

Statement:

**„Yesterday’s footprints“ -
The new Greenpeace-Report on per-fluorinated chemicals**

10. September 2015

On September 8th 2015, the environmental organization Greenpeace has published its report “Footprints in the Snow”. This report refers to their earlier ones from 2012 und 2013 on Outdoor-Apparel. Like in the two previous cases, the topic is again per-fluorinated chemicals, which the environmental organization detected in snow-and water samples.

The chemicals in question are, in addition to a multitude of industries, such as aircraft industry, metal plating, semiconductors also used in consumer goods industries, i.e. coating of cook-wear and paper and in the finishing of technical materials, like carpets and textiles.¹ They grant water-and dirt-repellent functions for apparel. These chemicals are very stable, volatile and thus persistent. Due to these facts, remains of per-fluorinated chemicals are found worldwide.

This is however not a new information, but well-known since the first Greenpeace-report in 2012.

Besides, the numerous above mentioned intended uses, Outdoor-Apparel is only responsible for a relative small part of per-fluorinated chemicals in the environment. A scientific research from 2013 showed that 0,5 % of critical per-fluorinated chemicals (PFOA) found in German wastewater derived from Outdoor-Jackets.²

In the interest of environmental protection, a lot of companies have drawn their consequences and are now converting to environmentally friendly alternatives. This technological change is however connected to big challenges and therefore needs a certain transition time: On the one hand the sector is dependent on new developments of environmentally friendly chemicals for the impregnation of their textiles. On the other hand consumers have high expectations on the performance of Outdoor-Apparel, appreciating their functional benefits for hiking and trekking as well as for everyday use in pedestrian zones. After a phase of research, development and the implementation of new processes in the textile supply chain, many new PFC-free outdoor-products are currently being released on the market. Consumers can already choose from a wide range of Outdoor-Apparel with fluor-free finishing in this current and the upcoming season.

Beyond that the Association of the German Sporting Goods Industry and their Outdoor committee are also active in the scientific field and co-operate with the University of Bremen and the German environmental protection agency (Umweltbundesamt) in the project “Water-repellent, breathable and green – sustainable equipment of outdoor-textiles” with the objective to evaluate “green alternatives” for textile-finishing. Fortunately enough, numerous chemical manufacturers agreed to provide fluor-free chemicals, so that not only the Outdoor-sector but the whole textile industry will soon receive important information on environmental friendly alternatives.

Therefore, we can disprove the statement of Greenpeace that *“the sector does not care about environmentally friendly alternatives, but only has taken efforts to enhance the clothing against even more extreme weather conditions”* (Quotation from magazine “Der Spiegel” 09/05/2015) with clear conscience.

¹ Investigation of use and emission of per- and polyfluorinated substances in the Nordic countries, Stefan Posner et. al. (2012)

² “Outdoor-Jackets as a source of PFAS in the environment”, Thomas P. Knepper, Hochschule Idstein, Berlin 25.09 2013

On the contrary, while the environmental organization analyzes “yesterday’s footprints”, the Outdoor-sector takes care of “tomorrow’s technologies”.

The Association of the German Sporting Goods Industry e.V. (*Bundesverband der Deutschen Sportartikel-Industrie - BSI*) is the professional association for German manufacturers, importers and wholesalers of sports equipment which was established in 1910. Its members include 150 mainly medium sized companies. The German sports goods industry generates an annual turnover of 25 billion Euros. The BSI is a member of the Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry FESI, which is based in Brussels, and therefore also a member of the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry WFSGI, which is based in Berne. The BSI is a co-founder and promotional supporter of the Cologne trade fairs spoga and spoga horse and promotional supporter of the ISPO Munich, the world trade fair for sports. It also supports the FSB trade fair in Cologne.

FGO – Fachgruppe Outdoor is the lobbying group for the German Outdoor Industry within the Association of the German Sporting Goods Industry e.V. (BSI). Its members include 43 leading German manufactures and importers of Outdoor goods and equipment. In addition to the representation of commercial interests, the FGO is dedicated to the responsible management of nature. The German Outdoor goods market is developing very dynamically with a current annual turnover of 1.8 billion Euros. The FGO is a member of the European Outdoor Group (EOG) and founder of the leading European trade fair, the OutDoor in Friedrichshafen.

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