Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS): New version 4.0 released: New assessment of improved regenerated and synthetic fibres

Large 2013 increase of GOTS certified companies in Europe

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New GOTS Version 4.0 - Short Version
Today, the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) International Working Group is announcing Version 4.0 of its globally-recognized standard for the processing of textiles made from certified organic natural fibers. GOTS' core provisions such as the 70 % minimum content of certified organic fibres, bans on GMO (genetically modified organism), nanotechnology and carcinogenic substances have been maintained.
There are modified rules on the conventional 'additional fibre materials': These now may consist of regenerated, respective synthetic fibres - up to 30 % - provided they are environmentally improved and certified. GOTS is following the current knowledge that the focus on natural fibers for this additional fibre content is no longer justifiable.
Other changes include the bans on virgin polyester and of angora (recently in the headlines due to animal cruelty concerns). New criteria were adopted for specific product groups, such as textile personal care products or mattresses.
The most important addition to the social criteria that are based on the ILO key conventions (eg. banning child labour) is to take into consideration available results of various other reliable programs and certification schemes in this field.

New GOTS Version 4.0 - Full Version
Today, the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) International Working Group is announcing Version 4.0 of the worldwide recognized standard for the processing of textiles made from at least 70% (label grade 'made with organic'), respective 95% (label grade "organic") certified organic natural fibres.

GOTS' core provisions such as the 70 % minimum content of certified organic fibres, the general bans on the use of substances from disputed techniques such as GMO (genetically modified organism) and nanotechnology as well as carcinogenic substances have been maintained. There are modified rules on permissible conventional 'additional fibre materials': These now may consist of regenerated, respective synthetic fibres - up to 30 % - provided they are environmentally improved and certified. For regenerated fibres this means that the raw material must be from certified organic production respective sustainable forestry management or certified recycled. For synthetic fibres the raw material must be recycled and also certified according to recognized standards.

"According to current knowledge through environmental impact assessments the previous focus on natural fibres for the permissible conventional 'additional fibre materials' (up to max. 30 %) is no longer justifiable. In the future, textile manufacturers will have a larger choice of fibre mixes if they

also use the environmentally improved variants of regenerated and synthetic fibres. A wider product selection of GOTS certified products will be made possible which will also support the increased use of organic fibres" notes Marcus Bruegel, GOTS Technical Director.

In addition, the use of virgin polyester and angora is banned. "Both bans are reasonable. Recycled polyester yarn is already widely available. In the case of angora the ban is a consequence of the mostly inacceptable husbandry conditions of angora rabbits" Bruegel continues.

The processing is also regulated more strictly. As in every revision process the latest insights regarding textile chemistry and residue testing methods were considered. Various applicable criteria and limit values were reinforced. The already extensive list of banned substances and strict residue parameters was further extended. This will point out more clearly that all substances criticized by Greenpeace in their "Detox Campaign" naturally remain banned in GOTS.

New criteria were adopted for specific product groups, such as textile personal care products or mattresses.

The GOTS social criteria are based on the ILO key conventions (International Labour Organization), which include the ban on child labour. The audit areas that need to be covered by the auditors during the on-site inspections were further specified. The GOTS 4.0 now expressly stipulates programs or certifications; the results are to be considered during the GOTS inspection: Fair Wear Foundation (FWF), Social Accountability 8000 (SA800), Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP) and the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI). Fire prevention training and evacuation drills were added to the existing health and safety training requirements.

The implementation period for GOTS certified entities to comply with the new criteria is one year after the announcement.

GOTS 4.0 is the result of a revision process with multi stakeholder input which is repeated every three years. Stakeholders who operate internationally with expertise in the field of organic production, textile processing, textile chemistry and social criteria and representing the industry, NGOs and consumer interests were invited to participate. This time the participating organizations also included Greenpeace, the Clean Clothes Campaign, Fairtrade, the Fair Wear Foundation, IFOAM and Textile Exchange.

GOTS Annual Report 2013

After the number of facilities becoming certified to GOTS in 62 countries worldwide surpassed the 3.000 mark in 2012, it remained stable in 2013 with an increase to a total of 3.085 certified facilities. A decrease in Asia which was partially caused by the trend of concentrating the placement of GOTS orders with certain already certified facilities was overcompensated by a huge increase in Europe. A total of 109 new facilities were registered in Germany (+66%), Austria (+14%) and Switzerland (+27%). An increase of 73 % with 33 new facilities was registered in Portugal, 13 % increase in Italy and 12 % in France.

The Top 20 countries in terms of the total number of GOTS-certified facilities were: India, Turkey, Germany, China, South Korea, Italy, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Japan, Portugal, France, United Kingdom, USA, Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands, Greece, Denmark, Belgium and Sri Lanka.

"We see the increase in Europe as a very positive sign. For the companies the GOTS certification means an increasing competitive advantage in addition to the effective supply chain management. It helps them find their 'Business Case for Sustainability'. First of all they have a pull effect on the whole worldwide supply chain and secondly they have a push effect towards the end consumers. They are

making themselves to real agents of change to sustainability in the textile industry and secure their long-time company success at the same time" says Claudia Kersten, GOTS Marketing Director.

India maintained her top position for fifth year in a row. At the end of the year 2013, there were 1,029 GOTS certified facilities in India. GOTS also got an award for the Best Sustainability Initiative from Consortium of Green Fashion in Apr-2013. There has also been an increase in the GOTS certified products being sold in the retail market in India with more brands and stores supporting GOTS. GOTS exhibited in National Garment Fair, Biofach India and IndiaTex in 2013. GOTS representative in India, Mr. Sumit Gupta was invited to various International Conferences, Seminars and Institutes to speak on Eco-Fashion, Compliance and Sustainability, where he interacted with professionals from industry and students.

All certified facilities are listed in the public database which has been available on the GOTS website since 2010. There are more than 100,000 search queries every year. There are currently seventeen GOTS accredited independent certification organizations.

The GOTS Version 4.0, the corresponding Manual for the implementation, a list of the relevant changes, region specific additions to this press release as well as translations into Japanese and Chinese and further information regarding GOTS can be found on www.global-standard.org.

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