

TTIP

Meeting with European Carpets and Rugs Association (ECRA)

09.12.2014

Participants:

[REDACTED] (TRADE), [REDACTED] (ENTR), [REDACTED] (ECRA)

Summary:

The objective of the meeting was to discuss issues of relevance for the carpets and rug industry (ECRA) in TTIP notably third party certification requirements on both sides of the Atlantic (including role of accredited laboratories).

ECRA noted that most of their products fall under the provisions of the EU Construction Products Regulation (third party certification requirements for flammability and most recently chemicals emissions – e.g. volatile organic compounds). In the US products have to respect mainly flammability requirements if used in buildings.

EU and US worked for a number of years on ISO/TC 219 Floor coverings. EU EN standards are identical to ISO ones. On the contrary, ASTM standards diverge from what has been agreed at ISO level. Consequently tests have to be repeated. Finally in the US, requirements vary from State to State which is particularly challenging for industry SMEs

As regards chemical emissions, EU legislation follows ISO 16000 while ASTM is not aligned with ISO as regards the way the testing is done.

In addition, both in the EU as in the US there are private/voluntary certification schemes that de facto become mandatory. Certain Architects in the US accept products only if they are certified by LEED (the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System). In the EU, the voluntary certification scheme is called PRODIS (the uniform PRODUct Information System of the European Carpet Industry).

In this context, although EU laboratories can be officially recognized in the US, when we enter in the private certification sphere there is almost no EU lab accepted in the US (there is only 1 EU lab accepted in LEED and the recognition process took over 5 years)

ECRA was asked to provide additional information on the procedures for an EU lab to be officially recognized in the US and how many EU labs are nowadays recognized in the US.