

Investing in the textile and clothing factories of the future in Europe

The 2018 EURATEX General Assembly showcases the economic renaissance of the textile and clothing industry, and its visions for the future, among numerous participants in Brussels.

BRUSSELS, 8 JUNE 2018 - The topic of this year's EURATEX General Assembly, held in Brussels on 7 June, was *Investments in the Textile and Clothing factories of the future in Europe*. The event attracted more than 120 attendees and offered an opportunity to gain interesting insights about a dynamic moment in which the sector is regaining a leading position in the EU industrial landscape. Indeed, over the last few years the Textile and Clothing Industry has invested over € 50 billion in the EU – a trend that is predicted to continue in the future.

Moderated by John Scrimshaw of the World Textile Information Network (WTiN), the conference opened with welcoming remarks from EURATEX president Klaus Huneke, who mentioned *“the unprecedented wave of young innovative textile and fashion companies that are currently being created across Europe”* and stressed that *“not only young entrepreneurs innovate and take risks. In the last few years we have witnessed a strong return of business confidence across the entire European textile and clothing industry”*.

Keynote speaker Irmfried Schwimann, Deputy Director-General of DG Grow, followed with an exhaustive overview of the financial instruments and funding opportunities available from the European Union.

The main discussion was divided in two panels, focused on investment trends in recent years and visions for the industry in the future, respectively.

CEOs and representatives from seven European companies presented their success stories and shared their first-hand experience in facing the challenges of the sector, from the need of skilled workforce, efforts in moving to sustainable processes and materials, and surpassing barrier regulations that can hinder exports.



EURATEX President Klaus Huneke opens the General Assembly

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Guest speakers from Panel 2: Anneleen De Smet (Beaulieu International Group, Belgium), Jean-Luc Barbarin (Innothera, France) and Elsa Parente (Valérius, Portugal)

The presentations and debate offered the audience a unique point of view about the actions that can be taken at European, national and regional level to ensure the right conditions for entrepreneurs in the textile and clothing sector to keep investing and producing in Europe.

The speakers called for collaboration in the sector, highlighting the importance of investing in the development of training programs to *"make the sector more competitive and attract younger experts"*, and *"producing locally to sustain this knowledge-based approach"*.

Additional reading material, including the full list of speakers and the recently published EURATEX brochure on investments, is available on the [EURATEX website](https://www.euratex.eu).

EURATEX is representing interests of the European textile and clothing industry at the level of the EU institutions. As the voice of the European textile and clothing industry, EURATEX aims to create a favourable environment within the European Union for the manufacture of textile and clothing products.

The EU textile and clothing industry, including manmade fibres, remains an essential pillar of the local economy across the EU regions, at the same time it is intensively competing within the international market striving for a level playing field with the rest of the world.

According to the latest EURATEX data, 176,400 EU textile and clothing companies realised in 2017 a turnover of €181 billion and employed 1.7 million workers. In 2017, the extra-EU exports reached €48 billion representing a 26 % share of total turnover.