

Roadmap for an “EU Strategy for Textiles”

EURATEX Feedback

1. On behalf of the 160,000 companies constituting the European Textiles and Apparel industry, EURATEX welcomes the launch of this EU Communication, and wishes to contribute to the consultation process in full transparency and dialogue with any other relevant stakeholder.
2. We appreciate this new strategy is directly related to the Circular Economy Action Plan, and welcome that sustainability will be at the heart of the Communication, provided we can strike a good balance between sustainability & the cost for industry. EURATEX already presented its extensive circular strategy in December 2019 and will continue to make constructive and realistic proposals to achieve circularity, e.g. with the Recycling Hubs initiative.
3. However, we believe the Communication should have a broader ambition, which is to address the competitiveness and resilience of the European textiles industry, without which no sustainability strategy can be implemented. The strategy should deliver growth and jobs to Europe, a sustainable transformation of this key value chain and ensure a global level playing field. This requires looking into areas such as research, innovation & digitalisation, standards, public procurement, market surveillance, skills, consumer trends, to begin with. The impact of the strategy in a global value chain should be duly considered.
4. In this regard, policy coherence should be ensured. While the EU Green Deal provides an important basis, this textiles strategy needs to be aligned with other relevant EU policies, including the EU Industrial strategy, the new EU Trade strategy, the EU Pact for Skills, the Sustainable Chemicals strategy, etc. The strategy should lead to harmonised European actions and remove contradictions between EU policies. It must above all be evidence-based, and not built on emotions or short-sighted solutions.
5. The textiles sector is a very “wide” industry; it covers a complex value chain involving multiple production steps, resulting in a variety of products, ranging from clothing and fashion to industrial filters, high-performance fibres, yarns and fabrics used in protective and medical equipment, homes, cars, planes and windmills. To be meaningful, the strategy should consider the entire value chain of the industry, as it is closely interconnected.
6. The Communication should establish, as much as possible, commitments, agreed targets and a time frame. Careful and realistic impact assessments must be made for any new proposal, and support must be earmarked for strategic investments (flagships) to sustain a forward looking, innovative and sustainable textiles industry and high quality jobs in Europe.
7. To avoid frustration about lack of implementation or follow up, the Communication should also suggest an appropriate governance set up; a (virtual) structure which gathers legitimate representatives of the industry, policy makers and other key stakeholders.

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