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OEKO-TEX® expands sustainable textile production to include leather products

BÖNNIGHEIM, GERMANY (March 8, 2019) – With the Sustainable Textile and Leather Production Certification (STeP), which will be launched on April 1, 2019, OEKO-TEX® is taking a giant step towards environmental protection and sustainability in leather processing. Until now, certification according to STeP by OEKO-TEX® was only available to producers within the textile supply chain. New OEKO-TEX® regulations will also come into force definitively on April 1, 2019 following a three-month transition period.

The environmental impacts of leather production are enormous. The heavy metal chromium is used as standard to tan the leather, which can only absorb and bind around 60 percent of the chromium used. The rest is discharged into water.

STeP helps manufacturers design production processes that are more environmentally friendly and sustainable, and to communicate these services to others in a transparent way. In the context of active consumer protection, brands and retailers can draw on products from certified facilities.

"The demand for articles that have been tested for harmful substances and which have been manufactured in a sustainable and socially fair way is increasing - also with regard to leather articles," Georg Dieners, OEKO-TEX® general secretary, commented.

"Consumers quickly learn that their buying decisions have an influence on their families and our environment. Brands, retailers and manufacturers must be equipped for this awakening and with STeP we can offer them an ideal tool to do so."

Certification according to STeP by OEKO-TEX® is possible for production facilities at all stages of processing, from the beamhouse to the tannery to finishing and making up. The modular analysis of all relevant areas of a company (chemicals management, environmental performance, environmental management, operational safety, social responsibility and quality management) enables STeP to conduct a comprehensive and reliable analysis of the sustainability of facilities and where there is still potential for improvement.

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The aim of STeP by OEKO-TEX® certification is the long-term implementation of environmental production processes and socially acceptable working conditions. Unannounced external audits are regularly carried out at the local production facilities to check compliance with required criteria.

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About Hohenstein
With over 1,000 employees in more than 40 branches, offices and laboratories worldwide, Hohenstein is an internationally oriented testing services provider and research partner in the textile industry. Hohenstein is a founding member and leading provider of the OEKO-TEX® portfolio of services and is certified by the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC ID #1058) as a third-party, independent laboratory for CPSIA compliance verification. Hohenstein.US/STeP

About OEKO-TEX®
With over 25 years of experience, OEKO-TEX® leads the world in empowering and enabling consumers and companies to protect our planet by making responsible decisions. OEKO-TEX® provides standardized solutions which optimize customers' manufacturing processes and help deliver high quality, more sustainable products. All products within the OEKO-TEX® portfolio are used to strengthen customers' systems, processes or products and help create more sustainable companies. More than 10,000 manufacturers, brands, and retailers in nearly 100 countries are working with OEKO-TEX® to ensure their products are tested for potentially harmful substances. Millions of consumers around the world look for OEKO-TEX® labels before making buying decisions. OEKO-TEX® certified products and suppliers can be located in the OEKO-TEX® Online Buying Guide at www.oeko-tex.com/products. Connect with OEKO-TEX® on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.