



EU Textile Labelling Issues from Parliament Session

The European Parliament focused on three main issues in its May 2011 plenary sessions: labelling regarding use of materials of animal origin in textile products; country of origin labelling for textile products imported into the EU; and possible harmonization of labelling requirements for care-code labeling. Parliament also considered uniform sizing codes and the indication of the presence of allergenic substances in textiles. More details on the outcome of the sessions follow.



Key Results from the Session

Fur and Leather Labelling:

New textile labelling rules for textile products containing materials of animal origin were approved on 11 May 2011. The rationale for this type of labelling is that fur is often used as trim in garments and it is often difficult for consumers to distinguish between real animal fur and good quality synthetic fur manufactured from synthetic fibres. Allergy sufferers and consumers who wish to avoid animal skin products will benefit from the new requirement. Basically any use of animal-derived materials, such as fur, will have to be stated on product labels. This should not be confused with animal-derived fibres such as wool, which already require labeling in textile garments under the *European Fibre Content Labelling Directive* and its amendments.

These new labelling rules concerning animal origin will come into force 20 days after publication in the *EU Journal*. However, there will be a two and a half year transition to allow industry time to adapt.

Country of Origin Labelling:

Although the European Parliament was strongly in favour of "Made in" labels for textile products imported from non-European Union countries, the Council did not agree. This potential legislation is controversial, with some countries seeing the label as useful for consumers and others against the idea. Those who did not approve, including some EU member countries, saw it as being a barrier to free trade and a "protectionist" measure against imports from countries outside the EU.

The result of these differences was that the EU Commission must present a study by 30 September 2013 on the feasibility of an origin labelling scheme. Essentially, this means mandatory country of origin labelling for textiles in the EU is not on the current legislative horizon. However, it should be noted that under the *European General Product Safety Directive* all products in the EU must be traceable through the supply chain back to the manufacturing source, including country, in case of product recalls.

Possible New Labelling Requirements and New Technologies:

Another result of the Session was an agreement to have an assessment made on the feasibility of harmonizing certain labeling requirements including: care labelling (currently voluntary); EU-wide uniform size labelling and labelling to indicate the presence of possible allergenic substances. Also, the EU Parliament stressed the need to evaluate innovative labelling technologies such as micro-chips or radio frequency identification as means of conveying information to EU consumers.

Contact Information

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