Sustainable Textiles for a Resilient Value Chain

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF TEXTILES

In 2020 textile consumption per person in the EU required on average:

- 400 m² of land
- 9 m³ of water
- 391 kg of raw materials

And caused a carbon footprint of about 270 kg

Source: European Environment Agency (2023)

TEXTILE PRODUCTION

Global textile fibre production has almost doubled:

- from 58 million tonnes in 2000
- to 109 million tonnes in 2020
- and is projected to grow to 145 million tonnes by 2030

Source: European Environment Agency (ETC-CE Report 2023/5)
THE IMPACT OF TEXTILE PRODUCTION AND WASTE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

• Less than half of used clothes are collected for reuse or recycling, and only 1% of used clothes are recycled into new clothes.

• Between 2000 and 2015, clothing production doubled, while the average use of an item of clothing has decreased.

• Europeans use nearly 26 kilos of textiles and discard about 11 kilos of them every year.

• Used clothes can be exported outside the EU, but are mostly (87%) incinerated or landfilled.

(EU parliament report, updated June 2023)
DISPOSAL
I DON'T BELIEVE IN GLOBAL WARMING


https://www.deviantart.com/adi1heidi2gaddi3/art/the-effects-of-global-warming-53517162
• Second largest polluter in the world, just after the oil industry.
• Industry growth is constant and seemingly permanent.
• Globalisation – low costs, low prices, clothing has become disposable.
• Production countries and consuming countries – the divide
• Burden of the offset effects are on producing countries, who are typically less advanced
Given the huge environmental impact of the textile industry, the European Union has launched a **strategy for sustainable and circular textiles**. The philosophy behind it is that "fast fashion is out of fashion" and consumers benefit longer from high-quality affordable textiles. The strategy addresses the **production and consumption of textiles**.

- **European Green Deal**
- **Circular economy action plan**
The Strategy lays out a forward-looking set of actions. The Commission will

- Set design requirements for textiles to make them last longer, easier to repair and recycle, as well as requirements on minimum recycled content
- Introduce clearer information and a Digital Product Passport
- Reverse overproduction and overconsumption, and discourage the destruction of unsold or returned textiles
- Address the unintentional release of microplastics from synthetic textiles
- Tackle greenwashing to empower consumers and raise awareness about sustainable fashion
- Introduce mandatory and harmonised Extender Producer Responsibility rules for textiles in all Member States and incentivise producers to design products that are more sustainable
- Restrict the export of textile waste and promote sustainable textiles globally
- Incentivise circular business models, including reuse and repair sectors
- Encourage companies and Member States to support the objectives of the Strategy
• European Green Deal seeks to transform the EU into the world’s first climate neutral continent.
  • no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050
  • economic growth decoupled from resource use
  • no person and no place left behind
CLEARLY THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY NEEDS TO RESPOND
HOW IS THAT TO BE MANAGED?
Sustainable

[prompt]

Sustainable

adj.

- pertaining to a system that maintains its own viability by using techniques that allow for continual reuse

- able to be maintained or kept going, as an action or process

- able to be confirmed or upheld: a sustainable decision.

- able to be supported as with the basic necessities or sufficient funds
REDDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ACROSS THE SPECTRUM

- Raw Materials including fibres
- Chemicals used in processing
- Resources in manufacturing (water, energy etc.)
- Trade and commerce of goods including transport and packaging
- Consumer purchase and use
- Reuse, Repurpose and final disposal.

Allied matters: biodiversity, animal welfare, fair (living) wages
Sustainability, Standards and Labels
Sustainability standards and certifications are guidelines used to demonstrate commitment to good environmental, social, ethical, and safety practices.

There perhaps over 400 such standards across the world.

Almost all of them are VSS

Labels are created for consumer recall.

They provide the means to consumers in a confusing landscape.
• The world’s largest database for sustainability standards.
• Standards Map presents in-depth information on over 300 voluntary sustainability standards, applicable to sectors including agriculture, textile and garments, consumer products, forestry, mining and services. They are active in 192 countries and sorted across 1650 criteria.
• ITC’s Standards Map is a free online tool to discover standards for environmental protection, labour rights, business ethics, due diligence and traceability, among others.
• Lists 75 standards for the textile industry.
• 33 of them have their own labels.
Resilient

[ ri-zil-yuhnt, -zil-ee-yuhnt ]
adj

springing back; rebounding.

returning to the original form or position after being bent, compressed, or stretched.

recovering readily from illness, depression, adversity, or the like; buoyant
Why Resilience?
In Feb 2002, the IBM Institute for Business Value (IBV) found that 93% of 16,000 global respondents said the pandemic had influenced their views on sustainability.

- 51% of respondents said environmental sustainability is more important to them today than it was 12 months prior.
- 49% said they had paid more for a sustainable product: consumers’ actions are starting to match their intent.
- Lip service is no longer tolerated.
- Traceability and Transparency.
- Regulatory movement in developed economies.
- Greenwashing is officially recognised as a threat.
A management and analysis framework to understand and measure how sustainably an organization is operating.

The large industry players demonstrate their commitments by public declarations of their credentials.

Regulatory pressures are also making their presence felt.

Responsible supply chains – OECD Guidelines for the industry.
THE VERDICT IS CLEAR.

• Sustainability is no longer “fashionable”.
• It is a business necessity.
• Consumers are waking up to this fact.
• So are governments.

• The textile value chain needs to, as well.

SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE
Thank you.

Questions?

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