EU should speed up the recovery of the textile sector

The textile and clothing industry was hardly hit by the pandemic in 2020. It is time for the European Commission and Member States to set the conditions for future competitiveness and resilience.

On the occasion of EU Industry Days, EURATEX asks the European Commission and Member States to set the right conditions for the competitiveness and resilience of its industrial base, in particular the textile and clothing industry.

The T&C industry is a pillar of Europe with its savoir-faire and excellence, counting 160,000 companies (mainly SMEs), employing 1,500,000 people, generating 162,000 billion euros. 38% of such industry's turnover is sold on global markets, whereby SMEs cover more than 50% of those global sales.

If the European Commission and Member States do not want to lose such asset, they should take a series of measures:

- Europe should put in place effective market surveillance, avoid unfair competition and guarantee level playing field. The continent has the stringiest social and environmental standards, and it should protect the quality of its products. We hear too often that products made in other countries do not attain these standards, such is the case of non-complainant face masks, and it is time to act upon it.
- Europe should support the transition towards a more sustainable and digital industry through specific funds and programs. Indeed, SMEs, due to their size and capacities, do not have the power to innovate their products and processes in the short-term. Moreover, the sector should reduce future risks by diversify its supply chains and promote nearby production. Europe can again play a fundamental role in the development of a new trade policy.
- Europe should have a market proof approach when moving towards sustainability & circular economy. The green transition should carefully balance the cost of this transition process and the long-term benefits. The green and digital transition is challenged by the economic crisis. Business and citizens may rapidly loose interest If the transition does not provide any short/mid-term benefit.
- Europe should help education systems and institutes to develop comprehensive and leading-edge T&C knowledge. It can do so through LongLife Learning, Erasmus + and the Pact for Skills Initiative. Our industries suffer from an aging workforce and it is fundamental to reskill/upskill it. Most importantly, the sector should attract young generation to renew itself and drive the change.
- Europe should have a coherent approach when legislating in different areas. All policies, from the Green Deal to the Sustainable Chemicals strategy, from the EU Trade strategy to the EU Industrial one, should be consistent and not hamper industry. If not, consequences will be fatal.

"*The forthcoming Textile Strategy for Textiles represents a terrific opportunity for industry and policy makers to develop a forward-looking vision*", commented Dirk Vantyghem, EURATEX Director General. "*If Europe misses this chance, it risks losing one of the essential ecosystems.*

Too many sectors will be affected by such loss, as textiles are everywhere, from a car to the street we walk on."

About EURATEX

As the voice of the European textile and clothing industry, EURATEX works to achieve a favourable environment within the European Union for design, development, manufacture and marketing of textile and clothing products.

The EU textile and clothing industry, with around 160,000 companies employing 1.5 million workers, is an essential pillar of the local economy across many EU regions. With over € 61 billion of exports, the industry is a global player successfully commercializing high added value products on growing markets around the world.

Working together with EU institutions and other European and international stakeholders, EURATEX focuses on clear priorities: an ambitious industrial policy, effective research, innovation and skills development, free and fair trade, and sustainable supply chains