

DG GROW
Meeting between Csr Breton, European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and other NGOs
Brussels, 23 March 2022
EU Textiles Strategy

Name of Cabinet Member: Anna ABLAZEVICA

Name of the Director who has cleared the briefing: Valentina Superti

BASIS request ID: Room, time: Participants: Name of main contact person: Telephone number: Directorate/Unit:

MINI BRIEFING NOTE

Background information

Include relevant key number, facts and figures.

- Turnover in 2019: €162 billion. 2020: €139.8 billion.
- Provisional data for Jan. to Nov. 2021: Turnover for textiles +13% and for clothing +9.8%.

The EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles

- The Circular Economy Action Plan and the updated Industrial Strategy identify textiles as a key product value chain with an urgent need and strong potential for the transition to sustainable and circular production and business models.
- The upcoming EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles aims at strengthening competitiveness and innovation, boosting the market for sustainable and circular textiles, increasing textile reuse, and addressing fast fashion. It also covers Social aspects, including working conditions.
- The Strategy is based on 3 main pillars – key actions, enablers and the EU/international dimension.
- The 1st pillar with the key actions focuses on eco-design requirements, information requirements, measures to address the release of microplastics, green claims, extended producer responsibility and stopping the destruction of unsold/returned textiles.
- The 2nd pillar with the enablers includes supporting research, innovation and investments, developing the skills needed for the green and digital transitions and strengthening the social component of the textiles ecosystem, addressing overconsumption, ensuring a well-functioning internal market, as well as launching the Transition Pathway for the Textiles Ecosystem.
- The 3rd pillar focuses on due diligence, addressing the challenges from the export of textile waste and harnessing international action.
- A new approach to design is a central element of the Strategy, in view of making textiles more durable, and easier to repair and upgrade; and of boosting the recovery of valuable materials and components at the end-of-life stage. It means better material efficiency, a reduced environmental footprint, and a longer life. Acting at the design phase makes it easier to choose materials that contain safe chemicals and recycled fibres. It will also be an attempt to reduce the unwanted release of microplastics coming from textiles. Textiles are a key value chain in the **upcoming Ecodesign Regulation for Sustainable Products**. As foreseen in the European Green Deal, the intention is to ensure that sustainable products become the norm, contributing to the climate-neutral Europe by

2050 objective.

- Both of these initiatives – the Textiles Strategy and the Ecodesign Regulation for Sustainable Products – will also support the uptake of new business models. More circular models, like resale, repair and ‘Product as a Service,’ which all perform more sustainably than linear models.
- The Ecodesign Regulation for Sustainable Products also proposes the **Digital Product Passport** that will improve access to information about product characteristics. That way all economic actors can make decisions that are better informed. It will enable better transparency and traceability throughout the value chain, which is particularly important for textiles
- Action on the supply chain needs to be coupled with initiatives to empower consumers in their purchase choices. That is why the Commission is also preparing a legislative **proposal on Green Claims**, that will be presented later this year. Moreover, in order to ensure accurate information to consumers, the Commission will also **review the Textile Labelling Regulation**, by assessing the introduction of mandatory disclosure for different types of information, such as sustainability and circularity parameters, in coherence with the new Ecodesign Regulation for Sustainable Products.
- Another important element is the recent (23 February 2022) legislative **proposal for a Directive on Corporate Sustainability due diligence** which aims at fostering sustainable and responsible corporate behaviour throughout global value chains, including in textiles.
- The new Strategy will translate into new ways of doing business, different patterns of consumption, better technologies for recycling, and products that are durable and repairable.
- The Textile Strategy is scheduled for adoption on 30 March 2022.

The Transition Pathway for the Textiles ecosystem

- Together with the strategy, on 30 March, the Commission will publish scenarios towards the co-creation of a transition pathway for the textiles ecosystem and launch discussions with stakeholders across the textiles ecosystem.
- The co-creation process should result, by the end of 2022, in matching concrete pledges, including commitments on circularity and circular business models, specific actions needed to strengthen industrial competitiveness, digitalisation and resilience, as well as identification of specific investments needed for the twin transitions.
- Once this transition pathway has been established, it will also allow monitoring the progress made with regards to achieving the twin transition, industrial competitiveness and bridging the investment and innovation gaps. This collaborative tool can also serve as discussion forum in anticipation of actions for the Sustainable Products Initiative, including the Digital Product Passport related actions.

Skills

- The skills aspect is important for the textile industry. Up- and re-skilling is yet another tool to empower women who represent 2/3 of the workforce.
- Our collective efforts need to result in making the ecosystem attractive to skilled and

young entrepreneurs and employees.

- The textile industry needs to take advantage of the employment opportunities brought by the digital and green transitions.
- Under the EU Pact for skills the Commission supported the establishment of partnership to promote the upskilling, reskilling and the acquisition and transfer of green and digital skills in the ecosystem.
- Launched on 16 December 2021, the Pact establishes commitments to create local partnerships between industry, public authorities and educational providers (such as increasing diversification, in terms of gender, age, in company management by up to 5% each year, supporting 10.000 SMEs in their digitalisation efforts, designing 20 new educational processes and tools responding to green and digital skills).