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**Small material, big impact:
European Repository of Reference Nanomaterials will improve safety
assessment**

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) has just launched the first European repository of nanomaterials with a representative range of 25 different types of reference nanomaterials. This will support safety assessment to ensure consumer protection and confidence in many innovative applications and products. Nanotechnology is one of today's most promising technological developments. By enabling a harmonised risk assessment the repository can contribute to the success of nanotechnology and its products. Standardised methodologies and materials are necessary to obtain worldwide comparable test results and to provide reliable data for policy and regulatory decision making.

Launching the repository officially today, Elke Anklam, Director of the JRC Institute for Health and Consumer Protection (IHCP), said: "This unique repository fosters standardisation in safety assessment and facilitates innovation by creating a common and consistent measurement framework for all stakeholders. This will both support international harmonisation bodies for standardising risk assessment as well as EU policy makers for regulatory issues."

Nanomaterials may offer a range of benefits over traditional materials and enable the development of innovative applications and products. For European industry to capitalise in the best sense from nanotechnologies, it is essential that the EU has a well-considered regulatory framework covering issues related to safe practices in the manufacturing process, consumer health, and protection of the environment.

Such a framework depends on harmonised and science based risk assessment. In order to ensure the comparability of the underlying data obtained in the many international test laboratories, the availability of representative reference nanomaterials is essential.

This first European repository of nanomaterials has been created by the JRC in response to needs for safety-assessment testing from experts in the major international standardisation bodies. The repository contains most types of nanomaterials currently assumed to be used in significant volumes in consumer products. Some 8000 test samples have already been distributed to European national authorities, EU-funded research projects, and have also been used in international scientific co-operation initiatives (such as the OECD Working Party on Manufactured Nanomaterials). The nanomaterials contained in the repository are produced in collaboration with the German Fraunhofer Institute for Molecular Biology and Applied Ecology (IME) under Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) conditions. The 25 types of material include carbon nanotubes, silver nanoparticles, titanium dioxide, cerium oxide, zinc oxide, bentonite, gold and silicon dioxide.

For more information on JRC activities in nanotechnology, please visit:

<http://ihcp.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

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