

COVID-19: How safe is protective equipment made in China?

Supporting German and Chinese authorities to ensure product quality of personal protective equipment and critical medical supplies for the coronavirus response



Challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a worldwide surge in demand for medical devices and personal protective equipment (PPE), including in Germany and Europe. In order to ensure adequate supply, the EU Commission and its member states are taking measures at various levels. This includes temporarily adjusting regulatory requirements to make urgently required products available more easily. Under certain conditions, products can therefore be brought into the market if they comply with technical regulations in other markets that offer an equivalent level of protection as EU standards.

Some EU-member states had negative experiences when importing medical devices and PPE from third countries. In several cases, products coming from China – the world's largest producer of PPE – were found to not meet the stipulated requirements. Additionally, there is an increasing

number of fake certificates in circulation. Without relevant experience, market surveillance authorities face challenges when evaluating the authenticity of conformity declarations for imported products, that are based on regulations of other jurisdictions.

Our contribution

The Global Project Quality Infrastructure (GPQI) supports German market surveillance authorities in the following ways:

Assessment guideline:

In consultation with relevant Chinese authorities, GPQI has developed a guideline for the assessment of Chinese certificates of conformity. The guide can be used as an orientation for German market surveillance authorities.

Exchange mechanism for case-by-case verification:

We support German market surveillance authorities by offering a mechanism to verify the authenticity of Chinese test reports and certificates for masks. For this purpose, we have established a direct exchange channel with the respective Chinese authorities.

We support German market surveillance authorities by offering a verification mechanism for Chinese test reports and certificates for masks.

Implemented by

Facilitation of joint action:

In cooperation with Chinese political partners, we support Chinese market surveillance measures and promote the exchange of experiences to assist the work of German authorities and decision-makers, e.g. regarding

- Nation-wide special inspections of Chinese mask manufacturers
- Comparison of Chinese and European norms and standards for medical devices and PPE
- Special surveillance initiatives against fake certificates and fraudulent certification activities for medical products and PPE

GLOBAL PROJECT *Quality Infrastructure*

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH implements the Global Project Quality Infrastructure (GPQI) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi). GPQI supports policy dialogues in China and other selected countries. In these bilateral dialogue partnerships, authorities jointly work on topics in various areas of quality infrastructure in an inclusive process. Participants include a wide range of stakeholders from companies, associations and scientific institutions. The common goal of cooperation is to promote market access, fair trading conditions, the reduction of technical barriers to trade, and the improvement of safety and quality of traded products.

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