COMMISSION

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of 6 February 1987

on certain methods for the removal of non-fibrous matter prior to quantitative analysis of fibre mixtures

(87/142/EEC)

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular the second indent of Article 155,

Whereas Council Directive 71/307/EEC of 26 July 1971, on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to textile names [1], as last amended by Directive 83/623/EEC [2], requires mandatory labelling of textile products, whose fibre content must be checked by analysis for conformity with the indications given on the label;

Whereas Council Directive 72/276/EEC [3], as last amended by Directive 81/75/EEC [4], and Council Directive 73/44/EEC [5] lay down analytical requirements that must be complied with in order to determine, during checks on conformity carried out in the Community, the fibre content of textile products composed of binary and ternary mixtures; whereas these requirements concern both the pretreatment of the sample and the quantitative analysis itself;

Whereas Directive 72/276/EEC and 73/44/EEC stipulate that non-fibrous matter added to textile products must be removed prior to the analysis of the fibre content of the sample; whereas these Directives lay down a standard removal method applicable exclusively to non-fibrous matter that can be extracted with light petroleum and water, but do not specify any procedure in respect of the many types of added matter that are insoluble in those substances; whereas, under these circumstances, the laboratories carrying out conformity checks on textile products may use different methods that may give differing results;

Whereas, in the current state of the art, it is in practice impossible to lay down binding and exhaustive methods for the removal of added matter that is insoluble in light petroleum and water, because of the complexity and varying composition of such matter;

Whereas it is nevertheless expedient, in order to ensure as far as possible the necessary uniformity of the results of conformity checks on textile products carried out in the Community, to provide laboratories with suitable methods for the removal of the main types of added matter that cannot be extracted with light petroleum and water, which those laboratories should use; whereas methods displaying these characteristics are set out in ISO technical report 5090 of 15 February 1977 and UNI standard 8046 of June 1980, as confirmed by experts from the national laboratories at a meeting of the Commission's 'Analyses' working party; whereas it is desirable to make provision for using these methods in appropriate cases and, therefore, that their use be recommended; whereas reference can therefore be made to the abovementioned documents, stipulating the necessary variants and the inherent limits of such methods;

Whereas these conclusions are in accordance with the views expressed by the Committee for Directives relating to Textile Names and Labelling,

HEREBY FORMULATES THIS RECOMMENDATION:

Article 1

It is hereby recommended that the laboratories conducting verifications of the conformity of the composition of textile products use, for the pretreatment of the sample for analysis, the methods for the removal of non-fibrous matter given in the Annex to this recommendation.

(1) OJ No L 185, 16. 8. 1971, p. 16.
(2) OJ No L 353, 15. 12. 1983, p. 8.
(3) OJ No L 173, 31. 7. 1972, p. 1.
(4) OJ No L 57, 4. 3. 1981, p. 23.
(5) OJ No L 83, 30. 3. 1973, p. 1.

Article 2

The Member States shall inform the Commission of the measures taken on the basis of this recommendation.

Article 3

This recommendation is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels, 6 February 1987.

For the Commission

Grigoris VARFIS

Member of the Commission

ANNEX

RECOMMENDED METHODS FOR THE REMOVAL OF NON-FIBROUS MATTER PRIOR TO THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF TEXTILE FIBRE MIXTURES

(Point I.6, third paragraph, first sentence of Annex II, part 1 to Directive 72/276/EEC and Directive 72/44/EEC)

1. INTRODUCTION

In the textile industry 'non-fibrous matter' means all substances of natural or synthetic origin added to textile products at any stage in their processing. These substances serve a wide variety of purposes depending on the type and intended use of the textile product to which they are applied.

Non-fibrous matter is subdivided into a number of categories, namely:

— lubricants and batching agents,

— sizes,

— finishes.

2. PROVISIONS FOR THE REMOVAL OF ADDED MATTER

To verify the fibre content of textile products, it is necessary, in the case of mixtures or when extraneous fibres are found in textile products claimed to be 'pure', to make a quantitative analysis of the fibre composition, generally by dissolving one or more constituents of the product.

2.1. Prior to the analysis proper, however, all the non-fibrous matter must be removed in accordance with the new Article 12 (3) of Directive 71/307/EEC on textile names, set out in Article 1 (7) of Directive 83/623/EEC.

2.2. This requirement is also included in a slightly different form in Directives 72/276/EEC (Annex II, section 1, fourth and fifth paragraphs) and 73/44/EEC (Annex I, Introduction, eighth and ninth paragraphs) on the quantitative analysis of binary and ternary fibre mixtures.

2.3. For the removal of certain types of non-fibrous matter, in particular non-fibrous matter that can be extracted with light petroleum and water (oils, fats, waxes, water-soluble products, etc.), Annexes I and II to the two abovementioned Directives on quantitative analysis lay down in item I.6, 'Pretreatment of laboratory test sample', a standard method consisting of extraction with light petroleum, followed by soaking in cold water, then hot water.

2.4. No removal method is given for other non-fibrous matter, the third and fourth paragraphs of item I.6 stipulating:

> 'Where non-fibrous matter cannot be extracted with light petroleum and water, it should be removed by substituting for the method described above a suitable method that does not substantially alter any of the fibre constituents...
>
> Analysis reports should include full details of the methods of pretreatment used.'

The great variety and complexity of composition of the matter added to textile products and the continual technical development of such substances, the characteristics and in particular solubility of which vary over a period of time, mean that their removal is highly complex and gives varying results.

Consequently, it appears virtually impossible to define before the analysis precise and exhaustive standard methods for the removal of all types of added matter.

That is why the Directives on analysis do not specify such methods but leave it to the laboratories to choose suitable procedures for the removal of added matter that may be present in textile products for analysis.

3. RECOMMENDED METHODS

3.1. Despite the impossibility of devising standard methods for all added matter, it would still be useful for analytical laboratories to have methods with precise procedures that could, where appropriate, be used in the different cases that arise and in particular for the dissolution of the added substances most frequently used.

Without such methods the removal of these substances prior to the analysis of textile products may well be carried out in different laboratories in varying ways, which could lead to varying results being obtained from analysis.

Consequently, to introduce some uniformity in the pretreatment of the samples to be examined it is advisable to suggest suitable methods for the removal of the main substances added to textile products.

3.2. The following methods are regarded as suitable for the removal of non-fibrous matter, especially finishes, and can therefore be used :

— those given in ISO technical report 5090 of 15 February 1977, Table and Annex,

— those given in UNI (1) standard 8046 of June 1980, appearing in Chapter 4, points 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.11 on the added substances referred to in Chapter 5 under serial Nos 5.4, 5.8, 5.10, 5.17, 5.19, 5.21, 5.22, 5.23, 5.28 and 5.29.

4. COMMENTS

The methods of removing resins for crease-resistant treatment described in points A.11 of ISO technical report 5090 and 4.9 of UNI standard 8046 are equivalent and either may be used.

The methods for the removal of sizes and finishes based on acrylic resins described in point A.6 of ISO technical report 5090 and points 5.4 and 5.21 of UNI standard 8046 are to be regarded as complementary, and therefore their use depends on the case in question.

5. WARNING

Attention should be drawn to the following considerations also set out in the second sentence of the first paragraph of ISO report 5090 :

— the methods proposed are sometimes imprecise and cannot, in the present state of knowledge, be improved,

— some methods are missing for the removal of certain non-fibrous materials,

— since methods for the identification of all non-fibrous matter are not available at present, it is not possible to decide whether removal has been total or not,

— certain methods can damage textile fibres without it being possible, at present, to assess the degree of damage.

(1) UNI = Ente Nazionale Italiano di Unificazione.