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Fixing one of fashion's biggest issues: Leading organisations partner to launch new manifesto on circularity

Ahead of Copenhagen Fashion Summit 2019, the world's foremost business event on sustainability in fashion, five leading apparel organisations have partnered to call on existing and forthcoming EU policymakers to rethink tools to establish a circular fashion system.

Currently, 73% of the world's clothing eventually ends up in landfills and the global fashion industry is projected to grow by 81% by 2030, exerting an unprecedented strain on the planet.¹ The linear model of “take, make, dispose” will soon reach its physical limits. Circularity is therefore a necessary solution to minimise the use of finite resources, but it demands a unified approach. To drive change, five organisations have released a new policy manifesto to deliver a circular economy in textiles.

In a unique collaboration between EURATEX (European Apparel and Textile Confederation), Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry (FESI), Global Fashion Agenda (GFA), International Apparel Federation (IAF) and Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC), the manifesto stresses the need for the industry to rethink its business model and for policymakers to think beyond existing policy tools that are rooted in a linear economy to resolve the most significant circularity issues for the fashion and textile industries.

The manifesto aims to accelerate urgent collaboration between the fashion and textiles industries and policymakers. A representative part of the fashion and textile industries is already engaged and committed to this journey, and policymakers have started to scrutinise industry practices; however, the infrastructure and tools to support a scaled circular system are currently inadequate. Businesses of all sizes must work with policymakers and regulators to establish a common framework and clear standards throughout the value chain. Efforts thus far have not achieved enough momentum or results.

The manifesto tackles circularity in three ways. First, it frames the issue by contending that closing the loop requires unprecedented collaboration to combat fashion waste and to guarantee that business models are fully circular, with no broken links. Second, it declares that a new approach must be adopted across the industry by utilising technological innovations in solutions such as separating fibres for reuse and upcycling. Third, the manifesto demands more groundbreaking policy measures tailored to the needs of a diverse range of businesses – from SMEs to multinationals – and smart regulations to nudge consumers to rethink the way they use and dispose of their garments. Download the full [manifesto](#).

The organisations behind the manifesto have committed to developing a European vision for textiles in a circular economy, and they will be expanding on the points outlined in the manifesto over the coming months. This is the beginning of a new approach. Central EU institutions will have new leadership this autumn, making now the time to act to fully realise the opportunities of a circular fashion system. Ultimately, the loop is global, not just regional. To establish a circular economy, a joint global approach to circular fashion is needed.

Eva Kruse, CEO and President, Global Fashion Agenda, says, “This manifesto is extremely significant as it is the first time so many influential organisations in the fashion industry have come together to work with policymakers on a unified approach to circularity. Consumption is only going to grow, and if we do not act now to find a solution to the take-make-dispose model, the strain on our planet will get much worse. We urgently need widespread collaboration between industry and regulators to enact impactful circular solutions, and I hope this manifesto will help to drive change at scale.”

¹ Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group (2017). *Pulse of the Fashion Industry 2017*.

Mauro Scalia, Director of Sustainable Businesses, EURATEX, says, “We believe joint endeavours can win global challenges. The Manifesto shows that finding new ways for unprecedented coordination is possible.”

Jérôme Pero, Secretary General, FESI, states, “Circularity has become a key issue in all aspects of daily life. However, the current schemes in place do not sufficiently support a scaled circular economy system. To drive change, it is essential that all actors work together to make it happen. That’s why I believe this manifesto is a perfect, timely call to unite everyone.”

Matthijs Crietee, Secretary General, IAF, says, “The International Apparel Federation (IAF) firmly supports the manifesto as it clearly recognises the importance of a truly global approach to circularity. So, with a consortium that is both European and global, from the outset the necessary connections between the European actions and those emerging in the rest of the world can be made. IAF will actively use its worldwide network to help create the connections for a global approach to circular fashion”

Baptiste Carrière-Pradal, Vice President, SAC, emphasises, “To transform the apparel industry’s sustainability performance, brands, retailers and manufacturers must align on assessing impacts with a common framework. Through this European collaboration we can support legislation that promotes lasting industry improvements globally.”

Download the full [manifesto](#)

View press material from [Copenhagen Fashion Summit 2019](#)

Key facts:

- Today less than 15% of clothes are collected for recycling, and less than 1% of the material used to produce clothing is recycled into new clothing. Every second, a whole garbage truck full of textiles is discarded²
- Overall, 73% of the world’s clothing eventually ends up in landfills³
- If today’s textile collection rate were tripled by 2030, it could be worth more than EUR 4 billion for the world economy⁴
- If the industry were to find a way to collect and recycle all fibres, the value could be up to EUR 80 billions
- Since March 2019 textiles (apparel and fabrics) is one out of eight priority sectors for the European Commission’s (Directorate-General for Environment) product policy framework for a circular economy⁶

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About Global Fashion Agenda

Global Fashion Agenda (GFA) is the foremost leadership forum for industry collaboration on sustainability in fashion. As a thought leadership and advocacy organisation focusing on industry collaboration and public-private cooperation, GFA is on a mission to make sustainability fashionable. The organisation guides and supports industry leaders in changing the way we produce, market and consume fashion, *for a world beyond next season*. In partnership with its Strategic Partners, currently counting the industry leaders ASOS, BESTSELLER, H&M group, Kering, Li & Fung, Nike, PVH Corp., Sustainable Apparel Coalition and Target, GFA spearheads the fashion industry’s journey toward a more sustainable future. A non-profit organisation, GFA has organised and hosted Copenhagen Fashion Summit, the world’s leading business event on sustainability in fashion, since 2009. GFA also publishes the annual *Pulse of the Fashion Industry* report, in collaboration with The Boston Consulting Group and Sustainable Apparel Coalition, and the annual *CEO Agenda*. For more information, visit globalfashionagenda.com.

² Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2017). *A New Textiles Economy: Redesigning Fashion’s Future*.

³ Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group (2017). *Pulse of the Fashion Industry 2017*.

⁴ Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group (2017). *Pulse of the Fashion Industry 2017*.

⁵ Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2017). *A New Textiles Economy: Redesigning Fashion’s Future*.

⁶ [Sustainable Products in a Circular Economy - Towards an EU Product Policy Framework Contributing to the Circular Economy](#), Commission Staff Working Document (2019) 91 final (European Commission, 04.03.2019).