

Germany Publishes Meeting Report from Expert Dialogue on Application of Nanotechnologies in the Construction Sector

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On June 1, 2017, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety published meeting documents from the Expert Dialogue on “Opportunities and Risks of the Application of Nanotechnologies in the Construction Sector.” The documents include a summary of discussion, meeting agenda, and report, *Regulation of construction products and possibilities to address (new) risks from nanomaterials*. During the Expert Dialogue, participants examined and discussed regulations for placing building products on the market and the general test procedures for reviewing their impact on the environment and human health. Topics covered included approaches that consider the whole life cycle of building products and the current status of knowledge about risks for workers and the environment. The summary states that participants saw potential risks in the production and application of nano construction products that could be managed using conventional protection measures. To date the particularities of nanomaterials have not been explicitly considered in the assessment of environmental and health impacts. An integration of respective requirements into the European Union (EU) standards is possible, according to the summary, but would require a longer process, which the EU Member States need to start. A stronger consideration of nanomaterials in national authorizations of construction products could be implemented in Germany via the principles for authorization or the integration of specific requirements in the model building law, respectively. Several stakeholders wished for more transparency on the benefits from the use of nanomaterials, as well as on the types and amounts of nanomaterials used in construction products. The summary states that “[a] comprehensive assessment and an understandable communication of benefits from nanomaterial-containing products as well as the potentially related risks from them, including from their disposal, was stated to be important for the acceptance of such products.”

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