



PRESS RELEASE

09 April 2015

GLOBAL LEATHER CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETS AT APLF IN HONG KONG

Led by the Presidents of ICT, ICHSLTA, and IULTCS respectively, the Global Leather Co-ordinating Committee (GLCC) met in Hong Kong on Monday 30th March, on the first day of the ASIA PACIFIC LEATHER FAIR.

The Committee confirmed its mission to maintain and enhance the position of leather in the markets as a valued component material for the benefit of consumers and the leather manufacturing sector.

An update was received on the EU led Pilot Project on leather environmental footprint and sector stakeholders' negotiations relating to allocations of its burden in the value chain. The leather pilot regrets to inform that the Joint Research Centre (JRC) technical report issued for the meat industry by the steering committee recommends an economic allocation of upstream burdens as a "default model" to the leather industry, taking into account a 3 year average hide price. The leather industry has voiced its opposition to such a method and wants hides to be considered as recyclable waste with zero burden. According to the JRC the pilots are welcome to test alternative methodologies in addition to the default model and the EU Steering Committee has approved the scope and choice of representative product for the continuation of the Pilot Project to develop and test an alternative methodology for leather. The timeline for such testing is three years.

The Committee considered various global regulations that restrict use of chemical substances - notably the Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (ZDHC), Manufacturing Restricted Substances List (MRSL) a draft of which has recently been circulated for comment and implementation of EU regulations relating to Cr (VI) which will affect leather and leather products sold or imported into the EU by May 2015. A draft EN / ISO standard on testing of critical chemical substances in leather is still under review by the IULTCS, ISO and CEN members and a final version is expected in early 2016.

ICT expressed concern on the chemical management issue and particularly on chrome use. There is growing confusion among clients, also caused by multiple initiatives on the issue.

Tanners are requested by brands and clients in general to comply with RSL and chemical tests/requirements that are inapplicable or inadequate or useless. Unfortunately some chemical producers, laboratories and consultants often take advantage of the lack of related know-how in the brands in order to approach them directly and sell eco “easy solutions”, without involving tanners on the feasibility.

In reviewing leather standards and legislation, ICT reported that the revised European (CEN) Standard for leather terminology was due to be published in April, and this would prohibit the use of the term “leather” – including use in conjunction with other words such as “synthetic”- for any materials that did not meet the strict definition of leather. However, it is disappointing that the European Commission is not addressing leather labelling legislation more positively.

The GLCC has started work on policy statements defining the industry position on key topics.

The next GLCC meeting is proposed to take place in Milan in September, 2015.

end press release

Notes:

1. The Global Leather Co-ordinating Committee comprises representatives of the International Council of Tanners (ICT), the International Council of Hides, Skins and Leather Traders Associations (ICHSLTA), and the International Union of Leather Technologists and Chemists Societies (IULTCS).
2. For further information on this release contact: Lena MANEAT (office@french-hides.com), Secretary of ICHSLTA.