



AIB-VINÇOTTE International s.a. / n.v.
SAFETY, QUALITY, ENVIRONMENT
Member of the Group AIB-VINÇOTTE
Head office : Boulevard A. Reyers 80 - B-1030 Brussels

CERTEST PRODUCTS

Everest - Leuvensesteenweg 248 / B-1800 Vilvoorde
Tel. : +32(0)2 674.57.50 - Fax : +32(0)2 674.57.85
E-Mail : okcompost@vincotte.be

• Our References
Référence: 2BR/PDW/081211a
Contact: Ph. Dewolfs

• Your References
Ref. :

Brussels,
December 2008,

Dear Sir/Madam,
Dear Licensee,

Subject : Royal Decree establishing product standards for compostable and biodegradable materials

As you are no doubt well aware, Belgium recently published a new Royal Decree on claims about environmental friendliness (see Official Journal of 24 October 2008 – the official French and Dutch texts are featured in the annex, the enclosed English version is not an official text).

The aim of this Royal Decree is to specify the conditions of access to the market to be met by solid materials using the name "compostable", "home compostable" and "biodegradable" (biodegradable materials in an aquatic environment are not covered).
It is scheduled to come into effect on 1 July 2009,

The technical specifications are explained in more detail in annexes I to IV.

Annex I : General requirements relating to biodegradable and compostable materials

Annex II : Specific requirements relating to compostable materials

Annex III : Specific requirements relating to home compostable materials

Annex IV : Specific requirements relating to biodegradable materials

As you will see, annex II (and I) features the requirements of the EN 13432 standard (= OK Compost), while annexes III and IV (and I) include the requirements of the "OK Compost HOME" and "OK Biodegradable SOIL" specifications respectively.

However, I think it might be useful and relevant to draw your attention to the following points :

- *Article 4 : If an element of the product bears a mark claiming one of the characteristics listed, all elements of the product must have the same characteristics.*

All the components of a packaging product (such as the container and the film) have to meet the requirements. Consequently, a compostable container may no longer be declared as such if it is packed in a film which is not compostable.



- *Article 5 : Under no circumstances may packaging or parts of packaging claim to be biodegradable.*

This restriction is related to the confusion reported amongst consumers who believe biodegradable packaging may be discarded in the environment.

Biodegradability in the ground may nonetheless be declared for other products whose end of life in the ground makes perfect sense (such as mulch films and plant pots).

- *Article 6 § 2 (and following) : The manufacturer of the material or his representative or the person responsible for placing the material on the market shall provide inspection officials, on request, with a file [technical data sheet featuring all the information required to show product compliance].*

All our certificates routinely refer to a compliance assessment report. The Vinçotte report, together with all the documents it mentions, represents the technical file required by this new legislation.

- *Annexes II.2, III.2 and IV.2 - Biodegradation : Pre-treatment using heat or light shall not be permitted.* [in the context of degradation tests according to the ISO 14855, ISO 14852 and ISO 14851 standards].

Products certified "OK Compost ", "OK Compost HOME" and "OK Biodegradable SOIL" are consistent with the specifications featured in annexes I and II, III and IV.

The entire OK Compost team remains at your service should you require any further information.

Yours faithfully,

Philippe Dewolfs

PS : This Royal Decree is only of application in Belgium, but many European countries are interested by the approach and could be inspired some in the future.