

Textile products: textile fibre names and labelling

2009/0006(COD) - 30/01/2009 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to lay down rules concerning the use of textile names and related labelling of textile products as well as the rules concerning the quantitative analysis of binary and ternary textile fibre mixtures.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: in recent years experience has shown that there was scope to simplify the existing legal framework for the development and uptake of novel fibres, with a view to encourage innovation in the textile and clothing sector and to allow fibre users and consumers to benefit faster from innovative products. The revision of EU legislation on Textile Names and Labelling¹ was announced in 2006. The purpose is to enhance the transparency of the process of adding new fibres to the list of harmonised fibre names and introduce more flexibility to adapt legislation in order to keep up with the technological developments expected in the textiles industry.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT : the Commission carried out an impact assessment of the various policy options, which led to the following conclusions: (i) the inclusion of guidance on the contents of the application file and the recognition of laboratories in assisting companies in compiling the file could bring significant time savings for both industry and public authorities; (ii) the greatest benefits for industry would arise from reducing the time taken between an application for a new fibre name being submitted and the ability to place the fibre on the market with the new name; (iii) Member States benefit from replacing the Directives with a Regulation, because they would no longer need to transpose the amendments into national legislation; (iv) consumers would benefit from knowing that fibres meet specified characteristics.

CONTENT: the proposed revision is of limited scope. It does not aim to extend EU legislation to other labelling requirements beyond the fibre composition and the harmonisation of textile fibre names covered by the existing Directives. The main changes to the existing legislation can be summarised as follows:

Facilitating the legislative process to adapt legislation to technical progress: this involves transforming Directive 96/74/EC into a Regulation, and repealing Directives 96/73/EC and 73/44/EEC. Given their detailed technical content, the adaptation of uniform methods is better addressed in the form of annexes to the main Regulation. The proposed Regulation includes an Annex VIII, laying down uniform methods used for official tests.

Shortening the time between the submission of an application and the adoption of the new fibre name: in order to allow fibre manufacturers, fibre users and consumers to benefit faster from the use of novel fibres and innovative products, new fibre names should be adopted in EU legislation more rapidly. In addition to the time gained with the changing of Directive 96/74/EC into a Regulation, the time necessary for the technical examination of requests for new fibre names may be reduced if application files submitted by manufacturers are more correct and complete with respect to the requirements they need to fulfil. The proposal introduces the procedure to be followed by a manufacturer to request the addition of a new fibre name to the technical annexes of the Regulation. The manufacturer needs to submit an application file to the Commission, taking into consideration the minimum requirements set out in Annex II. The Commission will present a report after 5 years, which will focus on assessing the experience obtained with the applications for new fibre names received in that period and it will examine if further gains on time may be obtained from a revision of proposed procedures.