

## Vienna Declaration

### Adopted at the Austrian National Seminar

#### Joint Statement of the Social Partners in the context of the STITCH Together Project

Vienna, 2 July, 2026

The textile and clothing sectors remain an important part of Austria's manufacturing industry, combining a long industrial tradition with internationally recognised expertise in technical textiles, medical devices, PPE (personal protective equipment), functional materials, workwear, fashion, and specialised high-quality production. The sector is facing profound challenges resulting from global competition, rising production and energy costs, climate change, digitalisation and increasing labour shortages.

These developments require continued investment in innovation, skills, and sustainable production while preserving quality employment and strengthening the sector's competitiveness. These transformations can only succeed if they are socially just. The green and digital transitions must create quality jobs, strengthen social cohesion, and ensure that no worker is left behind.

In this context, the Austrian social partners reaffirm their commitment to working together for a competitive, sustainable, innovative, and socially responsible textile and clothing industry based on strong social partnership, collective bargaining law and Austrian works Constitution law.

**Our joint commitments – in the context of the European Stitch Together project, which aims to strengthen social dialogue, support a just transition, and promote sustainable development in the European textile – clothing industry.**

#### **1. Maintain the Austrian Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining System**

We reaffirm that strong social dialogue and autonomous collective bargaining system are fundamental pillars of Austria's social partnership model since 1949 and essential for managing green and digital transitions. We will continue our system implemented in Austria, with social partners at any levels.

#### **2. Ensuring a Just Transition and Industrial Competitiveness**

The green and digital transitions must go hand in hand with social fairness. Public policies supporting industrial competitiveness should also safeguard quality

employment and regional production, such as the Industrial Accelerator Act and the future Public Procurement Act. No one should be left behind.

### **3. Delivering a Fair Green and Circular Transition**

The transition towards a climate-neutral and circular textile and clothing industry must create opportunities for both enterprises and workers. We call for adequate European and national public investment to support sustainable and digital production as well as circular business models.

### **4. Investing in Skills, Lifelong Learning, and Good Jobs**

We will continue to promote vocational education and training, apprenticeships, continuous professional development, and lifelong learning. Particular attention will be given to anticipating future skills needs arising from digitalisation, automation, artificial intelligence, the green transition, and upskilling. We support cooperation between companies, social partners, education providers in vocational training, and public authorities.

### **5. Making the Sector Attractive through Quality Employment**

The future of the sector depends on offering attractive, secure, and good quality jobs. We will work together to attract young people, apprentices, skilled workers, women, migrants, career changers, and other underrepresented groups.

### **6. Defending Decent Work, Fair Wages, and Workers' Rights**

As part of our system for collective bargaining and social dialogue, we promote and safeguard fair working conditions throughout Austria in the context of the environmental and digital transition.

### **Looking Ahead**

The future of Austria's textile and clothing industry depends on a level playing field, strengthening public procurement policies that promotes local content, combining industrial innovation and social security. Strong social dialogue, high labour standards, collective bargaining, and continuous investment in people are essential to achieving a successful green and digital transition.

Together, employers and trade unions commit building a sector that is competitive, environmentally sustainable and fit for future generations.

Signatories:

