Lidl Commits to Banning Hazardous Chemicals

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The world's second largest discounter Lidl is committed to eliminating all hazardous chemicals from its textile production by 1 January, 2020. With the statement released today, the company is reacting to Greenpeace's Detox campaign. 'The global retail giant Lidl takes a huge first step forward,' says Manfred Santen, Detox campaigner at Greenpeace Germany. 'Now discounters like Aldi, Penny, Tesco, Carrefour and Wal-Mart have to clean up their production, too.'

Lidl had done badly when Greenpeace recently tested discount children's clothing and shoes for the presence of hazardous chemicals (http://gpurl.de/kOGsk). In a discount store shopping guide, Greenpeace found weaknesses in raw materials, recycling of textiles and social production standards in the Germany based company.

Now Lidl has commited to phasing out hazardous pollutants like alkylphenol ethoxylates (APEs) by the end of June 2016. Released into wastewater, APEs degrade into environmentally hazardous alkylphenols which are highly toxic to aquatic organisms. All per- and polyfluorinated chemicals, some of which can damage the immune system and affect reproduction must be eliminated by July 2017. In order to make the supply chain in Asia and the rest of the world more transparent, 80 percent of Lidl's 'wet-process' suppliers will reveal their wastewater data by the end of 2015. This commitment applies to all of Lidl's apparel and footwear including both textile and leather. It also applies to all its home textile production like towels, curtains, or carpets.

Lidl – present in 28 countries across Europe

The discounter's apparel, footwear and home textiles business is booming: each week, they push huge quantities of low-cost products onto the market, resulting in annual sales of over one billion euros from Lidl textiles alone. The company is among the ten biggest fashion retailers in Germany, together with retail giant Tchibo and discounter chain Aldi. Tchibo was the first discounter to react to the recent hazardous chemical product tests, announcing that it would detoxify its production and set up a take-back and recycling programme. 'The junk range time is over. A backlash is already visible, away from quantity to quality,' says Santen.

Greenpeace's Detox campaign has so far convinced 21 leading international fashion companies and six suppliers to clean up their production by 1 January 2020. The campaign is fighting against massive global water pollution from textile production – the majority currently produced in Asia. In China, about two-thirds of rivers and lakes are contaminated with chemicals that are hazardous for both health and the environment.

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Resources
[1] The Lidl Detox commitment is online here: http://www.lidl.de/de/gemeinsam-veraendern/s7372519

The Detox campaign:http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/toxics/detox/

Company Contact:

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