



CONFEDERATION DES ASSOCIATIONS NATIONALES DE TANNEURS  
ET MEGISSIERS DE LA COMMUNAUTE EUROPEENNE

CONFEDERATION OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF  
TANNERS AND DRESSERS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

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## **COTANCE Position Statement on Certifications of Leather**

### **European Tanners call for common sense in private certification schemes**

Certification schemes for leather have escalated in the recent past. European tanners are concerned about this trend, as such schemes are generally mutually exclusive and often do not recognise pre-existing official certifications from industry-recognised standards. This drives up unnecessary costs in tanneries, which are confronted by a rising number of private standards and labels, and leads to fragmentation of value and supply chains.

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European Tanners can produce leather that complies with any reasonable requirement requested by their customers. Buying leather made in Europe ensures:

- *the authenticity of leather;*

European tanners produce leather; a material that is unique for its characteristics. Preserving these unique characteristics is the passion and the ambition of our tanners. There lies their skills and competence.

### **European tanners are determined to challenge false and misleading product descriptions abusing the term “leather”.**

- *the fitness for purpose of the leather;*

When you buy a leather article you expect that the leather will fulfill the technical requirements for that article. The leather has to meet the chemical, physical and fastness requirements of the specified end use, be it footwear, garments, leathersgoods, furniture or car interiors.

### **European tanners guarantee fitness for purpose for a leather that complies with the applicable ISO, CEN or national standards.**

- *the legality of the production process and its inputs;*

Europe’s chemical, environmental, and occupational regulations guarantee that a leather made in Europe complies with the most stringent requirements in the World for process chemicals, the protection of workers and the environment and the quality of the product. The EU implements also Animal Welfare rules that are among the most stringent in the World.

**European tanners are reliable business partners. The requirements set by the public hand for operating a tannery in the EU are among the most stringent in the World.**

- *the conformity of requirements with the tanning sector's trade practices;*

Leather-making is an art as well as a science. This cultural substrate forms the set of techniques and practices developed over centuries.

**European tanners are proud to be leaders in creativity and innovation.**

- *the ability to verify, with open test standards, the required characteristics of the leather.*

Setting requirements for leather makes sense only if the requirement can be tested. CEN and ISO standards, developed and recognised by the sector, are publicly accessible and serve in audits and certification. Private standards or house test-methods have a distinctively lower authority.

**European tanners see no added value in testing their leathers against parameters that are not relevant for the material or with test methods that lack the necessary scientific robustness.**

Leather made in Europe fulfils all the above conditions and can be placed safely on any market. Consumers will find in European leather a quality product that embeds the value of the article it dresses and that can be used safely for a lifetime or more.

Europe's leather industry has developed, through CEN and ISO, standards that are internationally recognised and accepted. The industry continues its standardisation activities, with relevant partners and stakeholders, in the same open spirit of collaboration, which is the essence of public standardisation and has always characterised Europe's tanners.

Igualada, 9 June 2017