Business Week
7th November to 11th November 05

REACH to be discussed at EU Plenary session

11 November 2005

REACH will dominate the agenda at the November Strasbourg session of MEPs, to be held November 14-17. The REACH package on chemicals regulation is provisionally scheduled to be held on the afternoon of November 15 with the vote set to be held on November 17.

The plenary session's vote will mark the end of the first reading". It will then be for member states, meeting within the Council, to come to a decision. The UK, which currently holds the Council Presidency, hopes to obtain a political agreement during the meeting of the Competitiveness Council on November 28. If no consensus is found, a second reading will take place, which could involve nearly a year's additional work.

West Wind branding updated with Nilorn labels

11 November 2005

The West Winds brand of 100% cotton Ventile clothing, recently acquired by Snugpak, has been given a new lease of life with redesigned swing tickets and woven laser cut badges.

We modified West Wind garment styles to bring them up-to-date but we also wanted the branding and presentation to have a fresh new look and reflect the quality of the brand," said Mick Dobson managing director for Snugpak, a UK manufacturer and supplier of sleeping bags, rucksacks and insulated clothing.
We have worked with Nilorn for about seven years, but this is the first time we have used them to help revamp brand presentation," said Mr Dobson. Together with the garment redesigns the impact has been significant and West Winds is once again winning new business."

Recently relaunched by Snugpak, West Winds has been established for ten years and its Ventile garments are supplied to those who work outdoors, where extreme weather demands the best in protective clothing. National Parks, the British Antarctic Survey, military departments and outdoor educational establishments are included among West Wind's customers.

Descente named official cycling apparel of Team CSC

11 November 2005

Descente Cycling Apparel has been named the official cycling apparel supplier to the Team CSC professional cycling team, based in Denmark and run by Riis Cycling.

The team, comprised of 30 of the top cyclists in the world, includes Ivan Basso, and three top Americans as well: Bobby Julich, Christian Vande Velde and David Zabriskie, who won this year's opening time trial in the Tour de France. Team CSC is owned by Bjarne Riis, himself a former top professional cyclist and the only Dane to ever win the Tour de France, which he did in 1996.

Descente is a brand that has the legacy, quality and brand strength that we're looking for to match our philosophy. We're very happy to have Descente on board as our clothing supplier and are looking forward to wearing the Descente cycling apparel in 2006," Mr. Riis said.

The Descente brand was established almost 70 years ago in Osaka, Japan, and began to specialise in athletic apparel. In 1953, Descente made a full-fledged entry into skiwear with the introduction of the first stretch-style ski pant.

SIA and REI to host 'Winter Feels Good' pavilion and 'Snowshoe Park'

11 November 2005

SnowSports Industries America (SIA) is working with REI stores in Northern Virginia and Maryland to host the Winter Feels Good Pavilion and Snowshoe Park that will be an interactive feature of the National Ski and Snowboard Expo on November 11-13 at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly, VA. This is the second year that the Expo has presented the Pavilion and Snowshoe Park and the first time that REI is hosting the attraction.

Atlas, Mountain Safety Research, Redfeather and Tubbs snowshoes will be represented at the park and show participants will be able to try snowshoeing on a special indoor surface that will be set up on the exhibit floor. Also featured in the Winter Feels Good Pavilion are additional sponsors including W.L. Gore and Associates, Columbia Sportswear, Sorel, Manzella gloves, Atomic, Exel, Fischer, Karhu, Rossignol, Salomon, Swix, and Whitewoods.

Tefron Ltd. reports 10% increase in sales

11 November 2005

Israel-based manufacturer of seamless intimate apparel, activewear and swimwear, Tefron Ltd has reported positive results for the third quarter and nine months ended September 30, 2005.

Sales for the third quarter rose 10.1% to $48.1 million, compared with $43.7 million in the third quarter of 2004. Gross profit reached $9.8 million, compared with $4.6 million in the same period in 2004.

For the first nine months, the company reported sales of $150.5 million, up 8.9% compared with $138.2 million reported in the same period last year. Gross profit for the first nine months was $26.5 million, compared with $19.5 million.

Meanwhile, Tefron has appointed Ishay Davidi as the new chairman of the board of directors. Mr. Davidi replaces Arie Wolfson. This appointment is in connection with the investment of FIMI and Mivtach Shamir in the company in February 2004. Mr. Davidi serves as CEO and senior partner of FIMI.

Celanese increases emulsions prices in Europe

11 November 2005

Celanese Emulsions has announced that it will increase the price for all vinyl and acrylic emulsion polymers sold in Europe by 5 to 7%, effective for shipments on or after December 1, 2005, or as contracts allow. The company stated that the increases were necessary to offset continued substantial rises in raw material and energy costs associated with the production of these products.

Celanese Emulsions, a business of Celanese Chemicals, is a global supplier of emulsion and adhesive polymers to the nonwovens, textiles, adhesives, paper, and building products industries.

Esjot launches patented aluminium toe cap

10 November 2005

Esjot Group, a designer and manufacturer of metallic safety components for the footwear industry, has developed a patented toe cap with aluminium alloy containing titanium, offering a lightweight, durable alternative to traditional steel toe caps. The toe cap, which was launched at Lineapelle, has been produced using liquid forging, an innovative technology which offers variable gauge thickness while maintaining a good shape and dimension to match the necessary standards and specifications of different industries.

Conforming to the EN12568 Standard, the new aluminium toe cap is said to absorb more energy on impact than steel (200 joules approved), whilst offering greater comfort and freedom thanks to its lightweight properties. It is non-magnetic and corrosion resistant, even when uncoated. The toe cap can also be coated to provide non-conductive properties.

The toe caps have been designed to be interchangeable with steel toe caps enabling manufacturers to replace steel toe cap models easily, without changing the footwear design or manufacturing process.

Puma launches new Italian away kit new woven rip-stop fabric

10 November 2005

To coincide with the release of a new Italian FA (FIGC) badge, Puma has launched its 2006 Italian National Team Away Kit designed in collaboration with Neil Barrett, who has worked for both Gucci and Prada.

All of the garments, from the playing kit to the team apparel, utilise proven functional materials and cut lines to provide optimum performance. The shirt introduces a new woven rip-stop fabric, especially developed for Puma in close co-operation with Toray Textiles and Manchester Metropolitan University. The woven fabric is extremely lightweight, is said to offer outstanding wicking properties and has limited stretch to prevent shirt pulling.

Launched under the tag 'Italians Look Better', the kit will make its debut in a friendly against Holland in Amsterdam on November 12.

Toray reports positive half year results

10 November 2005

Japan's Toray Industries has reported positive sales increases for the six months ended September 30, 2005.

The company's total consolidated sales totalled ¥678,796 million ($5,996 million) compared with ¥575,721 million in the same period in 2004. This equated to a 17.9% increase. Toray's Fibres and Textiles division posted an impressive 28.8% increase with sales rising from ¥224,215 million to ¥288,748 million year-on-year.

Tommy Hilfiger announces preliminary results for Q2

10 November 2005

Tommy Hilfiger Corporation has reported preliminary results for the second quarter of its fiscal year ending March 31, 2006.

On a preliminary basis, net revenue for the quarter ended September 30, 2005 was approximately $500 million compared with approximately $534 million for the second quarter of fiscal 2004. Revenue growth in the company's international wholesale segment and its retail segment partially offset a decline in the US wholesale segment. Higher margins earned in international wholesale and retail, however, compensated for the

decline in US wholesale revenue. As a result, the company expects its operating income for the second quarter of fiscal 2006 to be somewhat higher than that of the comparable prior year period. Net income for the second quarter of fiscal 2006, however, is expected to be below that of the prior year, owing to an unusually low effective tax rate in fiscal 2005.

Speedo to sponsor Winter Olympic athletes for first time

10 November 2005

Speedo, best-known for its swimwear, has announced that it has signed individual endorsement deals with American 2006 Winter Olympic sledding hopefuls Vonetta Flowers, Todd Hays, Noelle Pikus-Pace, Jean Prahm (formerly Racine), and Chris Soule. These are the first-ever winter sport sponsorships for the swimwear brand. The announcement precedes the unveiling of evolutionary suit technology that will make its Olympic debut during the 2006 Winter Games in Torino, Italy, in February.

"Speedo's dominance in the pool is built around a research and development process that engages the world's best swimmers," said Sheree Waterson, president, Speedo North America. "This approach now extends to sledding athletes, opening up unprecedented opportunities for speed."

Gerber Technology to offer new PLM for fashion industry

10 November 2005

Gerber Technology has announced that it is marketing a new Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) solution designed to meet the specific needs of the fashion market. Fashion Lifecycle Management (FLM) combines Gerber's WebPDM product development management software with an apparel PLM workflow solution. The product is expected to be available in the second quarter of 2006.

While PLM developed out of the needs of discrete manufacturing, for example automotive and aerospace manufacturing, the PLM requirements for the fashion industry are significantly different," said Holly Beum, director, software product management. Fashion Lifecycle Management gives designers and manufacturers of apparel, accessories and home furnishings the exact tools they need to improve and shorten the development cycle."

SATRA expands chemical permeation testing capacity

10 November 2005

SATRA has invested more than £50,000 in new equipment to expand its capability to assess the chemical permeation of industrial products, including chemical-resistant gloves and suits.

A new gas chromatograph with a custom-designed gas sampling system has doubled its capacity to test against volatile solvents, while a data logger has automated current equipment used for the analysis of acidic and alkali solutions.

A further investment has also been made in a new automated bespoke system using Ultra Violet (UV) detection. This allows the technology centre to carry out testing on a wide range of non-volatile substances such as drugs, disinfectants and pesticides.

Lanxess raises outlook

09 November 2005

Specialty chemicals company Lanxess AG has reported that its positive business trend has continued in the third quarter of 2005. According to preliminary figures, EBITDA pre-exceptionals showed a sharp 41% improvement from the prior-year quarter, to €148 million from €105 million in the third quarter of 2004. Sales increased by €12 million to €1,776 million versus €1,764 million for the comparable period in the prior year.

In light of the continued stability of the market environment and its successful restructuring measures, Lanxess has raised its earnings target for the current fiscal year and now expects to report EBITDA pre-exceptionals of €560 to €580 million, compared with the previous guidance of €550 to €560 million.

Lanxess will release its complete third quarter interim report on November 17.

Huntsman's major ethylene unit resumes production

09 November 2005

Huntsman Corporation has confirmed that its largest olefins manufacturing facility in Port Arthur, Texas, has returned to production. The company stopped production at the plant on September 22 in advance of Hurricane Rita's landfall near Port Arthur. The facility sustained no serious structural damage during the storm but did require some repairs and its restart was delayed by the lack of electrical power and limited availability of other utilities it receives from a neighbouring refinery.

With the successful restart of the Port Arthur facility, all Huntsman primary Gulf Coast plants have now resumed production.

New trade hub opened in Dakar

09 November 2005

US Agency for International Development (USAID) assistant administrator Lloyd Pierson inaugurated a West Africa Trade Hub in Dakar, Senegal, on November 8, which aims to promote improvements in Africa's trade capacity, boost international exports and help businesses take advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) - a law that provides trade preferences to countries that are making progress in economic, legal and human rights reforms.

This latest opening brings the total of USAID-funded trade hubs to four, the others being located in Botswana, Kenya and Ghana. The trade hub in Dakar - the second in the West African region - will join forces with its neighbouring hub in Ghana to help West African economies increase their share of world trade.

China, US reach agreement on textiles

09 November 2005

According to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, the USA and China have reached an agreement over textile and apparel trade between the two countries. China's Minister of Commerce Bo Xilai and US Trade Representative Rob Portman signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on November 8 in London after seven rounds of negotiation.

According to a statement from China's Ministry of Commerce, The agreement will provide a stable and predictable trade environment for companies in both China and USA."

The agreement covers 21 different types of textile products and will allow for a 10-15% increase of Chinese textile exports to the US in 2006, a 12.5-16% rise in 2007 and a 15-17% increase in 2008.

SATRA attracts new members at A+A

09 November 2005

SATRA signed up three new members at the recently held A+A health and safety exhibition in Düsseldorf, Germany, which attracted 2,000 exhibitors and recorded more than 50,000 visitors.

The companies are Nitti, a safety footwear manufacturer in Singapore; Leopard, a safety footwear manufacturer in South Korea and Soundpond, a glove and high-visibility clothing manufacturer in China.

Creora and Mare di Moda team up

09 November 2005

Creora has announced that it has signed a sponsorship agreement with international swimwear show Mare di Moda.

Commenting on the deal, Greg Vas Nunes, European & Americas president of Creora, said: "'Our European customers are getting more familiar with our Creora elastane products everyday. Partnering with Mare di Moda, the pre-eminent international swimwear show, is a perfect opportunity for customers to get even more acquainted with Hyosung. We view the sponsorship with Mare di Moda as a cornerstone of commitment to our European community."

Creora elastane brand was developed by Hyosung Corporation of Korea, the second largest elastane producer in the world, with a capacity of over 50kt.

Miroglio Group acquires Decora brand

08 November 2005

Italian textile company Miroglio SpA has completed its acquisition of Germany's Setila AG's dope dyeing technology and Decora brand.

The unit will be transferred to the Miroglio plant located in Saluzzo, Italy, and will consist of pilot and semi-industrial lines, masterbatch production lines, a fully equipped Colour Laboratory and the archive of Decora formulations developed by Setila for its customers.

Industrial production of the dope dyed polyester filament will be made on the Saluzzo spinning lines. The colour formulation capabilities and the pilot lines will allow the production of sample quantities of 30 and 300 kg respectively of POY, drawn, texturised/air texturised yarn.

Timberland to acquire SmartWool Corporation

08 November 2005

The Timberland Company has announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire 100% of the outstanding stock of SmartWool Corporation, from RAF Industries, Inc. and the Stripes Group LLC. SmartWool, a privately held company, designs and develops performance socks, apparel and accessories for men, women and children. The purchase price is estimated to be approximately $82 million. The SmartWool organisation will continue to be headquartered in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and will operate as a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Timberland Company under the leadership of Chip Coe, SmartWool's president.

SmartWool and Timberland partnered in early 2005 to develop and market performance footwear featuring SmartWool linings.

The acquisition is expected to be completed by mid-December.

Trim technology day to be held in London

08 November 2005

Four of the largest trim suppliers including Avery Dennison Information and Brand Management Services (IBMS), Freudenberg & Vilene, Gunzetal and YKK have teamed up with the American Intercontinental University (AIU) Fashion Design Department to host a Trim Technology Day" (TTD) aimed at providing garment manufacturers with the up-to-date information on the latest trimming techniques and materials. The show will take place on the November 22 at the AIU campus in London.

The London-based TTD follows on from the success of previous road shows in Hong Kong, China and the USA. On the day, there will be a seminar-style 'rolling programme', in which guest speakers will cover key issues facing the industry.

Gill Stark, dean of fashion at AIU, comments: Quality trimmings are frequently overlooked in an attempt to cut costs, when in fact if used effectively they can actually save the manufacturer money. This type of event has proved popular in other countries and is an ideal way for manufacturers to share experiences and demonstrate how to overcome the challenging technical problems that arise in today's garment construction. We're confident that the TTD will be very successful in London and perhaps even become an annual event."

The TTD is an open event and participants can choose the time that they wish to attend.

Bemis expands in Asia

08 November 2005

Adhesive coatings and films Bemis Worldwide, well-known for its Sewfree adhesive film, has recently improved its service in the Asian market by expanding its technical centre in Hong Kong and transferring the distribution of Bemis tape and film to Bemis Hong Kong Limited.

In August, Bemis Hong Kong Limited moved into a vastly more spacious technical service centre than the previous location. The move was made to address the rapid business growth Bemis is experiencing and to provide additional space for customer training seminars.

GenuOne to participate at AAFA seminar on counterfeiting

08 November 2005

US provider of brand protection management solutions, GenuOne, has announced that it will participate in the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) seminar on counterfeiting. The seminar entitled, "Knock It Off! Brands and the Counterfeiting Quandary" will take place at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York on November 15-16. The seminar will feature perspectives from industry leaders including attorneys, enforcement personnel, and executives from world renowned brands.

"Counterfeit products from factories in China and other places in Asia are draining billions of dollars out of the footwear and apparel industries," said Jeffrey Unger, CEO of GenuOne. "The Internet has only made the problem worse - sellers of counterfeit goods now have an anonymous platform where they can reach billions of buyers and sellers. Consumers may be buying counterfeit products they believe to be real that are in fact made by unauthorised manufacturers with s ubstandard materials."

According to GenuOne, counterfeiting costs the global economy as much as $512 billion per year with the majority of that amount coming from the footwear and apparel industry.

CTC Asia accredited by HOKLAS

08 November 2005

France-based CTC Groupe has received accreditation from the Hong Kong Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (HOKLAS) for its Hong Kong-based laboratory, CTC Asia Ltd.

The laboratory has met the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17025:1999 standard, General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories. This concerns specific tests undertaken in the Textiles and Garments" category, for footwear, gloves and leather goods that are analysed as stipulated in the HOKLAS Directory of Accredited Laboratories. The accreditation covers the testing of footwear, gloves, leather goods and textiles.

The French COFRAC committee granted the accreditation based on the CTC Asia Ltd. provides laboratory testing for leather shoes, accessories, gloves and bags, as well as chemical analysis for textiles, plastics, and leather, finished-product inspections, and performance analyses.

HOKLAS is an accreditation scheme operated by Hong Kong Accreditation Service (HKAS).

Clariant posts positive results for first nine months

08 November 2005

Clariant has posted positive results for the first nine months of the year, including a modest rise in sales, higher net income and a substantial increase in operating cash flow in the third quarter. Gross profit declined to CHF1.831 billion ($1.39 billion), from CHF 1.959 billion during the same period in 2004.

Sales on a like-for-like basis were CHF 6.094 billion during the period, up 1% in both Swiss franc and local currency terms. Net income rose 37% to CHF 222 million, from CHF 162 million. Prices were on average 1% to 2% higher during the period compared with a year earlier.

Foot Locker reports Q3 sales

07 November 2005

Specialty athletic retailer Foot Locker, Inc. has reported sales for the 13-week period ended October 29, 2005 of $1,407 million, versus $1,366 million in the comparable period last year, an increase of 3%. For this same 13-week period, comparable store sales increased 2.7%. For the 39-week period ended October 29, 2005, sales increased 7% to $4,088 million, from $3,820 million in the corresponding period last year. Comparable-store sales for the first nine months of 2005 fiscal year increased 2.2%.

Comparable store sales for the company's third quarter reflected a mid-single digit increase at its combined US businesses, led by strong increases at Footaction and Champs Sports. Its international operations posted comparable store sales that were flat with last year, including a very low-single digit decrease at its European stores.

Foot Locker operates approximately 4,000 stores in 20 countries in North America, Europe and Australia.

Phoenix Footwear reports 47.9% rise in sales

07 November 2005

Designer and developer of men's and women's dress and casual footwear, belts, personal items, outdoor sportswear and travel apparel Phoenix Footwear Group, Inc. has reported a 47.9% increase in sales for the third quarter ended October 1, 2005.

Net sales for the third quarter increased to $34.3 million compared with $23.2 million for the third quarter of 2004. The strong top-line growth was primarily attributable to $11.7 million, or 34.1% of total sales, generated by the company's two recently acquired brands, Chambers and Tommy Bahama.

For the nine months ended October 1, 2005, net sales increased by 36.5% to $76 million compared with $55.7 million for the comparable prior-year period.

The company's brands include Royal Robbins apparel, the Tommy Bahama, Trotters, SoftWalk, Strol, H.S. Trask, and Altama footwear lines, and Chambers Belts.

Bayer MaterialScience to expand Polymer Research Centre in China

07 November 2005

Bayer MaterialScience has commenced construction work to expand its Polymer Research and Development Centre (PRDC) in Pudong, Shanghai.

When completed, the PRDC will be Bayer MaterialScience's first facility in Asia Pacific to host technical development and research facilities for its four business units operating in the region: Polyurethanes; Polycarbonates; Coatings, Adhesives, Sealants; and Thermoplastic Polyurethanes. Each of these business units will have the full capacity to provide technical service, new application development, as well as training for staff and customers.

In addition to the Shanghai-based facility, Bayer MaterialScience also operates a laboratory for adhesive materials in Guangzhou in southern China. This laboratory, which has been operational since 2004, focuses on the testing and development of adhesive raw materials for the footwear, furniture, automotive and sealants industry.

Anatom holds Superfeet training session

07 November 2005

Foot specialists Anatom recently held a training session in Chamonix, France, for European distributors of Superfeet. Managing director Gordon Fraser along with a team of training staff held the academy specialising in ski boot fitting.

Polo Ralph Lauren reports increased revenues in Q2

07 November 2005

Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation has reported net income of $104 million for the second quarter of fiscal 2006 compared with $79 million for the second quarter of Fiscal 2005.

Net revenues for the second quarter of fiscal 2006 increased 15% to $1.027 billion compared with $896 million in the same period last year. Operating income increased 45% to $177 million compared with $122 million.

For the first half of fiscal 2006, net income was $155 million compared with $92 million for the comparable period last year. First half net revenues increased 18% to $1.779 billion and operating income for the first half was $257 million, an 81% increase over $142 million in the same period last year.

"Our business is strong and we continue to solidify our leadership position as the largest luxury apparel company in the world," said Ralph Lauren, chairman and

CEO. "Over the past few years our sales have doubled and our profits have more than doubled. Our focus on building new brands, such as Rugby and luxury accessories, expanding our retail and extending our international business has proven to be the right investment for our company."

Outlast Technologies appoints new VP of Operations and marketing manager

07 November 2005

US-based phase change material designer and manufacturer Outlast Technologies, Inc has named Greg Roda as senior vice president of Operations & Business Development and Heather Listoe as marketing manager.

Mr Roda comes from Minnesota-based NatureWorks LLC (formerly Cargill Dow LLC) where he was business development manager responsible for growing the Ingeo fibres non-wovens business as well as establishing partnerships and alliances for Ingeo fibre production.

Ms. Listoe returns to Outlast following her work on a company and product launch programme for Planetary Design, LLC of Missoula, Mont., where she was retained as national sales director. Before Planetary Design, Ms. Listoe spent three years at Outlast Technologies, in new business development, sales and sponsorship development.

EU-China discuss Doha, market access, intellectual property rights

07 November 2005

Chinese Trade Minister Bo Xilai met with EU Commissioner for Trade Peter Mandelson and Commissioner for External Relations on November 4 at a formal sitting of the EC-China Economic and Trade Joint Committee.

The Commission and Chinese representatives discussed all aspects of the relationship between China and the EU, with particular attention to economic and trade matters. Talks focused on intensive cooperation between the EU and China in the 20 ongoing technical 'dialogues' in areas ranging from the environment and energy to education and intellectual property rights.

Talks with Commissioner Mandelson focused on the Doha Round; market access for EU businesses in China; the protection of intellectual property rights in China and China's progress towards Market Economy Status.

Speaking after the meeting Mr. Mandelson said, This has been an important year in EU-China trade relations. EU-China trade is likely to continue to break records in 2005. China represents a formidable challenge to Europe but it is also a growing market for the products Europe produces best. Today's talks have reinforced the need for greater ambition from both sides, but also our mutual commitment to ensuring that competition and cooperation continue to go hand in hand."

EU-China trade is likely to reach another record in 2005 - €200 billion, up from €175 billion in 2004. 12.5% of EU imports, worth 127 billion euros, come from China. 90% of EU imports from China are manufactured goods - about half of all imports are machinery and vehicles. Europe is China's largest trading partner.

China receives about 5% of EU exports, worth 48 billion euros. The biggest European exporters to China are Germany (21 billion euro), France (5.4 billion euro) and Italy (4.4 billion euro). These exports are focused on manufactured goods - including textiles.

During the Joint Committee Commissioner Mandelson and Minister Bo discussed EU enlargement and initialled a bilateral Agreement on a package of measures to compensate China on products where EU enlargement resulted in losses to Chinese exporters. Both sides noted that this was a deal that fully reflected the WTO rules, and that benefited both the EU and China in a balanced way.

The Commission plans to produce a Communication on Europe's trading relationship with China early in 2006. The Commission and China have agreed to consider ways in which a new Framework Agreement between the EU and China could better reflect the economic and strategic changes in Europe's relationship with China over the last two decades.