



AVICENN

Association de veille et d'information civique
sur les enjeux des nanosciences
et des nanotechnologies

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Älmhult, Suède

Paris, June 11, 2021

Subject: withdrawal of GUNRID 'air purifying' curtains

Dear Madam,

We are writing to you on behalf of French non-profit organisation AVICENN. Our organization undertakes strategic watch on nanomaterials (available from veillenanos.fr) and promotes greater transparency and vigilance on nano-related risks. We would like to enquire about the recent withdrawal of GUNRID curtains from your product line.

Back in March 2019, we were intrigued by [IKEA's advertising on upcoming "air purifying" curtains](#). Since titanium dioxide (TiO₂) nanoparticles are known to have photocatalytic properties, as those also promoted in the [video](#) of the product, we wondered about their potential presence in the product. Although our first questions to IKEA had remained unanswered at that time, your supplier, HeiQ, wrote back to us in early 2020, after the actual commercialization of the GUNRID curtains started, assuring that their [Fresh AIR substance used on these new curtains](#) contained a "micro-sized" – not nano scaled – "mineral", without further clarification on its nature (TiO₂ or other?).

Our NGO thus decided to check for the exact composition and tested the curtains. We received the results in October 2020: a large number of TiO₂ nanoparticles were found on the surface of the fibres (100% below 100 nanometers, as described in the [report from the French national metrology laboratory](#)).

In the first trimester of 2021, we then initiated other tests to quantify the depolluting efficiency of the curtains. However, mid-May, when we wanted to order another set of curtains for further testing, we discovered that the product is no longer on the market. This time, you (partly) answered our email: yes, the curtains were indeed taken out of the range, because they did not purify the air to the extent that was expected.

Hereby we would like to seek further clarifications about your recent decision:

- When was the decision to take GUNRID curtains out of the range made and then implemented?
- To what extent did the [hazard classification of TiO₂ as a suspected carcinogen](#) enter into consideration in your decision?
- How many pairs of GUNRID curtains were sold before their withdrawal from the market?
- Is IKEA planning to inform consumers who bought these curtains about their insufficient air-purifying efficacy and the presence of TiO₂ nanoparticles on them?
- And what about a broader communication on your decision to stop selling these curtains? This would be all the more legitimate considering these curtains were featured on the cover of your 2020/21 paper catalogues almost all over the world. In France for example, [the National Union of Confectionery publicly committed to stop using TiO₂ in food as of mid-2018](#), one year before [the announcement of its ban in France](#) (and, [soon, in the whole European Union](#)).

We look forward to your answers that we propose to post together with this letter [on our website](#), in order not only to contribute to a better understanding of marketing choices regarding nanoproducts, but also to promote, through this concrete example, an effective vigilance on environmental health issues raised by nanomaterials, based on transparency, risk/benefit analysis and CSR best practices.

Should you envision the commercialization of products with similar properties without nanomaterials, or of products with nanomaterials for other properties and functions, we would be very interested in engaging in a constructive dialogue with you about market needs for such products.

Yours sincerely,

Philippe BOURLITIO, president of AVICENN, France
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