



Canadian province withdraws proposal for more complex labelling rules on stuffed articles

Following joint efforts by the Commission and the Canadian industry, a proposal to extend labelling rules for stuffed and upholstered articles by the province of Ontario was withdrawn in December 2008. This represents a significant victory for European textile exporters to Canada, but does not entirely solve the stringent labelling rules for stuffed articles in Canadian provinces. The European Commission continues to monitor the issue.

Canadian legislation regarding labelling of textiles (Textiles Labelling Act), while relatively general at federal level, foresees provincial competence as regards specific labelling requirements for stuffed articles. Due to concern about consumer safety and protection from use of unclean fillings, three provinces, Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec, require that each stuffed article (mainly home textiles) be subject to specific labelling, while their producers need to be registered with the provincial authorities. These requirements pose problems to European manufacturers by imposing additional costs to part of the Canadian market (the Upholstered and Stuffed Articles Regulation 218/01 has a regional dimension and does not apply to the whole Canadian territory) and causing significant delays in shipment.

A recent proposal by Ontario's Technical Standards and Safety Authority to further extend the regulation so as to include a broader definition of "upholstered and stuffed articles" covering all stuffed garments including shoulder pads as of 1 January 2009 was brought to the Commission's attention in October 2008. This extension widened the scope of the regulation to almost any type of padded or stuffed garment, from coats to underwear, thereby creating further, yet unnecessary, obstacles to trade in textiles.

The European Commission took action by raising the issue in the WTO TBT Committee in Geneva in November 2008 and at a meeting of the EC-Canada Trade and Investment Sub-Committee on 25 November 2008. Furthermore, the combined pressure of European and Canadian textiles associations on the Canadian government helped convince the Canadian authorities to review the measures.

Subsequent discussions between the Canadian government and the Ontario authorities resulted in withdrawal of the proposed extension. The previous exemptions from the licensing and labelling requirements for shoulder pads and trimming in articles of clothing were reinstated, while a new exemption, for padded undergarments, was established.

The measures were announced on the website of the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. Manufacturers who had paid registration fees are now entitled to a refund of those fees.

It is clear that the combined efforts of the European Commission and European business in cooperation with the Canadian industry have helped to limit the extent of the already burdensome legislation. However, the existing scope of labelling requirements for stuffed products continues to pose problems for European industry and the European Commission will continue to follow this issue.

Trade G.1, in collaboration with Trade G.2 and B.3

For further information: TRADE-G1-MARKET-ACCESS@ec.europa.eu

Produced by

European Commission
External Trade

Contact

Market Access
European Commission
External Trade
Unit G.1
B-1049 Brussels

Subscribe/unsubscribe

For further information and to keep up-to-date with the Market Access News, please send an E-mail to :
TRADE-G1-MARKET-ACCESS@ec.europa.eu
mentioning "Subscribe/Unsubscribe Market Access Flash" in the subject line.