

EU Compliance Overview

Product Requirements and Standards for EU Market

Introduction

The European Union has strict product safety, quality, and environmental standards that all products sold in the EU market must meet. Polish manufacturers, as EU members, are already compliant with these regulations, making them reliable suppliers for EU and international buyers. This guide covers the key compliance requirements you need to understand when sourcing from Poland.

CE Marking (Conformité Européenne)

What is CE Marking?

CE marking indicates that a product has been assessed by the manufacturer and meets EU safety, health, and environmental protection requirements. It is a mandatory conformity mark for many products sold in the European Economic Area (EEA).

Products Requiring CE Marking:

- **Machinery:** Industrial equipment, production lines, tools
- **Electrical equipment:** Electronics, appliances, lighting
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Helmets, gloves, safety gear
- **Toys:** Children's products and play equipment
- **Medical devices:** Healthcare equipment and supplies
- **Radio equipment:** Wireless devices, telecommunications
- **Pressure equipment:** Boilers, tanks, compressors
- **Construction products:** Building materials, structural components

CE Marking Process:

1. **Identify applicable directives** – Determine which EU directives apply to product
2. **Verify product requirements** – Check specific technical standards (harmonized standards)
3. **Verify product compliance** – Internal or external testing
4. **Compile technical documentation** – Manuals, test reports, risk assessments
5. **Create Declaration of Conformity** – Signed manufacturer's declaration
6. **Affix CE marking** – Visible, legible, and indelible on product

REACH Regulation (Chemicals)

REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals) regulates chemical substances manufactured or imported into the EU above 1 tonne per year.

Key Requirements:

- **Substance registration:** Manufacturers must register chemicals with ECHA (European Chemicals Agency)
- **Safety Data Sheets (SDS):** Required for hazardous substances
- **SVHC notification:** Products containing Substances of Very High Concern (>0.1% weight)
- **Restricted substances:** Certain chemicals banned or restricted

Affected Products:

- Chemicals, paints, coatings, adhesives
- Electronics containing chemicals
- Textiles and leather goods
- Plastics and polymers

RoHS Directive (Restriction of Hazardous Substances)

RoHS restricts the use of specific hazardous materials in electrical and electronic equipment (EEE).

Restricted Substances (10 substances):

- Lead (Pb), Mercury (Hg), Cadmium (Cd), Hexavalent Chromium (Cr6+)
- Polybrominated Biphenyls (PBB), Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDE)
- 4 types of Phthalates (DEHP, BBP, DBP, DIBP)

Compliance Requirements:

- Maximum concentration values for each substance
- Technical documentation proving compliance
- CE marking required for RoHS products

WEEE Directive (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment)

WEEE promotes collection, recycling, and recovery of electrical and electronic equipment waste.

Producer Responsibilities:

- Register with national WEEE authority
- Finance collection and recycling of products
- Provide information on recycling and disposal
- Mark products with crossed-out wheeled bin symbol

General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR 2024)

New GPSR came into force on December 13, 2024, replacing the old GPSD. Strengthens consumer protection with stricter requirements for manufacturers, importers, and online marketplaces.

Key Changes:

- Expanded scope covering more product categories
- Product traceability requirements (manufacturer details on products)
- Enhanced online marketplace responsibilities
- Stronger recall procedures and consumer notifications

Food Contact Materials (FCM)

Products intended to come into contact with food must comply with EU regulations ensuring they don't transfer harmful substances.

Covered Products:

- Packaging (plastics, glass, metal, paper)
- Kitchenware and utensils
- Food processing equipment
- Storage containers

Requirements:

- Migration testing (substances transferred to food)
- Declaration of Compliance (DoC) document
- Traceability documentation throughout supply chain

Eco-Design Directive (Energy Efficiency)

Sets mandatory ecological requirements for energy-related products sold in the EU.

Affected Products:

- Lighting products (LED, lamps)
- Household appliances (fridges, washing machines)
- HVAC equipment (heaters, air conditioners)

- Electric motors and drives

Requirements:

- Minimum energy efficiency standards
- Energy labeling (A to G scale)
- Technical documentation proving compliance

Compliance Checklist for Buyers

Before Ordering from Polish Suppliers:

- **Verify CE marking** requirement for your product category
- **Request Declaration of Conformity** from supplier
- **Check for restricted substances** (REACH, RoHS)
- **Obtain technical documentation** (test reports, certificates)
- **Verify product labeling** (CE mark, WEEE symbol, energy label)
- **Confirm traceability information** (batch numbers, manufacturing dates)

During Negotiations:

- **Include compliance clause** in purchase contract
- **Define responsibility** for compliance documentation
- **Request sample testing** if required
- **Clarify warranty coverage** for non-compliance issues

Advantages of Polish Suppliers for Compliance

- ✓ **EU Member State:** Polish manufacturers already comply with all EU regulations
- ✓ **Established Systems:** Quality management systems (ISO) commonly implemented
- ✓ **Testing Infrastructure:** Accredited testing laboratories available in Poland
- ✓ **Experienced:** Long history of exporting to demanding EU markets
- ✓ **Technical Competence:** Strong engineering and technical documentation capabilities

Key Compliance Resources

Organization	Focus	Website
European Commission	All EU regulations and directives	commission.europa.eu
ECHA	REACH and chemicals	echa.europa.eu
RAPEX	Product safety alerts	ec.europa.eu/safety-gate
CEN/CENELEC	European standards	cencenelec.eu
Polish UDT	Technical supervision	udt.gov.pl

Sources: European Commission, ECHA, GOV.UK, UL.com