



**Meeting between cabinet Sinkevičius and Euratex, 2020 May 5, 12:00 – 12:45**

*Participants*

Euratex

Dirk Vantyghem, Director-General  
[REDACTED]

European Commission

Marius Vaščega (MV), head of cabinet  
Rozalina Petrova (RP), member of cabinet  
[REDACTED] policy officer DG ENV

*Notes*

COVID19

Euratex highlighted the problems the sector is experiencing. They had developed a recovery strategy with short and medium/long term elements, which also incorporate sustainability. The crisis is not driving the sector away from sustainability issues, but on the short term any further burdens for the struggling sector should be avoided.

MV expressed sympathies of the Commission for the difficult situation the textiles sector is in due to COVID19 and thanks for the positive response by many players by producing masks and other protective clothing. This shows the sector can be resilient, and also the need to look beyond the 'just in time' approach. The Commission is in the process of developing strategies for leaving the crisis, in which the 3 main compasses for EU policies are digital, green and resilient. Circular Economy is relevant for all three of these.

Euratex asked about foreseeable consequences of the crisis for budgets across the Commission, MV briefly explained the state of play as concerns the EU budget and the recovery fund.

Circular Economy and textiles

Euratex pointed to the comprehensive document on circular economy developed by them, including several policy recommendations as well as commitments by members towards circularity. Currently they are engaging with Commission services to explain the thinking behind it and are finding the dialogue very constructive. Ultimately the aim would be to strengthen the competitiveness of the sector and achieving sustainability while minimizing costs.

MV pointed to the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) that was launched on 11/3, just before the worst of the crisis, and which can contribute to a way out of the crisis. Circular Economy can make us less dependent on external suppliers and deploy digital solutions to become more resilient. The CEAP mentions textiles as a high-impact sector and announces a comprehensive strategy by 2021. The aim is to make the sector more competitive and more sustainable. The strategy itself will not be legislative, but a strategic document.

Euratex presented the rough outlines of their new plan for setting up recycling hubs, which would be regional pilot projects for collecting material and developing methods to increase recycling of textiles, which is currently very limited. This is of particular importance in the light of the mandatory separate collection of textile waste which will kick in on 1 January 2025. They are looking for support, including financial support to cover the expenses. MV, RP and [REDACTED] expressed interest in such an 'on the ground'

approach as a complement to policy development and ongoing studies (without committing to any financing).

#### Other

Euratex asked about the distribution of tasks and responsibilities amongst Commission services. MV explained the recovery plans are led by the Commission President, while Commissioner Sinkevičius leads Circular Economy together with other important Commissioners including Breton. And of course, all decisions are eventually taken by the college as a whole.

In closing, it was agreed to stay in close contact, with [REDACTED] serving as contact point in DG ENV and RP in the cabinet. Euratex also announced they will invite Commissioner Sinkevičius for a meeting with their president at their new premises, once COVID restrictions are eased.