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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

A Lead Market Initiative for Europe

**{COM(2007) 860 final
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Action Plan for protective textiles

ACTION PLAN OF THE LEAD MARKET INITIATIVE IN THE AREA OF PROTECTIVE TEXTILES

This Action Plan describes the implementation of the Lead Market Initiative in the field of *Technical textiles for intelligent personal protective clothing and equipment* (PPE)¹.

Protective textiles comprise clothing and other textile-based systems whose main function is to protect the users from hazards and dangers in the conditions in which they operate such as civil and military emergency interventions or in hospitals and manufacturing environments that require insulation from bacterial and viral contamination. The current size of the PPE market in the EU is estimated at 9.5-10 billion euros, with around 200,000 jobs directly or indirectly related to PPE products and services. The fast growth forecasted in certain parts of the world suggests that EU exports of PPE could grow by about 50% over the next years. Advances in this area embrace, for example, novel speciality fibres, the use of nanoparticles and the integration of micro-electronic components into fabrics and garments. Spill-over effects from faster growing innovations in PPE to other market segments such as interior textiles or functional clothing would considerably increase the economic impact of the lead market, thus **increasing the knowledge content and the added-value**, contributing substantially to a sustainable competitiveness of the entire textile sector.

A swifter development and use of European standards in the global market, combined with appropriate measures for the protection of intellectual property, e.g. through business support services for SMEs, would create additional demand for protective textiles. Public purchases have an important role to play with regard to protective textiles, attaining 100% in certain product groups. Since there is not always bundling of demand, there is fragmentation of demand at the level of local authorities. At the same time there is a lack of knowledge on how public procurement can be used for purchasing innovative solutions while respecting the legal framework. Promoting a systematic interaction of innovation actors is a further crucial element of an anticipatory strategy for knowledge-intensive innovation in this market which responds to the need to increase the transparency of a market. This interaction is limited by the complexity of the products and by their quick evolution, not immediately identified by the market.

¹ The references to PPE are not restricted to the legal definition in Art. 1 of Directive 89/686/EEC, but refer to a broader concept

Policy Instruments	Objectives	Actions	Timetable	Actors
Legislation	To enhance coherence in the implementation and enforcement of Community technical legislation laying down essential safety user requirements, in particular in the area of personal protective equipment (PPE) ²	Adoption of the regulation ³ and decision ⁴ within the framework of the revision of the New Approach to technical harmonisation proposed by the Commission	2008/2009	EC, Council and EP
Public procurement	<p>To promote the exchange of good practice in public procurement of innovative protective textile products.</p> <p>To raise the know-how of public purchasers for protective textiles on public procurement for innovative solutions.</p> <p>To facilitate the access of public purchasers of protective textiles products</p>	<p>Establish a network between public purchasers of PPE to apply the Commission guide on public procurement for innovation in this area.</p> <p>The network would inter alia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify good practices in the field of PPE – Promote their application across the EU – Collate a best practice catalogue and put it on the Web. <p>Set-up of an information and training platform for buyers and users of protective textiles.</p> <p>Provide an overview of technical features of the</p>	2009-2011	<p>EC</p> <p>Member States</p> <p>Industry</p>

² Council Directive 89/686/EEC of 21 December 1989 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to personal protective equipment.

³ COM(2007) 37 final – Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products.

⁴ COM(2007) 53 final – Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a common framework for the marketing of products.

Policy Instruments	Objectives	Actions	Timetable	Actors
	to information on state of the art and on the latest technological developments.	products and IPR protection aspects. Actions to be implemented in the context of the CIP.		
Standardisation, Labelling, Certification	To foster the involvement of SMEs, in particular from the textile industry, in the development of standards in the area of protective textiles	Support the SME involvement in the development of protective textile standards in the new generation NormaPME project.	2008-2009	EC
	To accelerate the standardisation process and to facilitate informed choices by purchasers and users	Promote, where appropriate, the development and use of informal standards ⁵ for innovative products and services in this market area.	2008-2009	Industry
Complementary Actions	To develop a dynamic dialogue involving all stakeholders and aiming at bringing about further technological progress	Devise a strategy for an anticipatory approach to products and markets, including the organisation of a conference on protective textile innovation and the development of a Web-based information and collaboration tool.	2008/2009	Industry
	To stimulate research and technological development in the sectors of personal protective equipment and clothing	Inclusion of a research topic targeting the personal protective equipment and clothing sectors under the 2nd call of the NMP theme in FP7	2008	EC

⁵ Such informal standards could be either precursor deliverables in the formal process of standardisation or alternatives developed by fora and consortia other than recognised standardisation organisations; both have a shorter development period.

Policy Instruments	Objectives	Actions	Timetable	Actors
	To link investors and other protective textiles stakeholders more effectively with a view to establish partnerships	Create a model for a collaborative PPE innovation platform (pilot project involving financial institutions such as EIB could be envisaged afterwards).	2009	Industry
	To raise awareness and to overcome resource limitation and perception of IPR as burdensome	Conduct sectoral IPR awareness and support action under CIP	2008 onwards	EC
	To foster the development of economies of scale, innovation stakeholders collaboration and trans-sectoral cooperation	Encourage the development of clusters and other forms of local collaboration (incubators, open innovation platforms) involving purchasers and users	2008 onwards	Member States
	To fully exploit the growth potential of EU protective textiles exports	Improve access to markets of third countries, by means of the ongoing WTO/DDA negotiations and bilateral free trade agreements with India, South Korea, ASEAN countries, Ukraine, Andean Community and Central America	2008 onwards ⁶	EC

⁶ Conclusion of negotiations for free trade agreements envisaged for 2009/2010.