

**Petition for a certified quality**  
***Transparency, traceability, composition and origin of products of the TCL sectors***

Improving health and safety conditions of the population should be set as an objective by the international community.

During the last years, Europe has seen increasing requests concerning the improvement of health and safety conditions in the textiles, clothing, leather, footwear and accessories sectors (sectors being part of the so-called *sistema moda*), with particular regard to risks arising from the use of chemicals both at work and to the benefit of final users - citizens and consumers of the European Member States.

As far as **health and safety** are concerned, a greater attention to and a clearer collective knowledge about the use of chemicals in production cycles - coupled with controls certified by public authorities - would surely reduce risks of professional diseases of workers, and better guarantee consumers' health.

**Consumer policy** constitutes however a key element of the strategic objective of the Commission that consists in improving **the quality of life of all citizens of the EU**. The performance of such policies implies legislation and other actions in order to promote the interests, health and security of consumers in the Internal Market, in order to ensure adequate consideration of consumer issues inherent in all policies of the EU and in order to complete the consumer policies conducted by Member States.

The increase in international trade flows and the progressive elimination of tariff barriers however expose the sector to **new risks** due to the entry in trade of textile, clothing, leather and footwear products whose production process is outside the control, since they often use products and processes which are no longer permitted in Europe.

Such new scenarios can cause a greater exposure **of consumers to health risks**. The skin is the part of the body most exposed to the aggression of dangerous substances, that leads to an increase of allergic and irritating dermatitis from contact in **a population**, like that of **Europe**, where there is a confirmed **rise in dermatological pathologies** especially in the youngest age categories.

Textiles, clothing and other products of the TCL sectors are among the most frequent causes of irritating dermatitis (DIC) and allergies (DAC) from contact, and can contain annoying, toxic and carcinogenic substances prohibited by European norms and of individual Member States.

On this subject, various European countries have endorsed directive 2002/61/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 19 July 2002, that prohibits the presence in the end product of azocolourants in a position to releasing twenty two aromatic amines considered carcinogenic.

Clothing Dermatitis generally is attributed to chemical products and dyes, added in an incorrect way to fibres during their manufacture and clothing assembly. In particular, the responsible agents are finishes, colouring, metals, rubber and glues. Also bleaching, biocides, flame retardants and other agents occasionally are recognized as triggering substances.

Numerous researches at international level have permitted the creation of models for the assessment of risks associated with the exposure of the skin to toxic and carcinogenic substances. On the basis of such studies, numerous precautionary laws have been enacted and are continuously evolving.

**The issue of risks tied to the exposure of the skin to irritating, harmful and sensitising substances present in clothing must be tackled.**

Based on this premise, and in consideration of the norms in force at EU level in matters of consumer protection and security, **we hold** that operators of the TCL sectors should be in a position to identify those who have supplied them with a textile product or whatever accessory destined for consumption. To such ends, the operators should have systems and procedures that permit to put relevant information at the disposal of competent authorities that request it.

For these reasons, **we ask**:

*The European Commission*

1. To provide, in collaboration with the concerned Ministers of Member States, social and economic partners, a clear definition of “*risks arising from textile, clothing, leather, footwear and accessories products*”, both in the production processes and in their final use, which could be put into practice - in accordance with EU Reg. 1907/2006 (REACH) - through the institution of national observatories evaluating risks for human health based on the experience already gained in certain EU Member States <sup>1</sup>;
2. To extend to all Member States the creation, update and networking of specific national databases aimed at the collection and monitoring of all chemicals substances used in the production processes of the TCL sectors;
3. To strive for a greater coordination with the individual Member States, aimed at convincing and communicating with the competent health authorities<sup>2</sup> for controls and monitoring of the health and security of textile products and their accessories, with particular regard to customs controls of goods entering the EU market;
4. To promote the definition and the experimentation of a process aiming at a guaranteed traceability of TCL products destined for consumption on the basis of health and safety requirements – in accord with the main economic players – with the aim to dispose of a compulsory adoption in the Internal Market;
5. To foster and promote the development and the use of technologies suitable for the traceability of TCL products destined for consumption, with particular attention to R&D technologies.
6. To strive to raise European consumers’ awareness of health risks associated with the use of dangerous substances in TCL products promoting specific publicity and information campaigns.

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<sup>1</sup> See proposal for the institution of a *Osservatorio nazionale delle dermatiti da contatto da prodotti di utilizzo nell’industria tessile*, Health Ministry, Italy.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Bill 2074 of the Chamber of Italian deputies *Dispositions for the security of textile products and assimilated products of 15.12.2006*, sec. 3 and 4 (translated title)

*To the Member States:*

1. To commit themselves to approve a European Directive concerning the introduction of a mandatory origin label at least for TCL products imported in the Internal Market;
2. To set up a clear definition and monitoring of products defined as not safe for the health of the consumer, involving the main economic players of the sector, and to set competent health authorities for the control and the monitoring, including the definition of related sanctions for defaulting producers, importers and distributors;
3. To give full implementation of the rapid alert system RAPEX<sup>3</sup>, on the basis of which departments and offices identified by the competent authorities at the level of individual Member States can proceed with inspections and with the taking of samples of textiles in the places where they are produced, conserved in warehouse, sold or where textile products and accessories are consumed, including ports of call and means of transport;
4. That the said departments and offices can also proceed to the seizure of goods and, where necessary for the protection of the public health, to their destruction. In any case, such departments and offices adopt the measures taking into account the principle of precaution and act in the respect of the Treaty establishing the European Community, in particular articles 28 and 30, in order to put into effect the measures that are proportionate to the gravity of the risk;
5. To proceed to the identification and publicity of the network of accredited laboratories and of second level laboratories in a position to analyse textile samples on behalf of private parties who for their business use a handbook of correct procedures for self-monitoring made available by the competent health authorities, in concert with the main representative associations at the national level of textile sector and of consumers;
6. To provide for the institution of national observatories for the adverse reactions from textile products and contact dermatitis, and to favour the exchange of information, studies and research at EU level.

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<sup>3</sup> Of which annex II of directive 2001/95/EC of the European Parliament and the Council, 3 December 2001