

Technical Bulletin

#4 | 2022

False Labeling on “Bamboo” Textiles

The US Federal Trade Commission has noticed an increase in claims that some textile products are “bamboo,” “made from bamboo,” or contain “bamboo fibers.” It is claimed that these products are sustainable or environmentally friendly due to the “bamboo fibers.” However, these claims on textile products are deceptive and misleading as in fact those textiles are actually viscose or rayon whose manufacturing process uses toxic chemicals and emits hazardous pollutants.

Not only in the US but also in Germany or the European Union, respectively, authorities take action against false labelling of viscose as bamboo fibers.

In the US, textile fibers must be labeled and advertised according to the FTC Textile Fiber Products Identification Act and the Textile Fiber Rule. Selling apparel and other textile products labeled and advertised as “bamboo” are subject to civil penalties.

The FTC suggested that any plant/tree including bamboo can be used as a source of cellulose but once the cellulose undergoes the regenerating process by using various chemicals the generic fiber name would be viscose or rayon. Textile products made with bamboo pulp that has undergone a chemical fiber making process must be labelled and advertised as rayon (viscose) – maybe including the statement “made of bamboo”.

Textiles and apparel may only be labelled as “bamboo” if they are made directly with bamboo fiber (often called mechanically processed bamboo).

In general, fabrics made of rayon (viscose) from bamboo do not retain the natural antimicrobial properties of the bamboo plant.

EU Regulation 1007/2011 on material labelling

- Correct textiles labelling is a prerequisite for market launch

In the European Economic Area, many requirements and regulations must be observed. There is even a separate regulation in the EU for the labelling of textiles: The EU Regulation 1007/2011 on textile fibre names and related labelling and marking of the fibre composition of textile products.

Violations of these rules often lead to disputes under competition law and measures by the market surveillance authorities.

(Other labelling regulations must be observed beyond fibre identification.)

Fibre composition and textile labelling

Determining the qualitative and quantitative fibre content of yarns and fabrics is crucial if you want to label materials correctly in accordance with EU textile labelling regulation.

Hohenstein identifies fibers and determines their content using three methods: microscopic examination, mechanical as well as chemical separation. Based on those analytical results and our sound expertise in textiles and textile labelling we can check the existing labelling and/or propose a proper labelling for your textile products.