



A CERTIFICATION TO ADD VALUE TO SAFE TEXTILES AND TO THE COMPANIES THAT PRODUCE THEM

For years, the Tessile e Salute Association has been operating to identify and prevent the distribution in the Italian market of clothing products dangerous to consumers' health, using longstanding instruments and studies, among which there are:

- a database of substances used in the textile production chain produced in collaboration with the National Institute of Health;
- a National Dermatological Observatory;
- a survey at International level on the use of the substances in the textile chain;

The activities are carried out in collaboration with the **Ministries of Health and Economic Development, the National Institute of Health, the competent authorities in relation to product safety (ASL, NAS, Public Prosecutors' Offices)**, the DG Enterprise European Commission, IWTO (International Wool Textile Organisation), consumers' associations and the Enterprises.

The investigation results have been confirmed in the study commissioned by the DG Enterprise European Commission "Chemical substances in textile products and allergic reactions", which highlights the presence of hazardous substances in many imported textile products for sale in the national territory. In particular, the analyses made have identified the presence of carcinogenic aromatic amines, allergenic dyes, heavy metals, formaldehyde.

The severity of the problem is reconfirmed by health facilities: in over 400 hospitalized patients the skin disease was associated with contact with textiles (69,1 %), accessories (16,5%) and footwear (14,4 %). All the products identified as being non-compliant were imported or counterfeit.

In brief, 7/8% of skin diseases are caused, at National level by imported textiles and footwear.

Thanks to this field practice experience, the Association places at the businesses' disposal a valuable certification instrument in collaboration with Unionfiliera.

This certification system is simple and efficient, and assumes a special significance at a time when

- the offer of voluntary certification models is on the increase at International level, thus creating confusion among the operators of the sector and even more so, among consumers,
- the consumers increasingly focus their attention on safe and sustainable products, also under the environmentalists' pressure.

Targets of the Certification

The certification enables buyers to assess and choose textiles also on the basis of quality, technological and production features ensuring the protection of consumers' health and the environment

Aim of this certification is

- ***to make the process of textile products more transparent, by tracing and describing the various processing phases of the supply chain;***
- ***to ensure total absence of harmful chemicals;***
- ***to increase the value of safety requirements of the product;***
- ***to stress the commitment on the part of the producer (in terms of resources and technological investments assigned thereto) in order to create a safe product in compliance with environmental regulations.***

Specifications of the certification

This certification system is characterized by easy use and effectiveness:

- ***it operates at National level;***
- ***it does not consider the single enterprise but the entire production chain in which it operates;***
- ***it collaborates with Health Authorities;***

With regard to the presence of dangerous substances, the following acceptance limits must be met:

- ***Mandatory provisions on prohibition or restriction of the use of the substances listed in the REACH regulation;***
- ***The provisions laid down in UNI/TR 11359 Safety management of textiles, clothing, furnishing, footwear, leather and accessories;***
- ***Any other specifications of the Tessile e Salute Association;***

In practice, the requirements cover the many market demands.

Benefits for the certified companies

The enterprises that are Associazione Tessile e Salute /Unionfiliera certified, can demonstrate that they operate in full compliance with the REACH regulation with regard to the prohibition to use hazardous substances, and use reliable suppliers and a traceable and transparent production chain.

In doing so, the companies are enabled:

- to meet any market requirement on product safety;
- to enhance product safety requirements;
- to be differentiated from low-price competitors;
- to defend and promote entire production chains while ensuring health and sustainability;

This certification is also an instrument to improve companies' competitiveness because it gives major weight to the enterprises that operate openly and in compliance with the mandatory regulations, in the constant search to improve their performances.

Benefits for the buyers

This certification offers the buyers reassurance because it:

- ensures product traceability and safety, reproducing its production chain and the processes it undergoes;
- guarantees both production process and safety of the product obtained;
- provides due diligence procedures in the supply chain;
- standards and analysis methods develop in the light of the new knowledge provided by the National Health System and reflect the technical specifications of the companies;

The necessary steps to obtain the certification

The companies interested in starting the certification process according to the standards developed by Tessile e Salute Association/UNIONFILIERE shall provide complete and comprehensive information on their *internal production processes, supply chain, chemicals and compounds used*. They shall also undertake to an *ongoing quality sustainability improvement of their processes* in terms of safety of workers and end users.

For more info, to come into contact with the Association's experts and to apply for a first audit:

Tel: 015 406570 - Fax 015 8490009

E mail: direzione@tessileesalute.it – www.tessileesalute.it