

**Contact: Johannes Kleis: +32 (0)2 789 24 01**  
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## **EU nanotechnology plan: tiny focus on consumer protection**

Everyday products from clothes to children's toys can contain nanomaterials. Regrettably, the European Commission today disregarded calls from the European Parliament, consumer groups and environmental NGOs to force nanomaterial producers to be transparent about the substances they use and improve pre-market testing.

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) also deplores that thresholds for registering nanoproducts with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) remain too high.

Nanotechnologies use materials on an incredibly small scale - 1 nanometer is 10,000x smaller than the diameter of a human hair. Although of potential benefit to consumers, they also pose new threats to human health and the environment. According to experts<sup>1</sup> exposure to nanosilver could contribute to the development of anti-microbial resistance.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation commented:

"As with any other chemical, the 'no data, no market' rule should also apply to nanomaterials. It is a cause for concern that manufacturers can continue to put a product on the market whose safety has not been properly proven. It seems that once again consumers and the environment have lost out against innovation and economic growth.

"Consumers and public authorities will continue to be left unaware of the nanomaterials commonly found in European homes and workplaces. We should be told before buying such products and authorities need to be aware so that they can assess their safety. What we urgently need are strict information and registration requirements."

ENDS

<sup>1</sup> German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR): The BfR recommends that nanosilver is not used in foods and everyday products, BfR Opinion Nr. 024/2010, 28 December 2009,  
[http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/bfr\\_raet\\_von\\_nanosilber\\_in\\_lebensmitteln\\_und\\_produkten\\_des\\_taeeglichen\\_bedarfs\\_ab.pdf](http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/bfr_raet_von_nanosilber_in_lebensmitteln_und_produkten_des_taeeglichen_bedarfs_ab.pdf)