



## Workshop 2A - Textiles: EU Textiles Strategy and Sustainable Product Initiative: What would an ambitious textiles strategy look like?



### OVERVIEW

The workshop focused on the forthcoming European textiles strategy, presented by Paola Migliorini, DG Environment, European Commission. The panellists expressed their views and recommendations to be included in the strategy. Various initiatives and events were also mentioned. However different the Textiles Leadership Group members might be in terms of perspective, position in the value chain, nature, sources and needs, they all agree that the textile sector needs an urgent change in the textiles value chain, paired with a coherent, coordinated and harmonised response at EU level through a highly ambitious policy framework ([Jana Žůrková, RREUSE](#)).

### NEW CHALLENGES

- Is putting the responsibility for a transition to the circular economy on consumers the right thing to do? Businesses should bear it, but also be provided with economic and fiscal incentives.
- E-commerce practices should be assessed with a view to rethinking the distribution model.
- Financing is key. As more and more products should be re-used and recycled, this transformation needs financing.

### KEY MESSAGES

**Paola Migliorini** (DG ENV, Circular Economy, European Commission):

- The textiles stakeholders' contribution is recognised as a basis for the Commission's goals.
- The forthcoming textiles strategy is a policy document dealing with different themes and measures (eco-design, SPI, information transparency, digital product passport, waste management, EPR schemes requirements, microplastics, innovation and financing, consumer awareness of fashion issues, business's commitment to sustainability, etc.) to be followed by specific legislative initiatives. Since the textiles value chain is global, a level playing field has to be guaranteed for EU operators as most production takes place in non-EU countries.

**Lars Mortensen** (European Environment Agency) presented two new briefings on [Textiles and the environment: the role of design in Europe's circular economy](#):

- EU consumption of textiles was 14.8 kg per person in 2020 and textiles have, on average, the fourth highest impact in terms of GHG emissions and use of raw materials, water and land.

And on [Microplastics from textiles: towards a circular economy for textiles in Europe](#):

- Pathways to prevent the release of microplastics from textiles into the environment: 1) better design and production, 2) better use and caretaking, and 3) more sustainable disposal and end of life handling.

**Emily Macintosh** ([EEB](#), Fair and Sustainable Textiles Coalition): The [European Shadow Strategy for Sustainable Textile, Garments, Leather and Footwear 2020](#) should be integrated into the forthcoming EU strategy.

- It is crucial to phase out harmful substances (chemicals, etc.) from textiles.
- There is no place for destroying unsold or returned durable products.
- Consumers have to be empowered and the creation of a digital product passport (traceability, transparency, correct information) can help in this respect.
- EU level targets are needed for textile products, but at the same time a just transition for workers and regions has to be guaranteed.
- The EU textiles industry has to be accountable for the rules at global level. Consumers should not be bearing all the responsibility for the sector's issues. Producers' responsibility should be extended.
- Better use should be made of green public procurement.
- Concerning e-commerce and its attractive nature, its distribution model should be fully examined.

**Evi Oivanen** ([Cuitu](#)):

- Textile SMEs have a significant carbon footprint, but they are also agile and innovative, able to adapt to sustainable solutions.
- Transparency and collaboration in the value chain are crucial - the lack of common standards and indicators to measure performance and sustainability can give rise to green washing.
- The EU textiles strategy should include economic incentives for innovative start-ups and SMEs with a view to their scaling up. One example: the development of **circular acceleration houses at regional level** (providing training, know-how, technologies and contacts).
- The value chain is global and therefore the textile strategy has to be appropriate for the sector and set reuse objectives for all stakeholders.

**Baptiste Carriere Pradal** ([The Policy Hub](#)):

- To be impactful, the textiles strategy should be applied in a holistic, appropriate and homogenous way to the whole product lifecycle throughout Europe.
- EPRs have a key role, but only if they are similar, go in the same direction and are coordinated.

**Mathieu Rama** ([RREUSE](#)):

- Reuse targets are needed for cooperation at all levels of the value chains, to make sure that everything is actually reused and not prematurely recycled or incinerated.
- Reusability and recyclability are compatible as long as products are made with natural fabrics and not blended with synthetic fibres. The role of social enterprises in collecting and reusing garments in association with local authorities should be enhanced, while complying with the proximity principle.

**Martin Boeschen** ([EURIC](#)):

- Recycled content should only contain recycled textiles (ex.: no traces of PET bottles).
- It is not yet clear how to finance the mandatory collection of textile waste by 2025, as there is also uncertainty about which business model should be adopted.

**Vera Groeneveld** (Circular Textiles, Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management): In October 2021 11 Member States sent a joint paper to the European Commission focusing, *inter alia*, on minimising harmful substances in textiles, on the importance of a digital product passport to enable tracking and tracing and on the introduction of a mandatory label to inform consumers. Download the [Reach up joint paper on textiles | Publication | The Netherlands at International Organisations \(permanentrepresentations.nl\)](#)