

## Labelling scheme endorses REACH regulated dyes

Scannable label to inform consumers of EU production benefits

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A labelling scheme is being developed to encourage consumers to buy textile products, which have been produced in Europe, using dyes registered under REACH.

The scheme is part of a campaign designed to promote dyes which have undergone REACH registration as having less health and environmental impacts than those used in imported goods.

The label includes the scheme's title, "Made in Colours", and a scannable code which will tell the consumer that the product was dyed in the EU, as well as directing them to relevant webpages.

This will help inform consumers about the benefits of an article that uses chemicals controlled and regulated under REACH, says the scheme's founder and CEO of consultant REACH&Colours, Michela Kahlberg. "Consumers, the main beneficiaries of REACH, are not at all informed about [REACH] and our industry is the only one paying its costs without the benefits at the end," she said.

It is essential, says Ms Kahlberg, that in the run up to the final registration deadline in 2018, consumers are made aware of REACH in order to help increase the value of textiles, paper, leather and furniture items that are "truly manufactured in Europe, following the rules".

The scheme was first presented at a conference in Italy, last year, at the Industrial Association of Prato [an area of Tuscany traditionally associated with the textiles industry]. Attending the event was Clara Gonnelli, chairman of Italian consumer association ACU Toscana, who says the label and scannable code will help make the textiles manufacturing process more transparent and traceable. "It provides consumers with a tool to navigate through, and become aware of, the production process."

Chemicals, used in textile products that are produced outside the EU, do not have to be registered under REACH. These products, says Ms Kahlberg, can be imported into Europe without "deep analysis". Even if production standards exist in their country of origin, she says, they are very limited compared to those in the EU. "This penalises European manufacturers in terms of costs and does not give proper visibility to the work that [EU companies] do to guarantee consumer safety and environmental protection."

Over the last few years, she says, many EU textiles manufacturers transferred their operations to non-EU countries because the costs are lower and regulatory enforcement is less stringent. "In our opinion, the problem is that the manufacturing rules in these emerging countries are very different from ours, and controls – including those for importing – are very scarce." She adds that, within the EU, regulations for protecting human health and the environment are, "rightly, becoming more and more felt and severe".

The dyes industry has been vocal on the costs of registering substances under REACH. Some SMEs in the industry have said that the likely reduction in the number of available dyes, caused by the high registration costs, could threaten the survival of Europe's textiles and leather supply chains ([GBB October 2014](#)).

Made in Colours has five member companies and seven sponsors but Ms Kahlberg expects to reach 50 members in the next few months. Initially, it is focusing on inviting companies within the EU "colouring" industry, such as tanneries, dyeing houses and inks producers.

However, there are other companies that share the same interests, such as producers of other types of chemicals used in textiles, weaving mills, by refinishers and garment makers.