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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Vestager
on behalf of the European Commission
(4.11.2024)

The Commission recognises the challenge of supervising and enforcing compliance with EU legislation on imported goods, including for low-cost products.

A strict EU regulatory framework is in place to prevent certain hazardous substances in articles for consumers. Textile products placed on the market, including imports, are subject to the Regulation concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of chemicals (REACH)¹. Most substances found in the survey² are already banned or restricted in textiles³ and others may follow should it be warranted.

It is the responsibility of Member States to enforce EU legislation. Projects by the Forum for Exchange of Information on Enforcement⁴ aim to increase compliance with the REACH and the Regulation on Classification, Labelling and Packaging⁵ (e.g. on textiles)⁶.

EU regulations on general product safety⁷, on a Single Market for Digital Services⁸ and on market surveillance and compliance of products⁹ also aim to strengthen enforcement. In addition, national authorities must notify measures taken against unsafe products, through the Safety Gate Rapid Alert System¹⁰.

The proposed reform of the EU Customs Union¹¹ would strengthen the capacity of customs and other authorities to enforce compliance with EU rules on imports, including for e-commerce imports.

Furthermore, under the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation¹², the Commission is currently assessing¹³ the introduction of specific information requirements on the presence and use of substances of concern in textile products placed on the EU market (including imports). Performance requirements could also be set to restrict the use of substances hindering circularity, complementing existing EU rules.

¹ Regulation (EC) 1907/2006,

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02006R1907-20240606>

² https://www.oekotest.de/kosmetik-wellness/Test-zeigt-Shein-Mode-teilweise-voller-giftiger-Chemikalien_14755_1.html

³ For example, substances that are carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic to reproduction, azocolourants, azodyes or nonylphenol ethoxylates.

⁴ <https://echa.europa.eu/about-us/who-we-are/enforcement-forum>

⁵ Regulation (EC) 1272/2008, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2008/1272/oj>

⁶ https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/17086/ref-10_project_report_en.pdf/83661988-378d-6268-3f28-182da198e8ac

⁷ Regulation (EU) 2023/988, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/988/oj>

⁸ Regulation (EU) 2022/2065, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj>

⁹ Regulation (EU) 2019/1020, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1020/oj>

¹⁰ The EU rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products, <https://ec.europa.eu/safety-gate>

¹¹ https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/customs-4/eu-customs-reform_en

¹² Regulation (EU) 2024/1781, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1781/oj>

¹³ <https://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/product-bureau/product-groups/467/home>