Institute Directors Meet 2008
in South Africa
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New OEKO-TEX® Criteria
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OEKO•TEX®
Association

OEKO-TEX® news

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Tests for harmful substances

play significant role in considerations of textile buyers

Throughout Europe, testing for harmful substances plays a significant role in the considerations made when buying textiles. This is demonstrated by the results of a trend analysis survey commissioned by the German OEKO-TEX® Certification Centre and carried out by the consulting firm BBE Retail Experts in the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Portugal, Italy, France and Spain. In each country, between 400 and 500 consumers and 200 specialist retailers were asked, among other things, about the interest in textiles tested for harmful substances and awareness of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100.

The data gathered in connection with the GfK (Society for Consumer Research) consumer study done in 2006 and a survey of specialist retailers carried out by the consulting firm BBE Retail Experts in 2008 (both in Germany) provides interesting insights into shared and in some cases drastically divergent conditions on the individual markets.

Source: BBE european trend analysis 2008; Question 3: "Which of the following textile-seals do you know and which do you already offer in the context of your assortment?" German data = BBE retail trade survey 2008

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Editorial

REACh – making a start

One and a half years after the REACh Regulation officially came into force, on 28th October 2008 the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) published its first official Candidate List, featuring fifteen substances of very high concern (SVHC), whose synthesis, application, processing and exposure are under special observation by the agency and which are primarily subject to harmonised evaluation within Europe.

According to Section 33 of the REACh Regulation, suppliers (manufacturers and importers) are under a legal obligation to inform their customers and end-users if the marketed products contain an SVHC substance in a mass concentration of over 0.1%. As this Candidate List was compiled cross-sector and will in future be regularly updated by the European authorities, two aspects arise that the OEKO-TEX® Association is giving particular attention to on behalf of its more than 8000 licensees worldwide:

- Firstly, with the wide expertise of its member institutes, OEKO-TEX® can reliably evaluate companies interested in OEKO-TEX® using their product ranges to see to what extent articles might be affected by the listed substances;
- Secondly, the OEKO-TEX® Association ensures that where relevant any newly-added substances are incorporated into the OEKO-TEX® criteria catalogue as quickly as possible and suitable testing methods are provided for them.

This means that you, as a company with an OEKO-TEX® certificate, can continue to assist in ensuring harmful substances find their way into textiles production, and of course that you meet all legislative requirements in future as well.

In particular in the case of REACh, which utilises the smallest measurement of greater than 0.1 percent w/w (over 1000 ppm) in the article to analyse SVHC chemicals, you can even expect to exceed legal requirements – as the OEKO-TEX® criteria catalogue has demanded limit values in the double-digit or even single-digit ppm measurement range since 1992, setting the standard for product safety.

Jutta Knels,

OEKO-TEX® Certification Centre, Frankfurt am Main

Tests for harmful substances

play significant role in considerations of textile buyers

Page contd.

Results of the retail survey

According to the opinions of the specialist retailers surveyed, product quality, social aspects, skin compatibility and testing for harmful substances were the most important considerations made by their customers when buying textiles and were regarded correspondingly by the retailers in their ordering behaviour. On a scale from 1 to 5, with „1 = unimportant“ to „5 = very important“, these factors constantly received ratings ranging between 4.2 and 4.6. When asked about the significance of testing for harmful substances, the rating of 4.2 from Germany was consistent with the average of the ratings of the seven other European countries surveyed.

In the run-up to the retail survey, a pretest was conducted on nationally-specific textile seals in each country tested. Of the three labels present in all markets, aided awareness was greatest for the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100. In Germany, the awareness level among retailers was 79%, while the average for the seven other European countries was 37%.

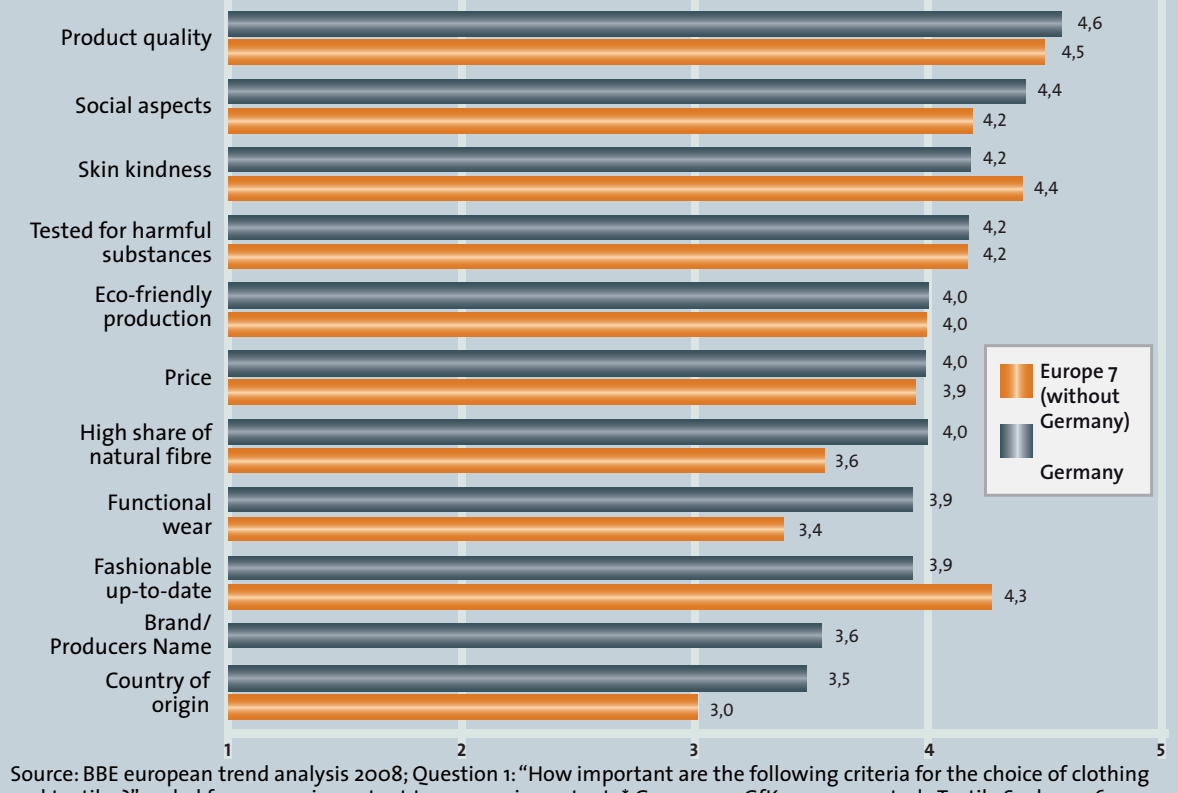
Wish for more product labelling

Survey results showed that testing for harmful substances for clothing and other textiles plays a significant role in sales presentations. Some 75% of the specialist retail traders surveyed in the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Portugal, Italy, France and Spain said that great value was placed on the issue by consumers. Correspondingly, an overwhelming proportion (78%) of those surveyed expressed the wish for more labelling of certified products. In Portugal (95%) and Spain (80%) in particular, specialist retail traders in all product areas spoke out in favour of more labels indicating „Confidence in Textiles“ in order to enable them to provide customers with competent information about tests for harmful substances carried out in accordance with the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100.

In the opinion of most of those surveyed (52%), the significance of these textile seals when it comes to ordering will continue to increase. In this respect, Germany at 37%, demonstrated a proportion that was below average. In this case, that may be because in Germany, the emphasis placed on labelling is already very high seen in

Retail trade

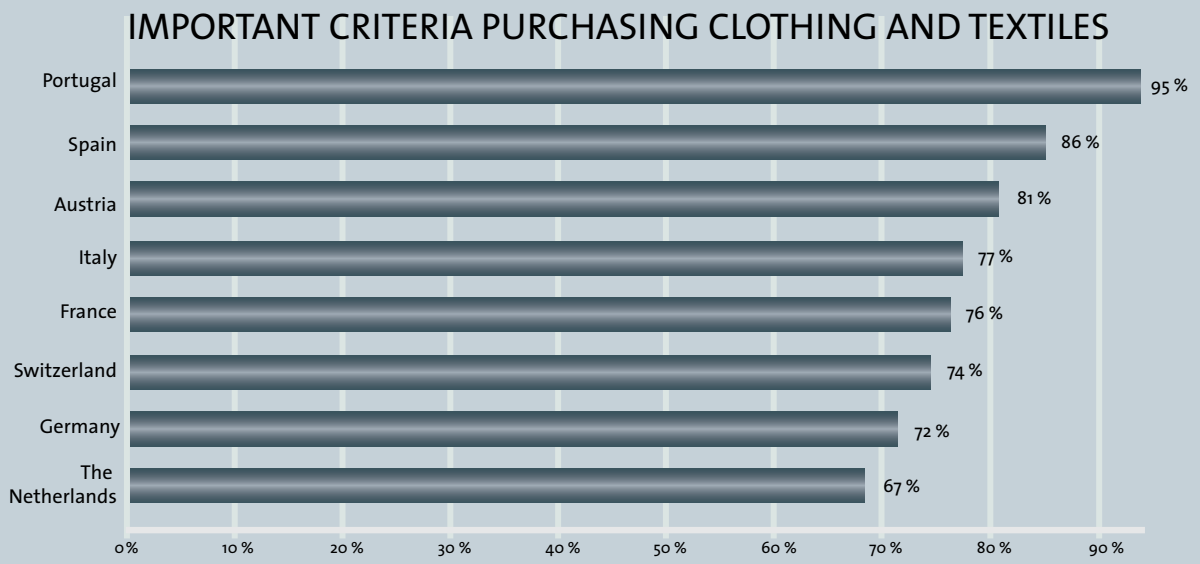
IMPORTANT CRITERIA PURCHASING CLOTHING AND TEXTILES



Source: BBE european trend analysis 2008; Question 1: “How important are the following criteria for the choice of clothing and textiles?” scaled from 1 = unimportant to 5 = very important * Germany = GfK consumer study Textile Seals 2006

Retail trade

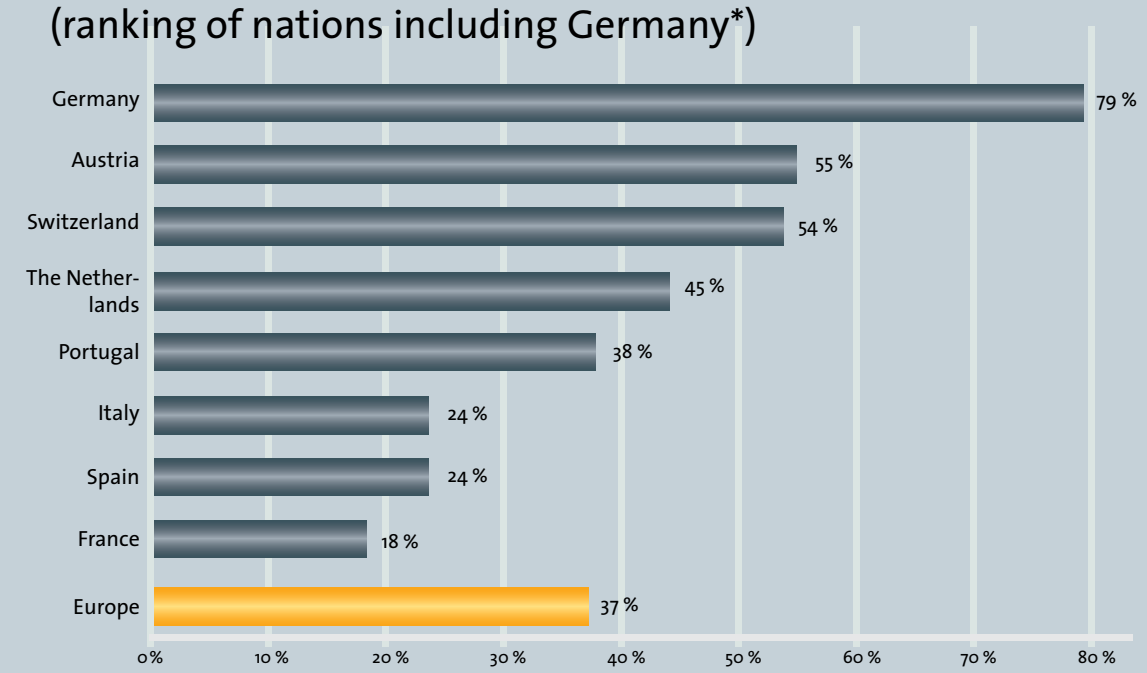
IMPORTANT CRITERIA PURCHASING CLOTHING AND TEXTILES



Source: BBE european trend analysis 2008; Question 1: “How important are the following aspects with the purchase of clothing and textiles for you?”; scaled from 1=unimportant to 5= very important; Germany = BBE retail trade survey 2008

Retail trade

AIDED AWARENESS OF “OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100” (ranking of nations including Germany*)



Source: BBE RETAIL EXPERTS; Question 3: “Which of the following textile-seals do you know and which do you already offer in the context of your assortment?”; *=Trade fair survey, spring 2008

TEXTILES – TESTED FOR HARMFUL SUBSTANCES
Survey of trade and consumers

absolute terms, whereas in other European countries there is a great deal of leeway for developing this.

Different sources of information

In all eight European countries surveyed, 48% of the retailers said conversations with suppliers were the most important source of information on product characteristics, such as testing for harmful substances, etc. But taken individually, the country surveyed showed sharp differences in the routes by which information is conveyed. In Germany, 53% said the internet was the most important means, and was, for example, given clearly more significance than speaking to suppliers (34%). When all eight countries are viewed together, about a third of those retailers surveyed said they felt they were sufficiently informed about OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 and testing for harmful substances. Another third said they would like more information, while the remainder had no further interest. The Austrians (57%), Swiss (47%) and Portuguese (47%) showed a higher than average desire for additional data and selling points.

Consumer survey results

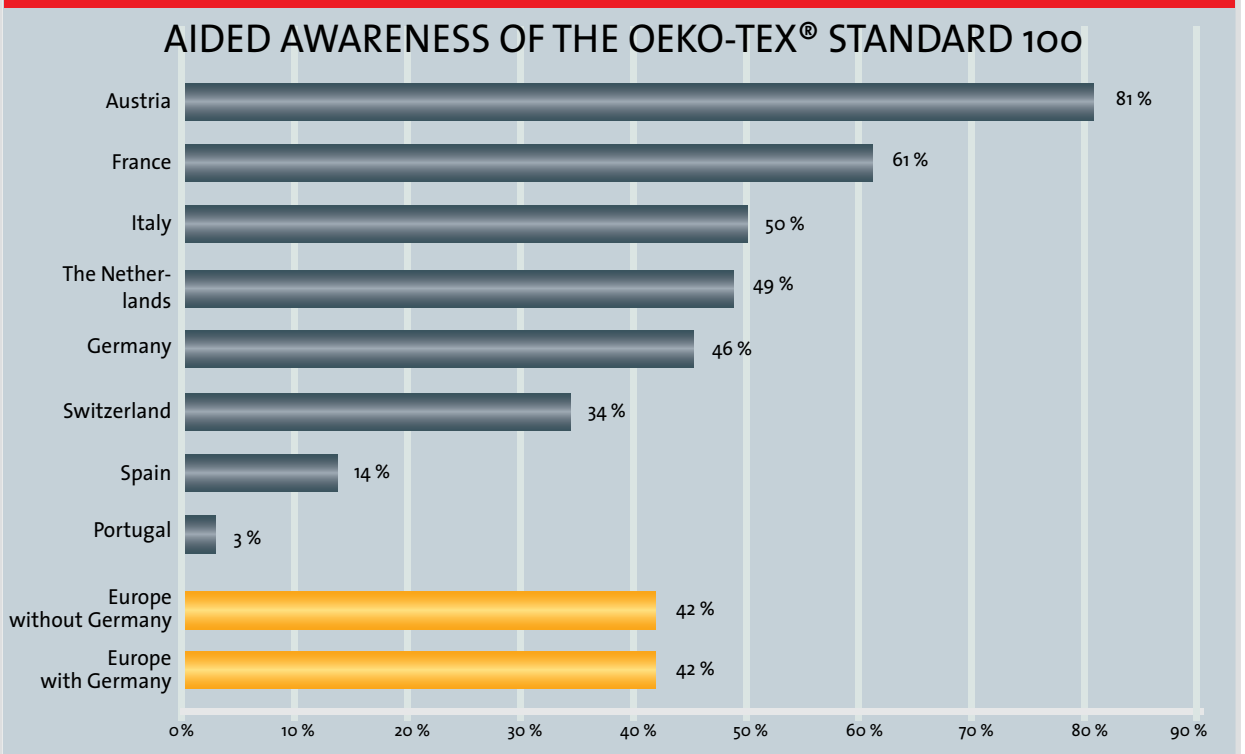
On a scale from 1 to 5, with „1 = unimportant“ to „5 = very important“, product quality (3.9), price (3.8), skin compatibility (3.5) and up-to-date style (3.5) were seen as the most important considerations to be made when buying garments and other textiles by consumers surveyed in the eight countries in the study. In this survey, testing for harmful substances was rated on average at 3.2, as were socially responsible or „fair trade“ conditions of production.

Greater emphasis (3.5) was placed on testing for harmful substances when purchasing baby and children‘s clothing. Consumers ranging in age from 26 to 55-years-old rated the significance of testing baby and children‘s clothes for harmful substances particularly highly (3.5 - 3.7).

“Confidence in Textiles” is best-known

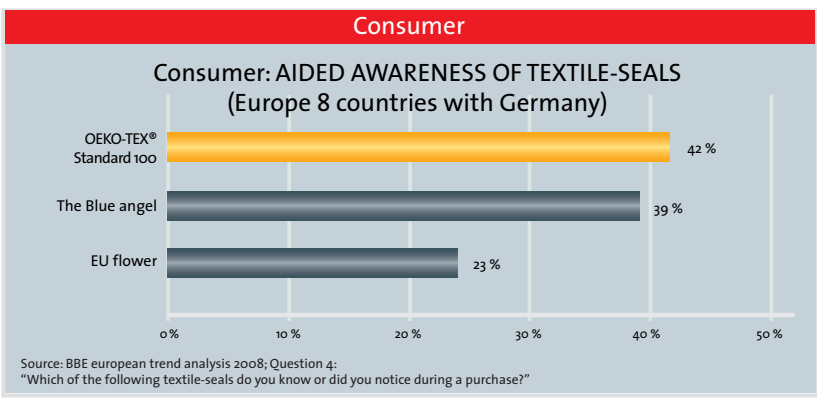
In the eight countries involved in the study, 42% of consumers, as well, showed the greatest level of awareness for the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 „Confidence in Textiles“ label relative to other textile seals. In any case, only the Blue Angel (39%) and the EU-Flower (27%) are represented on the market Europe-wide. Level of awareness for the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 was highest in Austria (81%), followed by France (61%) and the Netherlands (49%). Results from Germany (46%) and Switzerland (34%) were, by comparison, in the middle of the range. Spain (14%) and Portugal (3%) had the lowest awareness levels. This last figure is even more surprising considering the fact that Spain and Portugal belong to the top 10 of 84 countries world-wide when it comes to the 70,000 OEKO-TEX® certificates that have been issued. Apparently the holders of certificates there do not use them in promoting their wares, at least on the domestic market, in such a way that it would have a positive influence on the level of awareness of the label among consumers. What is consistent with this result is that in the retail survey (see above) 95% of the Portuguese and 80% of the Spanish retailers said they would support improved labelling.

Consumer



Source: BBE european trend analysis 2008; Question 4: “Which of the following textile-seals do you know or did you notice with a purchase?”
Germany = GfK consumer study Textile Seals 2006

Consumer



Source: BBE european trend analysis 2008; Question 4:
“Which of the following textile-seals do you know or did you notice during a purchase?”

Where do consumers buy textiles?

There were also major differences between individual countries when consumers were questioned about preferred places for buying garments and textiles. In Italy, the majority of those surveyed (multiple responses) preferred going to shops specialising in clothing (63%), boutiques (62%), and sporting goods stores (59%). In Portugal, on the other hand, retail chains (77%) and department stores (63%) were the main places to buy textiles and clothing. Taking the seven European countries together and excluding Germany, retail chains (57%) and department stores (48%) were clearly preferred ahead of classic specialist clothing stores (38%) and boutiques (34%). Some 11% of those surveyed said they used mail order services when buying clothing and textiles, with only minor deviation between the countries surveyed when taken individually.

www www.oeko-tex.com/news

OEKO-TEX® Institute Directors Meet in Cape Town

First-time visit to South Africa

With nearly 9,000 certificates issued in the last year alone, the OEKO-TEX® certification system continues to consolidate its position as the global leader of reference for independent testing of textiles for harmful substances. The International OEKO-TEX® Association has recognised this by holding the annual conference of the directors of the OEKO-TEX® member institutes from 41 countries world-wide from October 27 to 28, 2008 in South Africa, where one of the authorised testing institutes is based.

With respect to the further development of the OEKO-TEX® criteria catalogue, the institute directors emphasised they would continue to offer manufacturers, traders and textile consumers a high degree of product safety. The basis for the new formulation of the test criteria is shaped by continual observation of the market, harmonisation with national and international standards and laws, and consideration for the latest scientific findings. In their entirety, the OEKO-TEX® product standards clearly go far beyond legal standards.

„All the measures implemented to ensure the level of testing and product quality maintenance," said General Secretary Raimar Freitag, „have been tried-and-true for years, and will of course be continued." Among these are, for example, regular monitoring of products on the market. In the last year alone, some 20% of all the issued certificates were checked. Further quality assurance measures include the internal round-robin tests between the OEKO-TEX® testing institutes and unannounced visits by independent OEKO-TEX® auditors to the production facilities of certified companies.

Currently, more than 8,000 companies from 85 countries world-wide are active in the Oeko-Tex® certification system. Among them are textile and garment manufacturers representing all stages of production, accessory suppliers, retailers and producers of dyes and auxiliaries. The European countries, with 48.5% of the certificates issued, and Asia, with 48.6% share, are certification focal points. Viewed internationally, textile fabrics (29%) are certified most frequently, followed by garments (19%), yarns and threads (17%), accessories (15%) and home textile products (7%).

Front row left: Responsible members of the host institute CSIR: Abisha Tembo, General Manager Fibres & Textiles, and Dr. Francois Barkhuysen, Research Group Leader Fibres & Textiles. Front row right: Dr. Tony Sagar, Head of the British Institute Shirley Technologies Ltd., which issues OEKO-TEX® certifications in South Africa in cooperation with CSIR.

Customer reception

at Woolworths (South Africa)

Efforts to raise awareness of textiles tested for harmful substances in previously minor markets such as Africa were reinforced by OEKO-TEX® representatives at the General Managers meeting, during a customer event at South Africa's largest textiles retailer, Woolworths Holdings Ltd., attended by representatives of OEKO-TEX® certified companies, as well as other participants from industry and trade and the media.

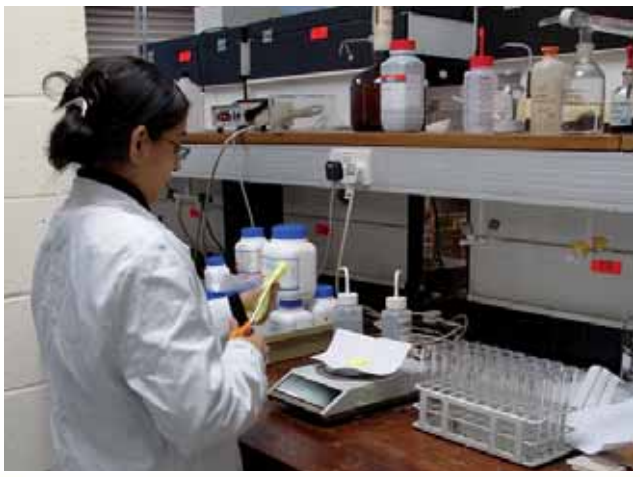
To date, only 130 OEKO-TEX® certificates have been issued for the entire continent of Africa, nine of which have gone to companies based in South Africa. In his presentation of the OEKO-TEX® certification system, OEKO-TEX® General Secretary Raimar Freitag explained that independent quality marks such as the "Confidence in Textiles" label are not only indispensable for manufacturers based in Africa when exporting to target markets such as Europe, but could also be of significance for regional sales.

Responsible companies such as Woolworths, for example, have for years now stipulated fixed limit values for the use of chemicals in textile production in their commercial terms. Now, however, the department store chain, which is especially popular among the South African middle class, is going a step further and demanding that its suppliers observe an environmental code. This requires that its business partners meet social criteria (e.g. work safety) as well as production-related parameters such as waste water treatment, emission limits and waste disposal.

Shirley Technologies Ltd

Unrivalled Expertise in Independent Textile Testing

Shirley Technologies Ltd is an accredited laboratory providing competitive, independent expert textile testing, certification, advisory and investigation services across the traditional and specialist textile industries. Since 2003, Shirley is an independent subsidiary of BTTG Ltd, formerly the British Textile Technology Group.



With over 80 years experience, Shirley Technologies Ltd provides unrivalled and expert reassurance through its technical services to a global network of clients which include manufacturers, retailers, the legal profession, police, consumers and related interest groups including Trading Standards.

Shirley Technologies and/or BTTG have been member of the international OEKO-TEX® Association since 1994 and have issued about 3.500 OEKO-TEX® certificates so far. The institute runs a contact office in Singapore and cooperates with the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to handle certification according to the OEKO-TEX® scheme in those regions.

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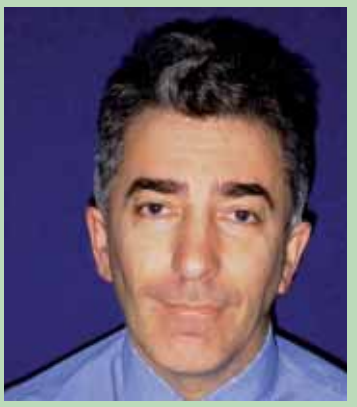

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Contact person:
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Accreditations:
- BS EN ISO/IEC 17025:2000
- OEKO-TEX® Standard 100
- OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000
- EU Eco-label
- UV Standard 801 (BTTG Group)
- Notified Body for PPE, Construction Products, Toys (BTTG Group)

Key activities

Ecological testing services
(e.g. OEKO-TEX® Standard 100)

Analytical and investigation service
Targeted problem serving and analytical services with specialist knowledge in textile related physical, chemical and analytical testing including

- complaints investigation
- identification of faults
- formulation of process errors
- product characterisation
- fibre analysis and identification

"Due diligence" testing
As an independent test organisation, Shirley Technologies provides a broad range of reassuring expert services to ensure that textile businesses meet their legal, ethical and "due diligence" requirements in terms of product testing, thus giving peace of mind in the product's ability to stand up to scrutiny. Examples:

- independent advice on mandatory and recommended testing for textile products
- durability and ageing studies to determine product life-time
- fitness for purpose testing etc.

Expert witness service
Shirley Technologies Ltd has an established track record in providing expert witness services to clients such as manufacturers, suppliers, solicitors, the police and consumers. Their experienced staff of technical experts offers support in the following issues:

- analysis and investigation of faults
- fitness for purpose challenges
- compliance to regulations
- patent infringement
- consumer complaints
- police (forensic) investigations

Laundry product evaluation
Laundry products have been successfully evaluated by Shirley Technologies for over a decade. Techniques and procedures available allow the assessment of

- product performance (durability, cleaning efficiency etc.)
- fabric care (incrustation, pilling, softness, tear etc.)
- garment care / product use (recommendations for best-use conditions)
- compliance with BS EN ISO 6330:2001 (standard for domestic washing and drying procedures)

Microbiological testing services
Shirley Technologies Ltd offers a wide range of UKAS accredited, recognised standard and in-house biological testing encompassing:

- testing and evaluation of anti-bacterial treated textiles (efficacy, durability)
- cleanliness testing for filling, stuffing and wadding materials including feathers, down, cellulosic and synthetic materials (bedding, upholstery, soft furnishings)
- microbiological deterioration (rot resistance, soil burial testing, mildew and fungal growth)
- medical fabrics

www.shirleytech.co.uk

On the road to success with CO

Johann Müller AG textiles finishing

CONFIDENCE IN TEXTILES
Eco-friendly factory
according to Oeko-Tex Standard 1000
Test No. OTS 23208 TESTEX Zuerich

In the annals of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100, the 27th September 1993 is an important milestone: for the first time ever, the dyeing process in a textiles finishing business, Swiss-based Johann Müller AG, was designed so that all processed threads and fabrics met the requirements of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100. Owner Dr. Kurt Müller is proud of his cutting edge role in environmental protection, "We played a decisive part in the design of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100. Our audit as an environmentally-friendly production site in accordance with the OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 in 2000 was a logical continuation of this commitment and of our generally high standards of quality."

With its environmental commitment, Johann Müller AG was in an ideal position for certification under the OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000. According to auditor Adrian Meili from the Swiss Textile Testing Institute Testex they only needed to take a few additional measures to meet the requirements, "The exclusion of environmentally-harmful additives and dyes, the observance of threshold values for waste water and exhaust air treatment, economical use of energy, avoidance of noise and dust and workplace safety were and are a matter of course at Johann Müller AG."

Important communication tool

Dr. Müller stresses the great benefit of the audit for his company, "The public perception of being certified as environmentally-friendly industrial premises by a neutral institute is very important to us. It affects our customers, who value such commitment highly. At the same time it is also reassuring for the community and residents to know that there is no potential risk for humans or the environment coming from our textile finishing business." Auditing in accordance with the OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 also represents an important building block for a major customer, the shirt and blouse manufacturer Eterna Mode GmbH, as it is aiming to achieve the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100plus for its products (see info box). It also contributes to the strength of this long-standing relationship.

"Use of environmentally-friendly production processes, and the human ecology qualities of finished products are a matter of course at Johann Müller AG."

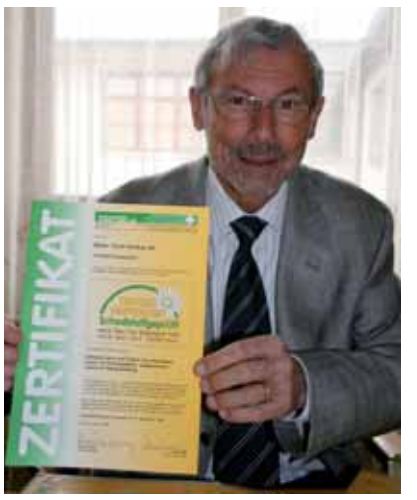
Adrian Meili, OEKO-TEX® auditor of the Swiss Textile Testing Institute Testex

Award-winning environmental work

Away from the auditing too, Dr. Müller is always on the search for improvements to the production process that reduce the demand for energy, water and additives in his 60-strong business, "Savings in these areas not only pay off for the environment, but also in francs and centimes in our operational result." So in 2001 the chemical engineer refitted the business' heating system to burn renewable fuel. This saves roughly 1000 tonnes of heating oil each year, equivalent to a CO_2 saving of 3200 tonnes a year. This pioneering work led to Johann Müller AG receiving the Swiss Solarpreis environmental award in 2002.

About 50-70% of the CO_2 output when producing a textile product is due to textile finishing. Yet with the many environmental efforts he has already made, Dr. Müller views the current CO_2 debate calmly, "For companies throughout the textiles chain which have made early, intensive efforts for sustainability, there are now real competitive advantages from those measures." For instance, the Swiss Coop chain is looking to make its range CO_2 neutral and is holding talks with suppliers who can help them achieve this goal. "We are in a good position, as we've already done our housework," Dr. Müller smiles.

2 neutrality and OEKO-TEX®



Dr. Kurt Müller with the first general OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 certificate dated 27th September 1993.

Picture on left: Quality is constantly monitored in the laboratory at Johann Müller AG.

Dr. Kurt Müller contributed significantly to the development of the economical modular system of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100. At the start, the idea was only to certify products, but not to include processes. For a dye works that produces tens of thousands of different dyes, this would have resulted in having to carry out an incalculable number of tests of dyed and finished substrates. This would have made the effort and costs of testing and certification disproportionately high.

The international OEKO-TEX® Association recognised the need to incorporate textiles finishing businesses into the testing and certification system in order to achieve the necessary market penetration, so together with Dr. Müller it sought a practical solution.

So on 6th April 1993 Dr. Müller recommended to the Hohenstein Research Institute in Bönnigheim, Germany, that instead of testing the many end products of a dye works it should test the individual elements of their processing.

His basic concept: if all the dyes and chemicals met the criteria of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100, and likewise the textile substrate, then all the end products derived from them would consequently meet the criteria of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100. In order to realise the concept of a modular system, Dr. Müller sent the safety data sheets of all dyes and chemicals believed suitable to the Hohenstein Research Institute for testing.

On 8th July 1993 Dr. Rainer Weckmann wrote from the Institute to Dr. Müller, "Today we took an important decision: we would like – entirely in line with your and my concept – to create an OEKO-TEX® Standard for the certification of textiles finishers and dyers. For this reason I would like to be in close contact with you and develop a feasible procedure with your help and experience." This was the birth of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 in its present form, whereby the process technology for textiles finishers is established on the basis of current lists of dyes and additives using example worst-case investigation.

Johann Müller AG – at a glance

Thread, tricot and fabric finishing, garment dyeing

Location: Strengelbach, Switzerland

Founded: 1845

Number of employees: approx. 60

Web: www.mueller-textil.ch

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CH-4802 Strengelbach / Switzerland

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Email: mueller@mueller-textil.ch

The OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 und 100plus

Starting from the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100, since 1995 companies have had the option of making declarations about the environmental production conditions, as well as the product-oriented safety checks.

The certificate for an environmentally-friendly production site under OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 applies for three years.

To be awarded OEKO-TEX® Standard 100plus it is necessary to have products tested under OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 as well as certification of the production conditions under Standard 1000. However, in addition it is also necessary to prove that the entire production chain, i.e. all businesses involved in the manufacture of a specific product, is certified – at least for the product line concerned, according to OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000.

www.mueller-textil.ch

Asia: First Company certified in Accordance with OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000

Suzhou Deylon Textile Co. Ltd., China

Left: Information event held by the OEKO-TEX® Association at the ITMA Asia 2008:
OEKO-TEX® General Secretary Raimar Freitag (right) hands the OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 certificate to Mohamed Ajlan, President of Suzhou Deylon Textile Co. Ltd.'s parent company Ajlan Bros. Co.

CONFIDENCE IN TEXTILES
Eco-friendly factory
according to Oeko-Tex Standard 1000
Test No. OTS 057150 TESTEX Zuerich

As a subsidiary of the Saudi Arabia-based investors, Ajlan & Bros. which feature a broad range of textile products, Suzhou Deylon Textile Co. Ltd., with more than 2,100 employees, is helping to meet the steadily growing demand for traditional headwear, the yashmagh and ghuttra, in the Arab world.

Since the company opened its production facility in Wujiang City in the Chinese province of Jaingsu in 2000, its goal has been to produce the high-quality articles in the most environmentally-friendly way possible. After a four-month preparatory phase, the production facility now meets the requirements of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 – a heretofore unprecedented achievement for a firm located in Asia. The aim of the Saudi-Arabian Ajlan & Bros. is to have certificated all its 16 production sites in China according to OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 in the medium term.

Mix of technologies: optimised for production and the environment

In the weaving area, for example, an air conditioning system with built-in air filters ensures that dust and lint remain within prescribed limits in the production halls. In addition, the company also meets the required standards when it comes to protecting its employees from noise and with respect to equipment and electrical maintenance. And the Chinese weaving machines have been optimally set to produce fabrics of special thickness and weave suited to all types of headscarves with respect to size, colour and quality. In order to maintain the wastewater requirements set by OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000, the company installed suitable filters and other monitoring systems for the treatment of wastewater from washing and finishing processes. An important point here is the continual use of enzymes to break down easily biodegradable starch sizing.

„The certification of Deylon Textile as eco-friendly factory according to OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 is initial spark towards which other interested companies can orientate themselves, and will certainly follow soon."

Adrian Meili, OEKO-TEX® auditor of Testex Swiss Textile Testing Institute

Flexible production for an optimal market supply

Thanks to innovative technologies, maintenance-free chain systems, and the specially developed Twin-Air System with integrated heat recovery, the company was able to reduce throughput times considerably and increase monthly production capacity to 1.5 million metres of finished goods. Director of Production Mohamed Kasseb emphasises, „We make 50 different versions of our yashmagh. Usually, 20 different variations are produced each month according to a rotation schedule. The new technology allows us to respond optimally to short-term fluctuations in market demand."

Working conditions above average

The extra effort Suzhou Deylon Textile is making in the name of ecology is also demonstrated by the appointment of Kasseb as the plant environmental manager. In this function, he developed the plant's own environmental handbook, which lays down all the company's environmental aims, including all the measures to be taken and the employees responsible for taking them. In addition, all the employees involved take part in regular plant training sessions in which they learn what they need to do to keep meeting environmental criteria in accordance with OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000.

Compared to other production facilities in China, the general work environment, special working conditions and provisions for job and social security are consistently positive. In the ready-to-wear department, for example, employees work in air-conditioned areas and with outstanding lighting.

Director of Production and Environmental Manager Mohamed Kasseb played a decisive role in implementing the criteria in accordance with OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000.

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www.deylontextiles.com

OEKO-TEX® is gaining Ground

in the United States of America

More and more companies adopt the OEKO-TEX® certification scheme. The second half of 2008 was a busy time for OEKO-TEX® in the United States. As interest grows in the effects of textiles on human ecology, the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 has gained acceptance as the leading brand and mark of quality.

Three major U.S. trade shows sponsored seminars which featured OEKO-TEX® as the industry's foremost expert on certification for the textile supply chain. The largest among the shows was the Outdoor Retailer show, which was held in August in Salt Lake City. The OR show gathers outdoor industry retailers, brands, media and enthusiasts and is a thought leader when it comes to trends, new products and – importantly – educational efforts within the industry. FabricLink and Textile Intelligence sponsored a seminar during OR entitled "ECO-Logical; Making Sense of Supply Chain Certification".

"The level of interest consumers have with issues such as the environment, sustainability and ecology is still on the rise in the United States."

Dina Dunn, OEKO-TEX® PR responsible in the U.S.

Dina Dunn spoke on behalf of OEKO-TEX® and opened up the seminar with a broad definition of the opportunities presenting themselves to the Outdoor industry, yet with a caution that there was tremendous confusion on behalf of the end-users. Dunn made the case to the audience of more than 200 that independent, third party certifiers were the best way to end the confusion and to prove – undeniably – that a company is doing what they say they're going to do. Questions from the audience ranged from 'big picture' questions, such as the difference between the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 and GOTS, to more detailed questions regarding the steps a manufacturer is required to go through for certification. The media proved interested in the seminar and followed-up with numerous articles in various Outdoor industry publications.

Some large, influential retailers have also decided to utilize the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 as an indication of their commitment to the human ecology concerns of their consumers. Chief among them is L.L. Bean, the $175 million 100 year old retailer based in Maine. Beginning in the spring of 2009, Bean will mark those items in its catalog which are OEKO-TEX® certified and will create hang-tags to clearly communicate what the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 certification means to their consumers. Each of Bean's more than 200 customer service representatives have been trained by OEKO-TEX® in order to properly respond to consumer questions and concerns. Other large retailers are soon to follow in L.L. Bean's footsteps.

Through the FILA brand, OEKO-TEX® has begun working with one of the country's largest retailers, Kohl's (957 stores), and begun to explore options for communicating the human ecology message wherever appropriate. Kohl's offers both private label brands and exclusive brands from national labels (such as FILA) and the stated goal of becoming the leading environmentally responsible retailer in the country. They believe the OEKO-TEX® message can serve as a complement to their bold mission.

Dina Dunn, OEKO-TEX® PR responsible in the U.S.

'Green Stamps'

for the textile and clothing industries

As the growing wave of 'eco' sweeps the United States, a textile industry event - The Green Event - was held in New York City on 18-19 September. More than 120 executives from around the country gathered to discuss everything from new 'eco-friendly' products available to federal guidelines meant to help regulate the growing number of 'eco' claims.

Organized by the publishing group behind industry trade magazines such as Textile Insight, Running Insight and Sports Insight, The Green Event brought together thought leaders throughout the supply chain in an effort to encourage open and honest discussion about the issues facing the textile industry. Panels were organized to enlighten the industry as to best-practices including everything from fiber to footwear.

One highlight of the event was a panel entitled "Green Stamps" which attempted to clear up some of the confusion surrounding different types of certification. The International Oeko-Tex Association was asked to begin the discussion on the panel by presenting the Oeko-Tex Standard 100. Other presenters included representatives from Bluesign, Carbon Trust, GOTS and Organic Exchange. Questions at the end of the panel sought to understand the differences between certifying the end-product vs. certifying the process manufacturers used to create the products. The Oeko-Tex Standard 1000 was introduced as a complementary certification to the Standard 100.

Dina Dunn, who presented on behalf of Oeko-Tex said The Green Event helped strengthen the Oeko-Tex position in the U.S. "Conferences on 'green' abound, but rarely do you get the right people, from all over the industry, together in the same room to discuss the issues that affect us all. Participants were open and honest and, though nothing proprietary was shared, companies seemed more willing than ever before to share best-practices with their competitors in an effort to move the industry toward sustainability. Oeko-Tex is well positioned to lead this effort in the U.S. as we do around the world."

FORMALDEHYD (CH2O)
in the OEKO-TEX® criteria catalogue

Use of formaldehyde in the textiles chain:
Primarily in textile finishing: as a binding agent to improve shape retention of cotton and viscose products, and blended fabrics (shrinkage, creasing).

Other applications:
Fixing agent (pigment print, surface coating, finishing), wool fabric protector, reducing agents in dip dying, improvement of wash-fastness of certain direct dyes.

Status of legislation in Germany: obsolete!
The German Commodities Regulation still only prescribes the labelling of textiles that if properly used might come into contact with the skin and that also contain more than 1,500 ppm of free formaldehyde:

"Contains formaldehyde. Wash before first wearing recommended to improve skin kindness."

However this rule is generally regarded as obsolete today!

Substantial reduction of formaldehyde
Consistent implementation of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 with its regulation of formaldehyde, **established 17 years ago**, has proactively and effectively achieved a substantial reduction in the textiles and clothing industry of products that contain formaldehyde – without restricting desirable product features such as "non-iron" finishes, etc.!

The OEKO-TEX® testing method is based on the world-leading Japanese Law 112, which set strict formaldehyde limit values for consumer products:

textile baby articles
Product Class I = < 16 mg/kg

textiles with direct skin contact
Product Class II = 75 mg/kg

textiles without direct skin contact
Product Class III + IV = 300 mg/kg

It is only possible for textile finishing to meet such values by using low-formaldehyde or formaldehyde-free additives!

According to current scientific knowledge, concentrations within OEKO-TEX® tolerated limits present no risk to health for the consumer – not least as formaldehyde is preferably contained in textiles in a bonded form for production reasons!

Opinion of the Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung (BfR)
As a result of OEKO-TEX®'s efforts to permanently raise awareness within the textiles industry about the responsible handling of formaldehyde, the BfR is of the following opinion: formaldehyde in textiles no longer offers a relevant health risk to end-users.

"As a result of its known harmful effect on humans, formaldehyde has been a permanent element of the laboratory test since the introduction of the OEKO-TEX® tests for harmful substances. The limit values are based on the scientific state of the art and therefore far exceed the obsolete legislation in Germany."

Dr. Manfred Hartmann, Head of Science, Hohenstein Research Institute

Characteristics Formaldehyde

- Substance classified as "toxic (T)" in accordance with the hazardous substance marking under 67/548/EEC, Annex I [3]
- Categorisation by IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer), 2004 and the Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung (BfR), 2006: in the case of long-term exposure and intake **via the respiratory tract** (gaseous, free formaldehyde) "carcinogenic in humans"
- in the case of improper use, **liquid formaldehyde** can lead to skin, respiratory tract or eye irritations and can cause contact allergies even in small quantities

Causes of formaldehyde emissions:
> Vehicle emissions
> Particle boards and similar building materials
> Carpets, dyes, paints
> Disinfecting agents
> Foodstuffs (raw and cooked)
> Tobacco smoke (e.g. in the total smoke from one single cigarette there is about 1.5 mg formaldehyde)
> Plastics production

Occurrence in nature:
> as an intermediate product of the metabolism in mammal cells
> the blood of mammals always contains 2 – 3 mg formaldehyde per litre
> in humans approx. 50 g is generated and remetabolised per day
> by photo-oxidation in the atmosphere
> in fruit such as apples (approx. 20 mg/kg per fruit) and grapes, and in wood
> by incomplete combustion (see above: vehicle emissions)

Scope of application:
> Formaldehyde is produced industrially in great quantities worldwide and is used as a precursor for many other chemical compounds and for the manufacture of numerous consumer products
> Sweeteners, binding agents, adhesives, textiles additives, fertilisers, preservatives (e.g. for cosmetics), foundry sand binders, ion exchangers, casting resins, tanning agents, hardeners, vulcanising additives, fillers, fungicides, explosives, etc.

Determination of formaldehyde with a UV/VIS-spectrometer according to Japanese Law 112

New OEKO-TEX® Criteria

All limit values and test criteria of the OEKO-TEX® certification system will from now on be expressed in the unit of measurement „mg/kg“ rather than „ppm“ (parts per million). As a result, future possible confusion between the unit measures of volume „µl/l“ or „mg/m³“ can be avoided and the new units more easily compared with standards named in other inventories of harmful substances.

The OEKO-TEX® Association has adapted the requirements of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 for testing textiles for harmful substances effective 1 January 2009. This routine update is based on continual monitoring of the market and consideration for changes in legal standards.

In connection with the REACh-rating of decaBDE (decabromodiphenylether) and HBCDD (hexabromocyclododecane) as SVHCs (Substances of Very High Concern), these chemicals have been explicitly included in the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 inventory of banned flame retardant substances. Explicitly, because their use has been prohibited for a long time by the existing regulations for flame retardants in the OEKO-TEX® product classes I, II and III.

The same is true for the less than or equal to 0.1% by mass content limit for the problematic phthalates DEHP (Di-(2-ethylhexyl)-phthalate), BBP (butyl benzyl phthalate), and DBP (dibutyl phthalate) for OEKO-TEX® Product classes I and II. Due to their inclusion in the REACh-candidate list of Substances of Very High Concern this limit will be extended immediately to Product class III (garments worn away from the skin) and Product class IV (materials for interior decorating and decorative purposes).

In the new version of the OEKO-TEX® criteria catalogue, the existing heavy metal tests based on eluate with a solution of synthetic perspiration have been added by the total breakdown of both lead and cadmium. As a result it is now possible to test textile items in which these heavy metals are bound into a massive matrix and therefore remain undetected in the presence of a solution of perspiration: for example, top coat paints and lacquers used on toys, where ageing and mechanical wear and tear can cause paints that contain lead and cadmium to break into flakes that could be swallowed by children. The basis for the inclusion of both of these testing criteria with respect to textiles and toys are the massive claims and recalls carried out last year on the US market and the corresponding standards for harmful substances formulated by the CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission).

Also new in the OEKO-TEX® criteria catalogue are tests for perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanic acid (PFOA). Because the European authorities are still currently formulating generally accepted testing methods within the scope of a CEN working group, the authorised testing institutes of the OEKO-TEX® Association will for the time being continue to use the methods they have developed to detect numerous individual substances that have been classified as PFOS.

www www.oeko-tex.com/limitvalues

A new home:

The German Certification Centre OEKO-TEX® GmbH has moved

Please note the new contact details (address, telephone, e-mail) for all enquiries, with immediate effect.

OEKO-TEX® Zertifizierungsstelle GmbH
Kaiserstraße 39
60329 Frankfurt am Main
GERMANY
Phone +49 69 400 34 08 0
Fax +49 69 400 34 08 299
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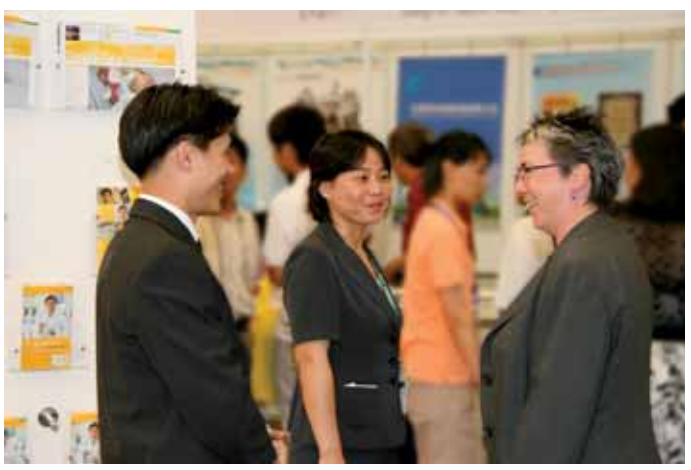
Successful premiere

at leading Asian textile machinery trade fair



More than 80,000 visitors from 96 countries worldwide was the gratifying outcome of **ITMA Asia 2008** which took place 27 – 31 July in Shanghai. This was an astonishing increase of 150% on the previous event in 2005 in Singapore and resulted in many happy faces amongst the organisers and exhibitors. OEKO-TEX® representatives were also very satisfied: true to their aims of informing textiles and clothing manufacturers first hand at major trade meetings about OEKO-TEX® certification, OEKO-TEX® took part for the first time as an exhibitor with great success.

According to trade fair data, a total of 1,368 exhibitors from 30 countries took part in the ITMA in Shanghai.

A stream of visitors, mainly from India

The majority of visitors came from South and South-East Asia, with companies from India above all using the fair to learn about the latest developments in the textile machinery and appliances market. A little way behind came Japan, Korea, Thailand, Iran, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Vietnam and Bangladesh as countries of origin for the specialist audience. The Oeko-Tex Association was prepared for the selection of visitors: 15 experts from all seven Asia-based bureaus of the Swiss textiles testing institute Testex were available to provide interested companies, association representatives and journalists with advice and demonstrations during the five days of the fair. The team was also backed up by Oeko-Tex representatives from a further four member institutes in Europe and Japan, and representatives of the German Oeko-Tex Certification Centre and the Oeko-Tex Secretariat in Zurich.

Proof of quality for the entire textiles chain

Not counting companies with Oeko-Tex certificates that discussed specific issues with experts from the Oeko-Tex Institute, the majority of visitors to the Oeko-Tex stand were textiles and clothing manufacturers who wanted to learn in detail about the requirements for Oeko-Tex Standard 100 and the certification process, as they also wanted to have their products certified in future. The fact that an Oeko-Tex certificate represents an important proof of quality and because of its international value offers a competitive advantage for the regional industry – above all for producers from China and India – when exporting goods, was especially apparent in the interest of the trade press and associations which used the face-to-face meetings with the Oeko-Tex Association to meet their readers' and members' demands for information.

"It was a natural step for Oeko-Tex to take part in ITMA Asia. The Asian region is the region with the largest worldwide growth in certification. So naturally there is a great demand for information which is best met by personal contact with the companies. Especially as the Oeko-Tex Association has had several bureaus in Asia for some years and is able to communicate appropriately with visitors to the trade fair in their mother-tongue."

Raimar Freitag, OEKO-TEX® General Secretary

“Green passport” to the world markets –

OEKO-TEX® Info Event for Industry and the Media

Asia is currently showing the strongest growth in Oeko-Tex Standard 100 certification. Consequently the demand for information is huge both from interested manufacturers and certificate holders from the region and from European companies that procure their goods from the Asian region.

At the event, General Secretary Raimar Freitag also took the opportunity to present the first Oeko-Tex Standard 1000 certificate to an Asian company. Mohamed Ajlan, President of the Saudi-Arabian parent company Ajlan Bros., was visibly proud to receive the award for the industrial premises of Deylon Textile Co. Ltd., which are located in Suzhou, China, and which produce Arab headgear.

About 80 people took part in the series of lectures that took as their theme “OEKO-TEX® opens unlimited textile markets”, principally including representatives of Oeko-Tex certified companies in Asia, plus 28 journalists from a variety of Chinese and Asian trade press.

The concept and global importance of OEKO-TEX® certification

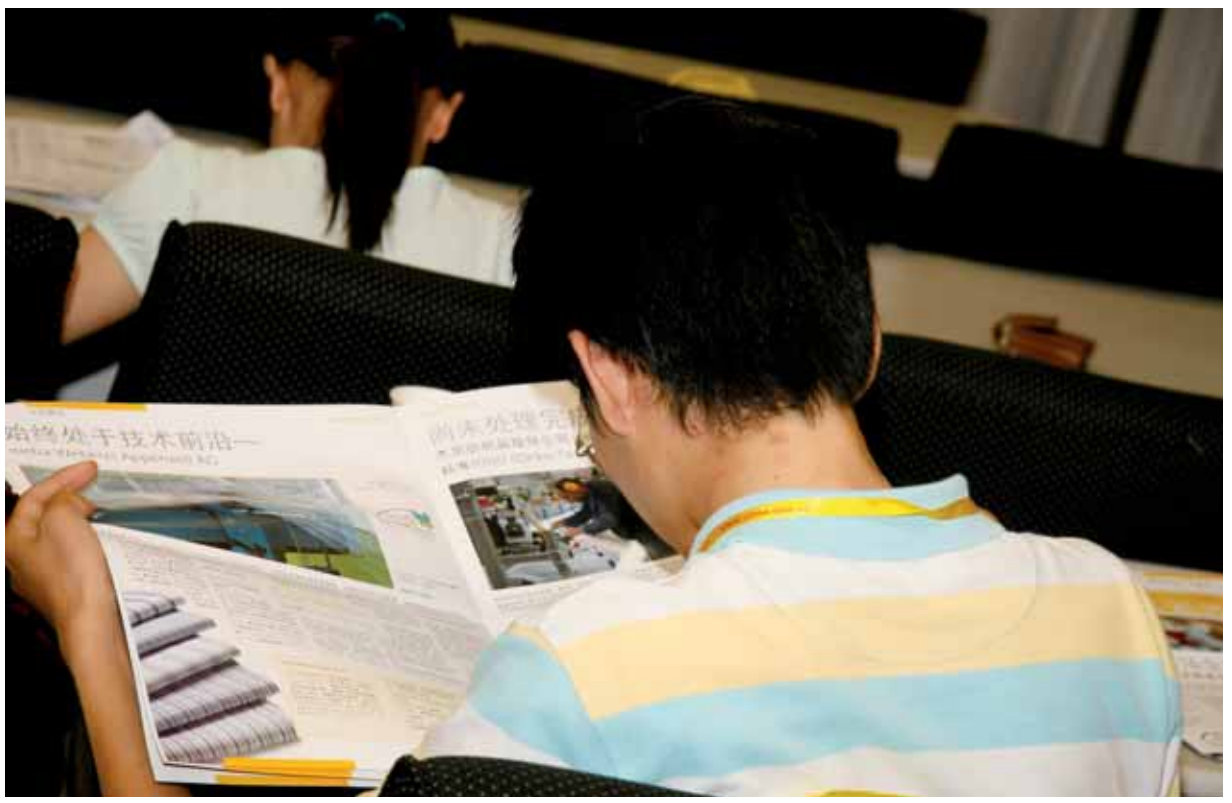
Using up-to-date certificate statistics, Oeko-Tex General Secretary Raimar Freitag underlined the global importance of the Oeko-Tex certification system. In the past year, he reported, there had been the largest increase (+11.5%) in internationally-issued certificates since the introduction of the environmental standards in 1992, with Asia now even slightly ahead of Europe.

Dr. Jean-Pierre Haug, COO of the Swiss Textile Testing Institute Testex described the mainstays of the Oeko-Tex concept: modular design, ongoing updating of audit criteria, regular product checks to see that set limit values are met, and efficient internal quality management of the audit institute. All this enables Oeko-Tex to offer manufacturers, traders and end-users maximum product safety, far in excess of national and international statutory requirements.

Jutta Knels, Head of the German Oeko-Tex Certification Centre, taking as her example the German-language region, also explained how targeted marketing measures and constant press and public relations work have contributed to the spread and recognition of the “Confidence in Textiles” label.

OEKO-TEX® in China

The Chinese public’s changing awareness of higher product quality and consequently of greater safety was described by Tak Him Chan, Head of Testex Swiss Textile Testing Ltd. Hong Kong, in his lecture. Although the majority of manufacturers still only have their goods certified for export, the recurrent product scandals are leading to a rethink by both consumers and the authorities. The Oeko-Tex label is still nowhere on the internal Chinese market, but the state is demanding Oeko-Tex product certification and is basing its statutory requirements on the criteria of the Oeko-Tex Standard 100.



Today in China, the OEKO-TEX® label is seen above all as proof of quality for textiles exports. The Chinese authorities are actively supporting certification and are basing their legislation on the framework of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100.

On the up:
sustainable textile production

The worldwide debate about greater sustainability is also making itself felt among member institutes of the International OEKO-TEX® Association – with increased demand for OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 certification of production plants. Consequently, the focus of the meeting of OEKO-TEX® industrial premises auditors on 5th November in Vienna was above all on the training of additional institute staff, who in future will also be able to undertake OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 audits of businesses involved in the textile chain.

Growing interest

The majority of the ten new auditors come from Spain, Switzerland and Italy. In Spain in particular, textiles and clothing manufacturers have a great interest in becoming certified as environmentally-friendly businesses, as this is a requirement for inclusion in the "made in Green" campaign, which has a strong public profile.

A symbol of top quality

For Swiss companies, OEKO-TEX® 1000 certification is an objective documentation of their high quality standards in all areas of operation, which combine traditionally-high innovative strength with meeting the most modern environmental standards.

Competent neutral business evaluation

The auditors who monitor implementation of the Oeko-Tex environmental standards are all experts with many years of experience in the textiles industry. Before they are sent into the field they are not only intensively trained in the concept Oeko-Tex Standard 1000 auditing, but also given an in-depth introduction into the methods of various quality management systems, as well as into modern production technologies and how they operate with an integrated production policy, and the complexity of the textiles chain, including logistical demands.

Continual development

In addition, at their annual meeting the auditors work continually on the development of the Guidebook, updating the catalogue of questions and the checklists that they use to investigate industrial premises and textile production from ecological and social perspectives in accordance with OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000.

"The OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 systematically analyses the extent of environmental pollution from materials, water and energy consumption with current technical production volumes. In contrast to the EC eco-audit or ISO 14000 the certification is specifically designed for the individual process stages in the textiles chain."

Raimar Freitag, OEKO-TEX® General Secretary

Environmentally-friendly production sites on the Internet:

www.oeko-tex1000.com/references: for an up-to-date list of all OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000-certified textiles and clothing manufacturers.

www.oeko-tex1000.com/portraits: for portraits of individual OEKO-TEX® Standard 1000 companies as pdf- or video files, such as AG Cilander

www.oeko-tex1000.com

OEKO-TEX® International
New bureau in Syria

European companies that have their goods produced in the Middle East, and regionally-based textile and clothing manufacturers, can now have their OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 certification process carried out by the new bureau of the OEKO-TEX® Association in Aleppo, Syria.

The bureau in Aleppo – the centre of the traditional and upcoming Syrian textile industry – is a representative office of the German Hohenstein Institute and is led by textiles expert Dr. Nabil Oulabi.

Summary of all Oeko-Tex member institutes and bureaus:

www.oeko-tex.com/institute

Hohenstein Institute Syria
Mokambo Square
Etehad Street
P.O. Box: 16282
Aleppo · SYRIA

Contact:
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Phone: +963 21 264 3467
Fax: +963 944 73 30 73
Mobile: +963 21 264 3468
Email: syria@hohenstein.org
Internet: www.hohenstein.de

OEKO-TEX® Online

New language versions: Greek and Russian

At the end of September 2008 the websites of the Oeko-Tex Association at www.oeko-tex.com were augmented with two additional language versions: Greek and Russian. So now companies in the former Russian Federation and in Greece can learn the basics of the requirements and functioning of the Oeko-Tex certification system on the Internet.

12 language versions

The web offering is now available in twelve different languages. Some documents such as information brochures can furthermore be downloaded in additional language versions. Automatic browser recognition means that Internet users are automatically guided to the appropriate language version.

Top 5 contents

Far and away the most popular web offering at www.oeko-tex.com with 47% of all page views is Sources of supply including the sub-functions such as Product search, Company search and Brand name search. After that come the summary of Limit values and fastness (18%), the download area (16%), the background to the introduction of the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 (12%), and Institute contacts (7%).

By far the most frequently clicked page over all languages under the Sources of supply is the Brand name search, ahead of Product search and the search for OEKO-TEX® certified companies).

Faster data access

Quick Finder with direct link

In order to speed up access to popular content, a Quick Finder with direct links to five of the most important pages has been installed on each page of the website: links include Sources of supply, Limit values, Institute contacts, Application forms and a Validity check for certificates.

Redesign of the Download area

In addition, since November 2008 the restructuring of the download area has guaranteed faster and easier access to existing download files such as environmental standards, application forms, advertising material or newsletters.

Wide international use

In line with the global spread of the OEKO-TEX® environmental standards, a statistical analysis of access figures on the OEKO-TEX® site underscores the international importance of the OEKO-TEX® certification system:

- Users from 36 countries around the world visited the OEKO-TEX® website at least 1000 times in 2008. In total, visitors registered as clicking on the website from 50 countries (the technical maximum) – the actual number was far higher.
- There is a relatively small variation between page visits during the day and at night. This is indicated by the many visitors from countries outside Central Europe who click on the website with times different to the server time (CET).
- 35% of all page views were of the German version. The rest were divided between the other eleven languages, including primarily the English (18%) and Chinese (10%) versions of the OEKO-TEX® website.

Open Day
at the Federal Ministry of Economics

"Knowledge creates prosperity": that was the theme of the German Government and the Federal Ministry for the Tenth Open Days in Berlin on 23rd and 24th August 2008.

Also taking part at the Federal Ministry for Industry and Technology (BMWi) were the German OEKO-TEX® Certification Centre and the Hohenstein Research Institute, to explain to visitors about the benefits of testing textiles for harmful substances to OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 and current highlights in the field of textiles research. The OEKO-TEX® contest was also a great success with the public, offering every participant the chance to win one of three trips in the "OEKO-TEX® Number One" hot-air balloon.

Also on show were innovations from a variety of fields which were supported by the BMWi with the aim of strengthening Germany as an economic location and generating jobs. In spite of some bad weather, the organisers were very satisfied with their "Invitation to make a state visit" and the number of visitors set new record.

The power bra!

Although it's not yet ready for the market – or perhaps vice versa – Triumph International (Japan) Ltd. has innovatively tackled the problem of declining resources along with the demand for environmentally-friendly textiles: in May the company presented the world's first bra with built-in solar cell.

According to the company, it can be used to run small mobile telephones or MP3 players – provided the wearer gets enough sunlight. The textile "matrix" of the intelligent bra is made of organic cotton and is tested for harmful substances to OEKO-TEX® Standard 100.

This novel product, Triumph says, reflects in miniature the general paradigm shift from energy storage to energy generation, which in future every household will be able to implement on a larger scale, by the use of the sun's energy to offset shrinking energy resources, for instance.

The "Photovoltaic-Powered Bra" follows the "No! Plastic Shopping Bags Bra" and the "My Hasi (Chopsticks) Bra" as the third product from a range on the theme of underwear, which Triumph is using in Japan to profile current social trends in relation to an environmentally-friendly lifestyle.

Imprint

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Thank you to all the companies that provided us with pictures for the event.