Labelling of chemicals in textiles

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Different actors have different needs

➢ What is the safe-guard object?
➢ What are the societal benefits?
➢ Which actors will be affected by the proposal and how?

Textile value chains are global and very complex
The textile value chains represent a diversity of chemicals

Chemical issues

**Raw materials:**
- Pesticides
- Fertilisers
- Crude oil
- Fracking agents

**Fibre production:**
- Solvents
- Carbon disulfide
- Surfactants
- Monomers
- Catalysts

**Yarn spinning:**
- Spinning oils

**Fabric manufacturing:**
- Needle oils
- Sizing agents

**Wet treatment:**
- Detergents
- Lubricants
- Stabilizers
- Bleach
- Dyestuff
- Sells
- Softeners
- Finishing agents
- Water emissions
- COD

**Drying/finishing:**
- Air emissions
- Prints
- Finishing agents

**Garment making:**
- Stain removal
- Spray bleaching

**Transport:**
- Biocides
- Container gas
- Fuel combustion

* Finishing agents are e.g. biocides, flame retardants, water/oil repellents etc.
Our mission

1. Mapping of the international activities

2. Survey of consumer demand/need

3. Mapping substances to be included in labelling/declaration schemes

4. Impact assessment

5. Analysis of legal and practical possibilities

6. Development of a first proposal for a joint Nordic strategy
Mapping of the international activities

• 15 different regulations in the EU/European countries

• 108 textile ecolabels (Ecolabel index, 2016)

• 7 examples of voluntary chemicals management

• Public procurement

• National initiatives to strengthen the knowledge
Survey of consumer demand/need

- Two independent consumer surveys, October 2016 (236 respective 915 respondents)

- A majority of respondents:
  - think that textiles may contain hazardous chemicals
  - have previously felt the need for a label that tells which chemicals are present in textiles
  - would like a label that tells which chemicals are present in clothing and home textiles to exist
  - would use such a label to choose between different textile products
  - would be most interested in knowing:
    - if the product itself contains something hazardous
    - if it has been produced using chemicals that have been hazardous for the textile workers
Mapping substances to be included

Substances?
1. chemical structure?
2. functional properties?
3. hazard classification?

Consumers’ interest?
- individuals’ (consumers and workers) health
- the production sites’ local environment
- the consumer’s local environment
- the global environment

End-of-life actors’ interest?
- chemicals compromising the legal compliance of secondary raw materials
- workers’ health
- chemicals affecting the process
Impact assessment

• Benefits:
  – Continuing to improve the working and social conditions of workers outside the EU, while offering textiles at an affordable price for EU consumers;
  – Improving the overall environmental footprint of textiles over their entire life-cycle;
  – Changing consumer attitudes of buying as cheap as possible and as much as possible;
  – Providing consumers with relevant information concerning the environmental footprint of the textile products as well as the associated health risk, based on harmonized systems – at least at European level;
  – Consumer organisations generally favour harmonised, mandatory systems in order to ensure that consumers meet the same information across the EU.

• Drawbacks:
  – Increasing the bureaucratic burden on businesses while not achieving the expected desired effect;
Analysis of legal and practical possibilities

• Barriers:
  1. The work load of introducing new legislation or making additions to current legislations
  2. The work load in converting the textile supply chain (where the major part is not subject to EU law since it takes place outside the EU borders) into a non-toxic supply chain

• Two alternative proposals for legal requirements:
  – an extension of REACH legislation to make it applicable for labelling and declaration; or
  – the creation of a new product safety regulation for textiles that could include CE-marking. Industry stakeholders in general favour the first option.

• A way forward may also include
  – Encourage non-toxic (frontrunner) initiatives
  – Connect green procurement into labelling/declaration standards
  – Efficient and clear societal communication
  – Support to develop the Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) system (voluntary-based)
  – Effective policy approach
  – New technologies impact
Thank you!