



European
Commission

TEXTILES INDUSTRIAL ECOSYSTEM



The textiles and clothing ecosystem encompass all activities that help transform natural and manmade fibres into yarns and fabrics and use these to produce a range of final products – from clothes, carpets, home textiles to industrial filters and medical textiles. The textiles sector in Europe is known for its high-quality products, strong brand names as well as leading position in high value-added segments such as high-end fashion.

The textiles ecosystem also includes the footwear and leather industries. These sectors are mainly composed of smaller enterprises, which focus on niche but high value-added segments.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

	Textiles and clothing	Footwear	Leather tannery
Turnover	€167 billion in 2023	€20.6 billion in 2020	€6.7 billion in 2021
Number of enterprises	192 000	17 400	1 400
Number of employees	1 300 000	210 000	30 500

KEY CHALLENGES



Keeping up with technological developments: embracing new technologies and ensuring adequate digital skills of workers has the potential to create higher added value products and open more creative jobs.



Improving the sector's sustainability: advancing digitalisation can also help improve the sustainability of manufacturing processes, helping to produce less waste and use fewer resources.



Ensuring responsible corporate behaviour: encouraging more sustainable and responsible corporate behaviour across global value chains can help to protect the environment as well as human and labour rights.

MAKING THE TEXTILES ECOSYSTEM GREENER, MORE DIGITAL AND MORE RESILIENT

The Commission published a Transition pathway in June 2023. This is a roadmap, created together with stakeholders active across the textiles ecosystem, to support the green and digital transformation of the ecosystem, while improving its overall economic resilience. The pathway includes 50 actions across eight areas ranging from improving sustainable competitiveness, supporting research and innovation, promoting investments and funding and access to important infrastructures (for instance for recycling), ensuring the availability of workers' skills as well as other important issues. To make the transition pathway a reality, stakeholders are invited to contribute to the implementation of the transition pathway by submitting pledges. The first round of published pledges includes 110 pledges covering all 8 building blocks of the transition pathway.

Adidas: By 2025, nine out of ten Adidas articles will be sustainable. Adidas defines articles as sustainable when they show environmental benefits versus conventional articles due to the materials used, meaning they are – to a significant degree – made with environmentally preferred materials. By 2050, Adidas will achieve climate neutrality (CO₂e) across the entire value chain.

SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION

SECURING NEW SKILLS IN THE TEXTILES ECOSYSTEM

The European Commission, together with relevant industry stakeholders, has supported the establishment of a large-scale skills partnership for the textiles ecosystem as part of the broader EU Pact for Skills. The aim is to jointly work on programmes and initiatives to improve green and digital skills across the workforce in the textiles ecosystem. As part of this, local skills partnerships will also be established.

FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE CORPORATE BEHAVIOUR

The Commission's proposal for a Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive should help to foster sustainable and responsible corporate behaviour, with a view of protecting the environment as well as improving the respect of human and labour rights across global value chains.

CREATING AN ENABLING REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

The EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles aims to create a coherent framework for the green transition of the ecosystem and presents a vision for the transition. It proposes actions for the entire life cycle of textile products.

SUPPORTING TEXTILES BUSINESSES

EU funding for the green and digital transition relevant for the textiles ecosystem is available through various funding programmes, including the Digital Europe Programme, LIFE, ESF+ and the Single Market Programme. To help companies in the sector innovate, the Commission has put forward a proposal for a European partnership on textiles under Horizon Europe.

