# EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles

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The European Parliament has adopted by 600 votes to 17, with 16 abstentions, a resolution on an EU strategy for circular and sustainable textiles.

***EU strategy***

While welcoming the Commission's communication on an EU strategy for circular and sustainable textiles and the vision it sets out for 2030, Parliament stressed that the transition to sustainable and circular textiles requires a holistic approach progressively covering the whole value chain of textile products.

Members believe that there is an urgent need to ensure that textile products placed on the EU market are **sustainable, reusable, repairable, recyclable and free from hazardous substances**. They insisted that textile products should be manufactured with respect for human and social rights, the environment and animal welfare.

Parliament reaffirmed that the growth of the textile sector must be fully decoupled from the use of resources and called on the Commission to propose binding EU targets for 2030 to significantly reduce the EU's material and consumption footprints and keep them within the limits of our planet by 2050 at the latest.

The Commission and the Member States are invited to adopt measures to **put an end to the phenomenon of 'fast fashion'**, which is based on the production of large volumes of low-quality clothing at low cost. The textiles strategy and the measures envisaged should step up the fight against overproduction and overconsumption. The Commission should assess policy options to reduce practices used by online marketplaces such as targeted advertising and incentives to overbuy, including 'buy now, pay later' options, free delivery and returns, and quantity discounts.

***Environment and climate change***

Members expressed concern that, in terms of consumption over their life cycle, textiles have on average the fourth highest negative impact on the climate and the environment, after food, housing and mobility. The Commission is invited to propose new legislation to **fully decarbonise the industry in a progressive manner**, and to set ambitious science-based targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the textiles sector throughout the product life cycle by 2025 at the latest.

Recalling that 20% of global water pollution comes from textile dyeing and finishing textile products, Parliament called on the Commission to set ambitious, science-based and binding targets for progressively reducing the water footprint within the textile industry.

Parliament called on the Commission to swiftly present the delayed initiative on the reduction of unintentionally released microplastics. The forthcoming proposal should set out clear objectives and measures to prevent and reduce as far as possible the release of **microplastics, nanoplastics and microfibres** into the environment.

Members also deplored the widespread use of **hazardous chemicals** in various textile production processes, which have serious effects on the environment and workers. Any use of harmful chemicals

must be avoided or reduced to levels that are no longer harmful to human health and the environment. Members are concerned that nearly 60 chemicals present in textile products placed on the EU market are considered to be carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic to reproduction.

***Circular by design***

Parliament welcomed the Commission's identification of **textiles and footwear** as a priority group of products that could be regulated under the Ecodesign Regulation. It called on the Commission to quickly set horizontal ecodesign requirements for textiles and footwear and to focus on establishing specific requirements for individual textile products later on. It insisted that ecodesign obligations for textiles should be established in line with the EU's climate objectives.

The resolution stressed the need for the Commission and the Member States to promote **business models** that contribute to longer life spans for textiles products and their use for longer, as well as the re-use and repair sectors as alternatives to purchasing new products.

Member States should explore the setting of incentives to encourage sustainable consumption such as **reduced VAT for second-hand products and repairs**. Members stressed the need to promote research, foster innovation and develop policies supporting new sustainable circular business models for the textile industry.

Deploring the lack of attention paid to animal welfare in the EU textiles strategy, Members called on the Commission to propose measures to promote animal welfare and protection within the textiles industry and sector.

Parliament also encouraged Member States, regions and managing authorities to use the **European Structural and Investment Funds** and the Recovery and Resilience Facility to unlock the full potential of the European textiles industry for innovative solutions to further digitise and decarbonise the sector. The EU research and innovation programme should target the entire circularity value chain in the textile ecosystem.

***Textile waste and extended producer responsibility***

Members considered that provision should be made for extended producer responsibility for textiles that they make available on the market for the first time on the territory of a Member State. Online markets should also be governed by the rules on extended producer responsibility. The revision of the Waste Framework Directive should set separate specific targets for textile waste prevention, textile collection, textile reuse, preparation for reuse, closed-loop fibre recycling and the phasing out of landfilling of textiles.

***Transparency and traceability***

Parliament welcomed the initiative, which should ensure that consumers receive information at the point of sale on a commercial sustainability guarantee for textile products, as well as on their repairability, end-of-life management and year of production. Concerned about widespread greenwashing practices, Members called on the Commission to review and tighten up the conditions for awarding the EU eco-label to textiles.

***Due diligence and social equity***

Parliament deplored the inadequacy of the EU strategy for sustainable and circular textiles with regard to social aspects, such as **workers' rights and gender equality**. It drew attention to the fact that women make up 80% of the global workforce in the clothing sector and are therefore disproportionately affected

by the negative impacts of the sector. It called on the Commission to integrate a gender perspective into the implementation of the EU's textiles strategy.

***Harmful purchasing practices***

Members believe that unfair purchasing practices by companies, such as last-minute changes in design or lead times, unilateral amendments to contracts and last-minute cancellation of orders, should be tackled effectively. They asked the Commission to assess how best to curb these practices, including through legislation.

The Commission and the Member States are invited to ensure **sector-specific training and education** in the field of sustainable textiles in order to safeguard current jobs and ensure the availability of a skilled workforce, in collaboration with the social partners and stakeholders in the sector. The Commission is also invited to ensure a level playing field and a high level of environmental protection for products manufactured and consumed within the EU and those imported or exported.