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Comparison of nano perception between Asia and Europe and its influence on nano regulation

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Nano information is crucial for nano safety along the life cycle of nanomaterials. Transparency on nano content offers advantages for producers, downstream users and consumers of nanoparticles. There are differences in the nano perception between different continents. Consumers in Asian countries like to buy nano products with nano particles because they appreciate the advantages of nano particles in them. In Asia many products are advertised as nano products, even if they are imitations. Thailand has introduced a certification system Nano Q which helps to distinguish between real and fake nano products.

In European countries industry often fears harm through stigmatisation, if companies have to declare nano particles in consumer goods. Many of them prefer not to label their products even if they contain nano particles. Therefore classification and labelling has only been introduced in a few regions and in a few product categories, such as in cosmetics and in biocides. The justification for such regulation is the protection of human health and the environment from hazards and risks of nanomaterials and / or the consumers' right to know if they buy products containing nano materials. There is an ongoing debate whether nano regulation including the compulsory declaration of nano particles in products is compatible with WTO law. The present article investigates nano regulations in various regions and their compliance with WTO rules.

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