NOTE

from: Commission
to: Council (Competitiveness)
No. Cion prop.: 6095/1/09 REV1 TEXT 2 MI 47 ENT 19 CHIMIE 11 ECO 11 CONSOM 27 CODEC 131

Subject: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on textile names and related labelling of textile products

Delegations will find as annex an information note by the Commission on the subject-matter which will be presented at the Competitiveness Council on 25 May 2010 under "Any other business".

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Revision of existing EU legislation on textile labelling

Existing EU legislation on textile labelling requires textile products marketed in the EU to include a label with information about their fibre composition and harmonises the fibre names used for that purpose. This legislation consists of three Directives which need to be updated every time a new fibre name is added to the list of harmonised names. For public authorities and industry, the key issue surrounding the current regulatory framework is the burden and the time taken for the legal adoption of new fibre names.

In the context of the Better Regulation initiative, the Commission adopted a proposal for a new regulation bringing together all legislation (three basic Directives with subsequent amendments) related to textile names and labelling. The proposal seeks to simplify the existing regulatory environment for the labelling of textile products and to streamline the adoption of new fibre names with a view to encourage innovation in the textile industry and save transposition costs for national administrations.

Following the adoption of the proposal, the inter-institutional work for adoption by the Council and the European Parliament started in 2009.

State of play of the inter-institutional work

On 16 December 2009, the Economic and Social Committee adopted an opinion which welcomes the initiative.

The technical work at the Council started under the Czech presidency and has progressed under the Swedish and Spanish presidencies, with Member State delegations showing support for the initiative.
At the European Parliament, the Rapporteur, Mr Manders (ALDE, NL), prepared the report on the proposal within the Internal Market and Consumer Committee. The report supports the original proposal and includes amendments to extend the scope of the regulation to harmonise other aspects of textile labelling. Among others, the harmonisation of origin marking ("made-in") and the indication of the presence of animal-derived parts in textile products. At the plenary session of 18 May, the European Parliament adopted its position at first reading, with the support of all major political groups.

**Key issues for the inter-institutional negotiations**

The position adopted by the European Parliament at first reading underlines the relevance of labelling for consumers of textile products and acknowledges correct information about the origin of such goods as essential information to ensure their informed choices. Consequently, the EP proposes a double system for origin marking:

- An obligatory scheme for imported products, which follows the lines of a proposal of the Commission (2005) on the indication of the country of origin of certain imported products, including textile goods.

- A set of rules for the voluntary indication of origin in the case of EU manufactured textile products.

The Commission could support most amendments proposed by the European Parliament. In particular, as regards origin marking, the Commission shares the need to define clearly the country of origin to avoid misleading information. Furthermore, this would bring EU legislation in line with our major trade partners (e.g. USA, China, Russia) who require such indication.

In view of the strong support expressed by major political groups at the European Parliament, the Commission would request Member States to consider carefully the issue of origin marking and support these amendments.

The Commission looks forward to a swift adoption of the new regulation, so that all stakeholders can gather the benefits of a simplified regulatory environment. In this context, the Commission commits to work on the basis of the European Parliament report and to facilitate the negotiation to reach an acceptable compromise between the co-legislators.