EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles – Press release
30 March 2022

A European policy framework for a climate-neutral textile industry: The Policy Hub - Circularity for Apparel and Footwear supports the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles.

30 March: The EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, published today by the European Commission, lays out key principles supporting the much needed transformation of the textiles industry. The Policy Hub - Circularity for Apparel and Footwear – which represents more than 700 brands, retailers, manufacturers, and other stakeholders from across the globe, covering more than 50% of the apparel and footwear sector – applauds the strategy.

If the textiles industry continues its current path, by 2030, it will still emit around twice the emissions required to align with the Paris Agreement. Despite the urgency to act, approximately 5.8 million tonnes of textiles are discarded every year in the EU¹, and less than 1% of textiles are recycled directly into new textiles². So, it is key to promote lower impact materials, processes, and business models.

The apparel and footwear sector supports the main principles of the European Commission’s vision in the Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles and reiterates its willingness to actively work together with the European public authorities, as these principles align with the Policy Hub’s objective to promote a circular and climate-neutral economy in the apparel, footwear, and textile industry.

The three main principles that the Policy Hub supports in the European Commission’s vision are as follows.

1. The Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles provides a solid foundation at the EU level that clarifies how the horizontal initiatives impacting our sector will tie together. As such, this foundation can be used to build future policies that will accelerate the circularity of our sector.

¹ EEA (2019) Textiles and the environment in a circular economy

2. We are supportive of the Commission’s approach covering the entire life cycle of garments and footwear: from the product design to new business models and green claims to waste management, and EPR.

3. We welcome the direction the EU Commission is taking regarding the promotion of consumer-facing transparency including the recognition and shift towards digital labelling. Providing consumers with comparable and trustworthy sustainability information at the product level can enable more sustainable customer behaviour.

Whilst the Policy Hub welcomes the Commission’s mention of harmonised EU EPR rules including the eco-modulation of fees and waste collection and management requirements these could be strengthened. For instance, introducing harmonised rules on the separate collection of textiles waste across the EU and harmonising the sorting criteria for reuse and recycling.

Baptiste Carriere-Pradal, Chair of the Policy Hub, says, “the best dishes are always those which are slow cooked. After having been in the making for virtually 7 years, the EU Commission has released today a game changing piece, its Textile Strategy. Its foundation is solid enough to tackle the challenges facing our sector. Now, to make this work, we will need a new redefined collaboration between the Industry and policy makers. Together, the environmental benefits of the taken measures need to be evaluated, all along this journey. We have one shot, lets make the most of it.”

The Policy Hub will continue to engage on this topic with its constituents and representatives from the European Union. As part of this engagement the Policy Hub would like to express its enthusiastic willingness to participate in the Commission’s proposed Transition Pathway for Textiles Ecosystem.

For more information on the work of the Policy Hub watch this short video. You can also explore the Policy Hub’s website, www.policyhub.org, which provides more insights into our positions. Interested organisations are invited to contact us!

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