

Press release

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Next STeP: OEKO-TEX® expands Sustainable Textile Production to include leather products

Bönnigheim (ivs) The benefits of leather are clear to see: in addition to their captivating visual appearance, leather products are characterised by their extraordinary longevity, their unique patina and their impression of high quality. Consumers are thus happy to fall back on leather, a natural product – from lambskins for babies to furniture or vehicle fittings to clothing and accessories. However, for consumers it is also increasingly important that these leather articles are tested for harmful substances and that they are produced in a sustainable way.

When it comes to environmentally friendly production, the leather industry is still in its infancy. With the Sustainable Textile and Leather Production Certification (in short, STeP), which will be launched from 01 April 2019, OEKO-TEX® is taking a giant step towards environmental protection and sustainability, also in leather processing. Until now, certification according to STeP by OEKO-TEX® was only available to producers within the textile supply chain. At the same time, the new OEKO-TEX® regulations will come

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into force definitively from 01 April 2019 following a three-month transition period.

The environmental impacts of leather production are enormous: for example, the heavy metal chromium is used as standard to tan the leather; however, the leather can only absorb and bind around 60 percent of the chromium used during the tanning process. The rest is discharged into water. STeP helps manufacturers to design production processes that are more environmentally friendly and sustainable, and to communicate these services to others in a transparent way. In the context of active consumer protection, brands and retail companies can draw on products from certified facilities.

“The demand for articles that have been tested for harmful substances and which have been manufactured in a sustainable and socially fair way is increasing - also with regard to leather articles. Consumers quickly learn that their buying decisions have an influence on their families and our environment. Brands, retailers and manufacturers must be equipped for this awakening and with STeP we can offer them an ideal tool to do so,” commented Georg Dieners, OEKO-TEX® General Secretary. Certification according to STeP by OEKO-TEX® is possible for production facilities at all stages of processing: from the beamhouse to the tannery to finishing and making up. The modular analysis of all relevant areas of a company such as chemicals management, environmental performance, environmental management, operational safety, social responsibility and quality management enables STeP to conduct a comprehensive and reliable analysis of the sustainability of the facilities and where there is still potential for improvement. The aim of STeP certification is the long-term implementation of environmental production processes and socially acceptable working conditions. In doing so, comprehensive internal quality management is unavoidable. In addition, unannounced external audits are also regularly carried out at the local production facilities to check compliance with the required criteria.

About OEKO-TEX®

With other 25 years of experience, OEKO-TEX® is the world leader in enabling consumers and business to protect our planet through responsible trading. OEKO-TEX® offers standardised solutions with which customers can optimise their production process and contribute to bringing high-quality and sustainable products onto the market. All of the services provided by the OEKO-TEX® portfolio serve to strengthen our customers' systems, processes and products and, ultimately, to create more sustainable businesses. Currently, 10,000 manufacturers, brands and retailers in nearly 100 countries work with OEKO-TEX® to ensure that their products are tested for possible harmful chemicals. Simultaneously, millions of users around the globe use the OEKO-TEX® labels as information for their purchasing decisions. OEKO-TEX® certified products and suppliers can be found online in the OEKO-TEX® Buying Guide at www.oeko-tex.com/products. Follow OEKO-TEX® on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

OEKO-TEX®
INSPIRING CONFIDENCE

STeP



With the Sustainable Textile and Leather Production Certification (in short, STeP), OEKO-TEX® is taking a giant step in the direction of environmental protection and sustainability, including in leather production. © OEKO-TEX®



It is increasingly important to consumers that leather articles are also tested for harmful substances and that they are produced sustainably. © OEKO-TEX®