pillars of the EU.

TEKO, the Swedish Textile and Clothing Industries' Association together with its member companies feel that time has come to regulate the presence of hazardous chemicals in textile products on EU-level. We argue that:

- All labelling organisations have the same basic ambition which is to work towards a reduction of the use of chemicals in textiles for the benefit of people's health and the environment. Different criteria mean check-ups to ensure that the requirements are met and this is neither cost effective nor efficient. A common system of regulations means more accurate, efficient and cost effective check-ups.
- The current system of voluntary labelling makes it possible for importers and other stakeholders to get round the laid down requirements. This causes a problem for serious manufacturers and importers.
- Our experience shows that common and imperative rules are necessary in order for the mechanism of reducing the presence of hazardous chemicals in textile products to reach full impact.
- Common and imperative rules for the entire Union would bring substantial benefits for businesses, consumers and the environment. Uniformed methods of analysis and control would reduce costs.
- With common regulations, everyone involved would know from the start what the regulations are. This would work as an incentive for the producers of chemicals to replace hazardous chemicals with more suitable substances and/or for the textile industry to adapt their products thus rendering the use of hazardous chemicals unnecessary.

- Once a producer has verified that all the chemicals involved meet the set out requirements, the go-ahead would be given for production, no matter which product or which customer is intended.
- Legislation on EU level means applying common rules on a market of over 500 million inhabitants. It will increase predictability and incentives to develop products that meet the requirements. Producers will know from the start what rules apply and anyone following these rules will gain access to the entire European market.
- Common EU rules will shut the gaps in the current system of voluntary labelling, thus creating a more fair system and increasing consumer security.
- Demands, requirements etc. ought to be negotiated between the EU and the industry in the same manner as the Eco-design regulation has been in order to ensure a smooth and effective process.

Time has come for the EU Parliament to take action towards achieving the goal of a non-toxic living.

Stockholm November 16, 2012

Sven Gatenheim
President of the Board

Ola Toftegaard,
Managing Director

Henrik Willers
Environmental Expert