

SAFE

SLOW FASHION FOR THE FASHION INDUSTRY

RESEARCH REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

SAFEST aspires to raise awareness on the impact of the fashion industry on the environment and the role consumers can play in changing this attitude and making a positive impact towards reaching the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the European Green Deal objectives.

Between 1990 and 2018, greenhouse gas emissions in the EU were reduced by 23% . A central objective of the **EU Green Deal** is to set out the trajectory for the EU to be climate neutral by 2050. As a milestone towards this target, the EU Commission proposed a 2030 target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 55% compared to 1990.

As of 2019, consumers had an average of 136 apparel items in their closets. As a whole, the world's citizens acquire circa 80 billion apparel items annually. Moreover, according to a study conducted by Censuswide for Barnado's, each piece will be worn on average just seven times before being tossed.

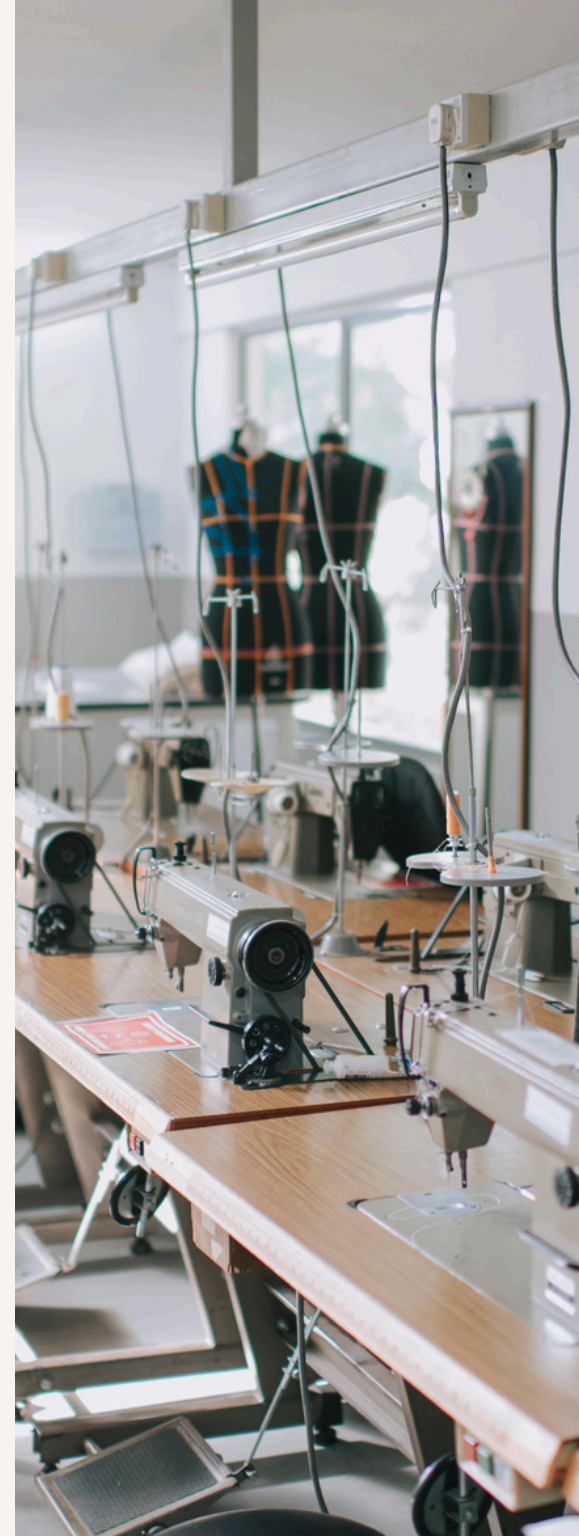
The chase for new style at rock bottom prices leads to corners being cut in quality, workplace practices and environmental sustainability. The fast processes used in the fashion industry require cheap unnatural materials produced via poor agriculture practices, toxic chemicals, and synthetic fabrics.

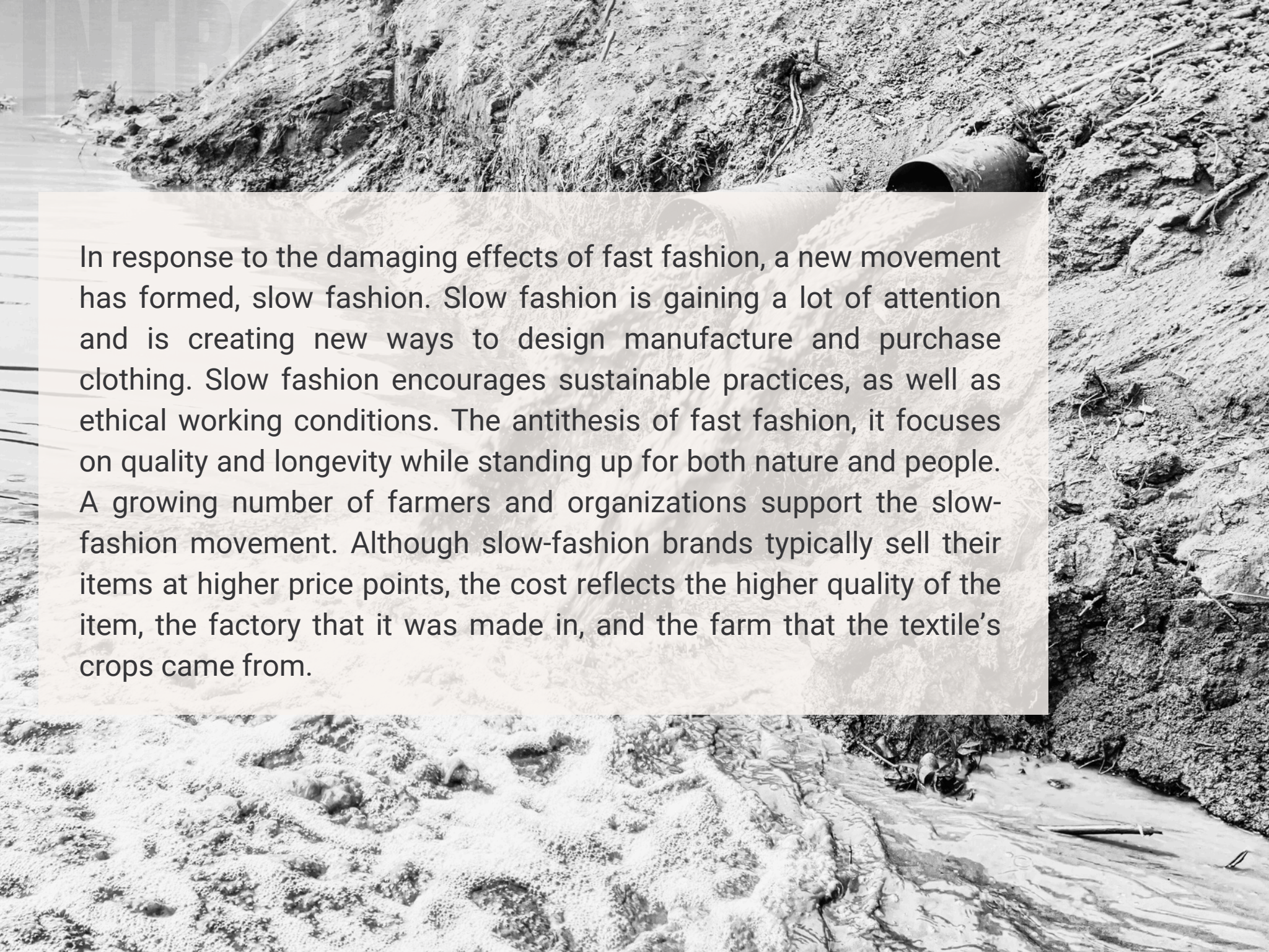
INTRODUCTION

In fact, the fashion industry is the second largest polluter of the world's clean water sources. Textile production is estimated to be responsible for about 20% of global clean water pollution from dyeing and finishing products. Washing synthetics releases an estimated 0.5 million tonnes of microfibres into the ocean a year. Laundering synthetic clothes account for 35% of primary microplastics released into the environment.

A single laundry load of polyester clothes can discharge 700,000 microplastic fibres that can end up in the food chain.

Furthermore, textile dyeing requires toxic chemicals that subsequently end up in our oceans. Approximately 20% of the wastewater worldwide is attributed to this process, which accumulates over time. As many factories moved overseas as stated previously, they may be in countries without strict environmental regulations, resulting in untreated water entering the oceans. Regrettably, the wastewater created is extremely toxic and, in many cases, cannot be treated to become safe again.



A black and white photograph of a riverbank. The bank is composed of light-colored, eroded soil or sand. Several large, dark, gnarled tree roots are exposed, extending from the top of the bank down towards the water. A dark, cylindrical pipe or culvert is visible, partially buried in the soil on the right side of the bank. The water in the river is calm, reflecting the sky. The overall scene suggests environmental degradation or erosion.

In response to the damaging effects of fast fashion, a new movement has formed, slow fashion. Slow fashion is gaining a lot of attention and is creating new ways to design manufacture and purchase clothing. Slow fashion encourages sustainable practices, as well as ethical working conditions. The antithesis of fast fashion, it focuses on quality and longevity while standing up for both nature and people. A growing number of farmers and organizations support the slow-fashion movement. Although slow-fashion brands typically sell their items at higher price points, the cost reflects the higher quality of the item, the factory that it was made in, and the farm that the textile's crops came from.



Against this backdrop, **SAFEST aims at promoting the fight against climate change by raising awareness among consumers on the importance of the choices made in terms of fashion.** *By changing the demand, we can change the market and its procedures, moving the fashion industry towards a more sustainable way of production.*

To this end, in the frame of the project, the SAFEST Consortium conduct a research in Sweden, Spain and Italy to understand the current situation in these countries regarding regulation and incentives received by the fashion industry to change their behaviour and shift to a more sustainable system.

At the same time, through interviews and surveys, the Consortium has studied habits and behaviour of consumers (aged 18-45) when it comes to fashion, and more specifically:

- their knowledge of the concepts of fast fashion and slow fashion;
- if and how much they are aware of the environmental impact of the fashion industry;
- choices and behaviours to reduce the environmental impact of their fashion choices.

WHAT WE MEAN BY



FAST FASHION

It can be defined low-cost but stylish clothing fashion. More specifically, *fast fashion is a business model* characterized by the quick production (usually outsourced) of a wide variety of garments, which are continuously renewed and whose designs follow the fashion trends at lower prices.

SLOW FASHION

Put simply, *slow fashion is the opposite of fast fashion*. It is an awareness and approach to fashion that considers the processes and resources required to make clothing. Slow fashion advocates for buying better-quality garments that will last longer and valuing fair treatment of people, animals, and the planet.

WHERE DID WE CONDUCT OUR RESEARCH?



SWEDEN



SPAIN



ITALY

SWEDEN COUNTRY REPORT



POLICIES & REGULATIONS

Tax policies

There are several tax policies introduced in Sweden exerting impact on the national fashion industry in a different way. First of all, the Chemical Tax on Clothing and Footwear in Sweden was introduced on July 1, 2017, as part of the Chemicals Agency Regulation (KIFS 2017:7) and the Chemical Tax Act (2017:948).

The tax was designed to encourage the use of less harmful chemicals in textile production and minimize the environmental and health risks connected with the use of hazardous substances. Precisely, the tax proposal focuses on both chemicals which fulfil the EU REACH criteria for being Substances of Very High Concern (SVHCs) and similar chemicals that can be deemed to fulfil the same criteria.

The impact of the Chemical Tax on Clothing and Footwear was the awareness raising to the need for the use of safer chemicals in the fashion industry the Chemical Tax on Clothing and Footwear has raised awareness and has encouraged companies to take steps to reduce their use of hazardous chemicals. The Tax was initially set to be enforced in April 2021, the exercise was postponed to January 2022.

However, in the proposal for a Swedish national budget for 2022, the Swedish Government stated that it had no intentions to move forward with a proposal for a tax on chemicals in clothes and footwear due to several practical problems in implementing the proposal, and other regulations regarding the chemical substances in question have lessened the need for a tax.





Sustainability policies

In 2020, the Swedish government adopted a **Circular Economy Action Plan**, which aims to transition towards circular economy by 2030. Several measures are included to CEAP that impact the fashion industry, including sustainable design promotion, use of recycled and renewable materials, and textile recycling infrastructure improvement.

In a nutshell, these are improving textile recycling infrastructure, increasing the use of recycled and renewable materials, promoting sustainable design.

Textile EPR

According to the EU Waste Framework Directive and the EU Circular Economy Action Plan, all Member States have to set up separate waste collection for textiles by 2025. Sweden is the second country in the European Union to adopt **legislation on extended producer responsibility** (EPR) for textiles and clothing. The new guidelines came into force on January 2023, and Swedish lawmakers have calculated that the introduction of the EPR will result in a **T-shirt becoming SEK 0.23 (about 0,022 euros) more expensive.**



A background image of a textile workshop. An older man with grey hair, wearing a light blue shirt and a yellow measuring tape around his neck, is leaning over a workbench. A woman with dark hair is sitting at the workbench, looking up at him. The workshop is filled with various items, including clothes hanging on racks, boxes, and sewing equipment.

Labor legislation

The Textile and Clothing Agreement (TCA) is a collective bargaining agreement that was first established in 1976 and applies to workers in the textile and clothing industries in Sweden. The TCA is a legally binding agreement between the employers' organization, Teko, and the labor unions representing workers in the textile and clothing industries, such as the Unionen and the Swedish Textile Workers' Union.

TEKO¹ has reached new collective agreements with our trade unions, IF Metall, Unionen and Sveriges Ingenjörer.

The agreements are for two years and apply from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025. The contract value is 7.4 per cent during the period and the weighting is 4.1 per cent in year one and 3.3 per cent in year two. Furthermore, the agreements include matters such as minimum wage, part-time pension and individual guarantee.

1. TEKO is the Swedish trade and employers' association for companies working in the textile and fashion industry.



Human rights related regulations

Swedish Act on Measures against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing requires companies in all sectors, including the fashion industry, to conduct due diligence on their supply chains to ensure that they are not supporting human rights violations or other illegal activities. For example, there are restrictions on the import of certain textiles from countries with poor labor standards. This act also requires companies to report any suspicious transactions to the authorities.

Sweden also ratified the **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights**, which mandates that businesses prioritise human rights throughout all aspects of their operations, including their supply chains. In other words, businesses must make sure that they don't utilise forced labor or commit other violations of human rights when producing their products.

Animal welfare laws

Sweden has introduced strict animal welfare laws that exert impact the use of animal products in the fashion industry such as the prohibition use of fur from certain animals.

The **Swedish Animal Welfare Act** (1988:534) lays out regulations to protect the well-being of animals, including those used in the fur industry.

Specifically, the Act states that animals must be kept in conditions respecting their physiological and behavioral needs and must not be subjected to unnecessary suffering.



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

aimed at
raising awareness and educate
consumers on the negative
impacts of fast fashion on the
planet

& promoting responsible
fashion practices in
Sweden



SWEDISH TEXTILE INITIATIVE FOR CLIMATE ACTION

The Sustainable Fashion Academy - an organisation with focus on promoting sustainable fashion at a national and international level - runs the **Swedish Textile Initiative for Climate Action (STICA)** in order to align the companies with the target of EDG and Paris Agreement.

STICA provides a platform where companies can collaborate with other members, share best practices, new solutions, and take part of climate specific data and innovations.

Being part of STICA also means that companies must continuously report their progress to assure they are on the right path.



RETHINK[®]

A hand holding a small globe over a background of newspaper clippings. The globe is positioned in the center, showing the continents of Africa and Europe. The hand is holding the globe from the bottom. The background is a collage of various newspaper clippings, some of which are visible and legible, such as 'Can You Buy' and 'Bought!'. The overall image has a warm, slightly aged tone.

ReThink is a project initiated and run by the Swedish association TänkOm. ReThink is about making us think again by understanding the consequences of consumption, generally and more urgently than ever, around clothes and textiles.

Among its many **initiatives**, RETHINK has cooperated with the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation to develop **factsheets**, **videos** and **promotional content** in regards to the environmental consequences of clothing consumption on the planet

SLOW FASHION SHOW

This is a network of designers, bloggers, and fashion experts/workers committed to the promotion of sustainable and ethical fashion in Sweden organising events and workshops towards consumers education regarding sustainable fashion.

Indeed, the **Slow Fashion Show** (SFS) is a non-profit association focused on a young generation of fashion designers, who combine style and technology to create Slow Fashion collections without hurting environment or people. Usually, only a select number of fashion students see their collections on the runway. Instead, through the SFS platform every student has the opportunity to show their collections.





SWEDISH FASHION COUNCIL

The **Swedish Fashion Council** is an industry organisation aiming to guide the fashion industry into innovation and lead several initiatives towards promoting responsible fashion in the country.

In order to drive the change necessary within the fashion industry, SFC publishes **reports** presenting relevant, actionable data and actionable insights to future proof fashion businesses in a responsible way.

Through the **Incubator**, instead, SFC helps shaping the future of fashion by supporting the most innovative players on the market and focusing on emerging brands and creators combining creative excellence with innovative, sustainable business models and a disruptive vision.



FRONT RUNNERS BY FILIPPA K

Filippa K is a Swedish fashion brand operating with a circular fashion approach.

Through the "Front Runners" initiative, the company selected every 2 years the most sustainable items in its collections. By studying these items, the company aims at making its collections fully circular by 2030.

Moreover, sustainability efforts at Filippa K regard not only the use sustainable materials to produce garments, but also the implementation of collection and re-use strategies for old & unused clothing, with a view to avoid textile waste.



FASHION REVOLUTION SWEDEN

Fashion Revolution is a global movement aiming to contribute to a more ethical and sustainable fashion industry.

In Sweden, Fashion Revolution organizes events and campaigns towards awareness raising about the issues in the fashion industry and promote sustainable practices

MISTRA FUTURE FASHION

Mistra Future Fashion was a cross-disciplinary research program, holding a a system perspective on the fashion industry.

Its vision was to close the loop in fashion and clothing – enabling a systemic change in the Swedish fashion industry, leading to a sustainable development of the industry and society.

The program - running from 2015 to 2019 - aimed to deliver insights and solutions that the Swedish fashion industry and other stakeholders could use to significantly improve the environmental performance and strengthen the global competitiveness.

Main results

The program focused on achieving economic and environmental gains by applying good practices in the fashion industry. By applying the right research it would be possible to reduce the environmental footprint and expand the lifespan of clothing material.



SMART TEXTILES

Smart Textiles is an environment that consists of a close collaboration between the University of Borås, RISE - Research Institute of Sweden, Swerea IVF and the Incubator in Borås.

The basic purpose of Smart Textiles is to develop, make available and put into practice textile innovations that can be used in innovative, commercial products in unexpected ways. The business is an engine when it comes to facilitating and creating new collaborations between research and business.

In recent years, a number of projects in the field of sustainable textiles have been implemented, such as “Re:textile”, which develops new design principles and production systems to enable circular flows in the textile industry.

The Government mission to establish a national platform for sustainable fashion and sustainable textiles (Textile & Fashion 2030) consolidates the role of Smart Textiles as an enabler, catalyst and accelerator for the textile industry’s path to sustainability. The aim of the initiative is to establish a platform between players throughout the value chain in order to promote a transition to non-toxic and resource-efficient cycles in a circular economy.

SO, TO SUM UP

The regulatory landscape surrounding the fashion industry in Sweden is multifaceted, encompassing tax policies, sustainability initiatives, labour legislation, human rights regulations, and animal welfare laws. These regulations reflect Sweden's commitment to promoting environmentally friendly practices, protecting workers' rights, upholding human rights, and ensuring the welfare of animals.

At the same time, a strong emphasis is placed on consumers' education and awareness initiatives, which aim to promote sustainable consumption patterns and responsible fashion practices among the public. It should be noted that the majority of such initiatives are led by private companies and NGOs, with little to no initiative coming from the Institutions.

Research and development projects play a pivotal role as well in advancing sustainable innovation and enhancing the environmental performance of the fashion industry, but they are dependable from public or private funding and their journey could be cut short when the funding runs out or is pulled.

A large Spanish flag with three horizontal stripes of red, yellow, and red, and the national coat of arms on the left, waving against a clear blue sky. In the bottom foreground, the spires and towers of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao are visible.

SPAIN COUNTRY REPORT

POLICIES & REGULATIONS

To follow the new directives of the EU Green Pact, Spain adopted a new legislation (Law 7/2022) on waste and contaminated soils for a circular economy.

It has the purpose of “preventing and reducing the generation of waste and the adverse impacts of its generation and management, reducing the global impact of resource use and improving the efficiency of such use with the aim of ultimately protecting the environment and human health and transitioning to a low carbon and circular economy”.





Art. 25 calls for the establishment of separate collection of textile waste, so as to facilitate the preparation for reuse and high-quality recycling.

Art. 26, instead, invites the competent authorities to adopt the necessary measures, through waste management plans and programs, to guarantee that:

- By 2025, the preparation for reuse and recycling of municipal waste will be increased to a minimum of 55% by weight; of this, at least 5% will be mainly textile waste, electrical and electronic equipment waste, furniture, and other waste that can be prepared for reuse;
- By 2030, the percentages will have grown by 5 percentages point (60%-10%);
- By 2035, the percentages will have grown by 10 percentages point since 2025 targets, reaching 65%-15%;

At the same time, Law 7/2022 establishes measures specifically aimed at the textile sector, which should promote its circularity, such as promoting reuse through donations and the implementation of systems that promote repair and reuse activities for textiles. It also introduces the prohibition to destroy or eliminate unsold surpluses of non-perishable products such as textiles, and allocate them to reuse channels, and when this is not possible, to repair for reuse. To facilitate preparation for reuse and high-quality recycling, the obligation to implement the separate collection of textiles is established before the end of 2024.



Overall, Law 7/2022 law is intended to ensure that the bill for processing and recycling waste is fully paid by manufacturers who put the products on the market. In other words, 'the polluter pays'.

In concrete terms, Law 7/2022 prohibits clothing stores to throw away their unsold clothing and if they do, then they will have to pay.

As we have seen, the novelties introduced by Law 7/2022 are mainly focused on recycling, but in the producers should focus on the implementation of specific eco-design or labelling measures to reduce the textile waste and to see faster the environmental effects.

When it comes to its impact on the Planet, a sustainable brand considers its use of resources and energy, reducing its carbon emissions, impact on our waterways, and using and disposing of chemicals safely and should aim to use zero or very few animal products, like wool, leather, fur, angora, down feather, shearling, karakul, and exotic animal skin and hair.



PLAN DE RECUPERACIÓN TRANSFORMACIÓN Y RESILIENCIA ESPAÑOL

Backed by the Next Fund Generation EU, PERTE (Plan de Recuperación Transformación y Resiliencia español) in Circular Economy will give a definitive boost to the incorporation of the circular economy in the Spanish industry.

It includes 18 instruments distributed in 2 Lines of action. Falling under Line of action 1, the textile sector is a strategic and priority sector for Spain. Through PERTE funds, Spain aims to support its textile sector in overcoming the current "fast fashion" model and facilitate the transition to more sustainable models ("smart fashion").

At the same time, the environmental impacts of the fashion industry are amplified by its intensive consumption and aggravated by poor waste management. The change involves facing challenges such as the eco-design of new garments that have a lower environmental impact by reducing the use of chemical substances or the use of more sustainable alternatives, improving waste treatment, promoting reuse and recycling, not always easy, and the incorporation of recycled material into production.



Thus, the second line of actions of the PERTE addresses support instruments in this sense, including:

- Aid to encourage the production and incorporation of raw materials with low impact, recycled and/or of renewable origin (cotton, hemp, wool, recycled, artificial fibers, etc.) through innovative projects;
- Grants for the development of collaborative R+D+I initiatives that allow for the sharing of knowledge, such as carrying out pilot projects and their scaling for waste management or the improvement of processes in terms of reducing the impacts generated;
- Aid for investment in infrastructure and technology for all links in the value chain, including the waste management stage (classification and preparation infrastructure for high-quality of reuse and recycling), including machinery, equipment, and facilities;
- Aid aimed at the implementation and improvement of traceability that facilitates circularity: development, implementation, and deployment of information systems throughout the chain, including the waste management stage.

PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

aimed at
raising awareness and educate
consumers on the negative
impacts of fast fashion on the
planet

& promoting responsible
fashion practices in
Spain



ASSOCIATION OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION OF SPAIN



Sustainable fashion in Spain is no longer something marginal or reduced experimental initiatives with an irrelevant production.

On the contrary, the companies dedicated to this activity are beginning to be so many that most of them have grouped into the Association of Sustainable Fashion of Spain (AMSE), which already brings together 130 brands. These are companies - spread throughout Spain - who have a common commitment: to avoid raw materials and manufacturing systems with a large ecological footprint.

AMSE president confirms that sustainable fashion is increasing in Spain, but that there are still big brands in the sector that often pretend to be sustainable just for the show.



AMSE points out that another of the pending matters is to ensure that production returns to Spain and is no longer in the hands of large multinationals that manufacture fabrics in countries far away from the final consumer.

This causes a strong ecological footprint, due to the transportation required over long distances, not to mention other factors such as the working conditions in which these materials may have been manufactured.

THE CIRCULAR PROJECT SHOP

The background image shows a person's hands holding a piece of white fabric with a black line pattern. In the foreground, there is a wooden table with various fabrics and a black knitted bag. The overall scene suggests a workshop or a shop focused on sustainable fashion.

It is a pioneer project in the world of sustainable fashion due to its holistic approach to the market as an integrated social, ecological, economic, and working sustainability.

It is a project around organic and responsible fashion made in Spain that is part of the Economy for the Common Good, aimed to spread the desire of aware and collaborative work with the environment, through a fashion that differentiates itself on the market by an exclusive eco-design, a local production, a local commerce and a great care for the planet in which we live.


Another key aspect of project is the circular economy concept, the materials at the end of their life can be integrated back into nature without causing any harm, that are reused, recycled and optimized.

THE CIRCULAR PROJECT SHOP

A person is holding a piece of fabric with a blue and white geometric pattern. The person is wearing a white ribbed top and light blue jeans with a black belt. The background is a blurred interior space with various items hanging on a wall.

The **Circular Project Shop** is a space for sustainable fashion in Madrid and is the first store in the city specialised in marketing and dissemination of Sustainable and Ethical Fashion, supporting eco-design in all its aspects from manufacturing to sale both physically and online, to its communication and dissemination in all areas. It is a sustainable fashion store with clothes free of labour exploitation, a store made in Spain and as a result create a conscious fashion.

In this sustainable fashion store in Madrid, brands united by the desire to transform the industry towards a sustainable model that is more respectful of people and their environment coexist. All of them have been approved to offer customers traceability and the guarantees of fair, sustainable and ecological trade.

A black knitted bag and a colorful patterned scarf are lying on a wooden table. The bag is made of thick black yarn and has a drawstring closure. The scarf has a green, yellow, and white pattern. The table is made of light-colored wood.



ECOALF was founded in 2009 by Javier Goyeneche, who wanted to create a truly sustainable fashion brand. ECOALF's goal is to reduce the consumption of natural resources by recycling and creating a new generation of recycled products with the same quality and design as the best non-recycled products.

The initial vision was to use materials such as recycled polyester, recycled nylon, recycled wool, and recycled cotton, reducing the amount of CO2 emissions generated and the amount of water consumed.

After three years of R&D, the first ECOALF collection was born with its first flagship store in the heart of Madrid.

To fight climate change, they also created the ECOALF Foundation with the revolutionary project: Upcycling the Oceans.

An underwater photograph showing a large, crumpled white plastic bag floating in the water. In the background, a dense field of smaller pieces of plastic waste, including bottles and fragments, is visible on the seabed. The water is a clear, light blue color.

ECOALF FOUNDATION: UPCYCLING THE OCEANS

The project is a global adventure created with the support of the fishing industry to help remove and recover the marine litter that is destroying the oceans and close the loop by transforming it into a high-quality fabric to create high-quality products.

ECOALF became the first Spanish fashion brand to receive the certificate as a B Corporation company.

They are also a **Global Recycling Standard (GRS)** certified brand. The GRS is a voluntary product standard for tracking and verifying the content of recycled materials in a final product. The standard applies to the full supply chain and addresses traceability, environmental principles, social requirements, chemical content, and labeling).



SKFK

SKFK, in the Basque Country, is a brand providing unconventional clothing and encouraging customers to take care of the environment through conscious and responsible consumption.

SKFK use ecological fibers, such as organic and Fairtrade® cotton, which is friendly with the skin, the producers, and the environment.

SKFK's fabrics contain also Lenzing lyocell, a soft, durable fiber and biodegradable fiber made from wood pulp, sourced from sustainably managed eucalyptus forests.

Moreover, SKFK also uses recycled materials and reused garments in its production process. So, instead of becoming potential landfill waste, these recycled materials and reused garments are turned into new and fashionable clothes, while also taking care of the planet.

To increase their environmental approach, SKFK created an **online tool** that tracks the carbon dioxide generated by their garments at each stage of their life cycle and compares it to the industry standard. From shipping to bioplastic packaging to the recycled cotton paper label, every action is quantified.

REGROWN

Regrown is an eco-friendly brand in the footwear market, that uses sustainable and innovative materials such as recycled Pet or ecological fibers.

The main material that Regrown uses in most of its models is made of a canvas made from 100% organic cotton. This material has the **GOTS certificate**, which is the worldwide leading textile processing standard for organic fibers, including ecological and social criteria, backed up by independent certification of the entire textile supply chain.

Thanks to manufacturing through these fabrics, Regrown managed to save water, reduce textile waste and to create chemical-free products.

Regrown's raw materials and their production are 100% Spanish. Indeed, the manufacture is in Orihuela (Alicante), and this allows Regrown to reduce their CO2 emissions and create links with other national companies.



Advertising canvases from Valencia are converted into bags and objects with a new utility, it is the proposal of Rincón de Velluters, an association dedicated to the social and labor integration of people with mental health problems, which has baptized the project with the name '**A la Lona de Valencia**'.

In their workshop in the center of the city, they recycle the waste generated by the multitude of races, including the Marathon, to give it a second life, by turning it into functional designs as a therapy.

The project was born in 2016 at the proposal of the merchants of the historic center, with a clear objective: to integrate people with functional diversity into the workplace and help in their rehabilitation. Rincón de Velluters, an organization created by the users themselves, sells these designs through social networks and various events related to running that are held throughout the Valencian Community.



A LA LONA DE VALENCIA

SO, TO SUM UP

Spain's Law 7/2022 and the PERTE initiative embody a robust legislative commitment to addressing the environmental challenges posed by fast fashion. These policies play a pivotal role in steering the fashion industry towards more sustainable and circular practices, as they not only set ambitious targets for waste management and recycling but also foster innovation in eco-design, transparency, and corporate responsibility.

However, the real change extends beyond regulations. The rise of sustainable fashion initiatives - like the ones presented - indicates a growing industry and consumer shift towards sustainability. These initiatives not only complement legislative efforts but also drive the cultural and operational transformation necessary for a genuine industry-wide shift.

Yet, challenges remain. The effectiveness of these policies and initiatives hinges on their implementation and the broader industry's willingness to embrace change. While regulations can provide the framework and incentives for sustainable practices, the transition to a truly circular and sustainable fashion industry requires collective action across all stakeholders.

In conclusion, while significant strides have been made towards combating the environmental impact of fast fashion through regulatory measures and industry initiatives, the journey towards sustainability is ongoing.

Continued innovation, collaboration, and commitment are essential to ensure that the fashion industry can meet future environmental, social, and economic challenges head-on, paving the way for a more sustainable and responsible fashion ecosystem.

ITALY COUNTRY REPORT



POLICIES & REGULATIONS

In Italy, there are several policies and regulations that have a direct or indirect impact on the fashion industry and aim to counteract fast fashion and promote a more sustainable fashion industry. Among the most important:

1. **Fashion System Code of Conduct:** In 2012, a voluntary code of conduct for the Italian fashion system was established. The code promotes sustainability, ethics and corporate social responsibility in the fashion industry.
2. **Ban on the use of harmful chemicals:** In accordance with the **European REACH legislation**, regulations were introduced to ban the use of certain hazardous chemicals in textiles and clothing.





3. **Material labelling:** Textiles and clothing must be labelled accurately, providing information on the fibres used, the country of origin and other relevant indications. This helps consumers to make more informed and conscious decisions.
4. **Promotion of sustainable fashion:** The Italian government supports the adoption of sustainable fashion practices through various initiatives, such as the promotion of brands and designers that are committed to environmental and social sustainability.
5. **Tax incentives for sustainability:** Tax incentives have been introduced for companies that adopt sustainable practices in the production of clothing and accessories.
6. **Collaborations and agreements:** Italy participates in several international agreements and collaborations to promote sustainable fashion and the circular economy. For example, Italy is a member of the United Nations Partnership for Action on Sustainable Fashion.
7. **Awareness campaigns:** Awareness campaigns have been launched to educate consumers on the environmental and social impact of fast fashion and to promote more conscious consumption.

The fashion industry in Italy is affected by a number of regulations and policies that have a direct and indirect impact on the sector. Some of the main regulations and policies affecting the fashion industry in Italy are described below:

- **Labour laws:** Italian labour laws regulate the rights and obligations of workers and employers. These laws cover issues such as working hours, minimum wages, occupational safety and conditions of employment. Operators in the fashion industry must comply with these laws to ensure a safe and fair working environment for employees.
- **Environmental regulations:** These regulations are aimed at reducing the environmental impact of textile production and consumption; they may concern waste management, the use of hazardous chemicals, energy efficiency and the sustainable use of resources. Operators in the sector must comply with these regulations to minimise the environmental impact of their activities.




- **Intellectual property:** Intellectual property rights, such as trademarks and copyrights, are important in the fashion industry to protect original designs and prevent counterfeiting. In Italy, intellectual property laws offer protection to designers and registered trademarks, allowing them to defend their property rights.
- **International trade policies:** Italy participates in several international trade policies that may affect the fashion industry. For example, the European Union (of which Italy is a member) has tariff policies and trade agreements that can affect textile exports and imports. Trade policies can facilitate or complicate trade for Italian fashion companies.
- **Tax incentives and concessions:** The Italian government can offer tax incentives and concessions to support the development of the fashion industry. These incentives may include tax breaks for companies, subsidised financing, training programmes and export support. These policies are aimed at promoting innovation, competitiveness and employment in the sector.
- **Labelling and product safety standards:** The labelling of textile products in Italy is regulated to ensure correct and transparent information for consumers. There are specific requirements regarding the labelling of materials used, care instructions and safety warnings. In addition, product safety standards are regulated to ensure that textile products marketed in Italy comply with certain quality criteria.

The Textile-Clothing (TC) sector is a sector of great economic importance for Italy; it is in fact the third largest manufacturing sector in the country, with almost 450,000 employees and more than 50,000 companies active in the area, accounting for approximately 10% of the Added Value of Italian manufacturing.

Despite its priority role in the economy, or perhaps precisely because of this, the textile sector is the subject of much attention with regard to the sustainability of the various stages that make up its supply chain. In fact, textile production is often characterised by processes that have a considerable impact on the environment, *especially in terms of consumption of natural resources (primarily water), consumption of electricity and use of chemicals; in particular, wet processes, such as dyeing, printing and finishing, are blamed for the large consumption of water and chemicals.*



The background of the slide features a blurred image of a wooden fence with vertical slats and lush green foliage, possibly trees or bushes, in the background. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

Fast fashion is a phenomenon that has had a great impact on the fashion industry in Italy. Characterised by fast production and low costs, fast fashion has revolutionised the way people buy clothes, but has also generated some controversy and concerns about sustainability and environmental impact.

In Italy, fast fashion has gained popularity in recent decades thanks to brands such as Zara, H&M, Primark and many others. These brands have distinguished themselves by offering trendy clothing at affordable prices, allowing people to follow the latest fashion trends without spending a fortune.

In recent years, in Italy and worldwide, fast fashion has raised concerns about the sustainability and ethics of clothing production. Many consumers are turning towards brands that promote responsible production and use sustainable materials. Sustainable fashion initiatives and interest in upcycling and recycling are gaining in popularity, pushing the fashion industry to be more conscious of its practices.



In response to these concerns, some Italian brands have embraced ethics and sustainability, promoting local production and the use of eco-friendly materials. Initiatives such as non-profit and fair trade, which support local communities and seek to ensure fair wages and safe working conditions for fashion workers, are also becoming more widespread.

The debate on fast fashion in Italy continues to evolve, with more and more people calling for a more sustainable and responsible fashion industry. Consumers are encouraged to make conscious choices, seeking alternatives to fast fashion and supporting brands that emphasise transparency, ethics and reduced environmental impact.

In fact, in 2016 Sistema Moda Italia, one of the world's largest organisations representing textile and fashion industrialists in the Western world, drew up a document in collaboration with the National Chamber of Fashion with the aim of providing an authoritative and concrete starting point for embarking together on a virtuous path to inspire textile-clothing companies to set ambitious sustainability targets.



CONTAINS RECYCLED
POLYESTER



The SMI president presented to parliamentarians the project underway for the creation of a consortium of Italian entrepreneurs for the optimised management of waste from the fashion world, anticipating regulatory decisions on the subject and giving a concrete direction to the sector's industrial activity.


On this occasion, the President illustrated the SMI strategy for the reuse and recycling of textile and clothing waste and commented on the SMI position paper on the opportunity of the introduction of an extended producer responsibility (EPR) regime for textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods. There could be many advantages in terms of enhancing the reuse and recycling of such products, provided that companies in the sectors involved could have a collective EPR system formed exclusively by producers, in order to efficiently manage the resulting regulatory obligations.

In addition, the position paper was sent to the Ministry of Ecological Transition as part of the Circular Economy consultation.

A background image showing a person's hands operating a sewing machine. The machine is white and black, and the person is sewing a piece of blue fabric with orange and white geometric patterns. The scene is set in a workshop or factory environment.

MAIN POINTS OF THE SMI POSITION PAPER ON THE DESIRED EPR REGIME IN THE TEXTILE SECTOR

- The perimeter of the "EPR regime", which should include finished textile products (clothing, home and hospitality textiles, footwear and leather goods, other textile products intended for domestic or professional use) and, only for the part intended directly for sale to end users, semi-finished textile products;
- The definition of 'producer', which should include not only Italian companies, but also importers and those who, from abroad, sell textile products directly to end users;
- The regulation of distance sales, providing for the involvement of distance sales channels, web platforms and marketplaces;
- The regulation of Producer Management Systems, which, when set up on a collective basis, should be compulsorily participated in by producers only, without necessarily imposing the presence of distributors or waste collection and treatment operators;
- The organisation of separate collection of the textile fraction through a Producers' Systems Coordination Centre operating for the urban area and through voluntary selective collections carried out in parallel with the public service;

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- A close-up photograph of a person's hands operating a sewing machine. The person is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt. They are sewing a piece of fabric with horizontal stripes in blue, orange, and red. The sewing machine is white and black. The background is slightly blurred, showing more fabric and the sewing machine's components.
- The judicious and planned use of NRP resources, which should also be directed to the start-up of Producer Systems under the "EPR scheme";
 - The reasonable progression over time of the targets for collection, preparation for re-use, recycling and recovery of textile waste;
 - The encouragement of the prevention of textile waste production through re-use;
 - The imposition of a visible eco-contribution on sales of new textile products, which should be determined taking into account the costs related to 'end-of-life' management and modulated on the basis of environmental performance criteria;

PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

aimed at
raising awareness and educate
consumers on the negative
impacts of fast fashion on the
planet

&

promoting responsible
fashion practices in
Italy





FASHION REVOLUTION ITALIA

Fashion Revolution was founded in 2013 after the collapse of the Rana Plaza production site in Bangladesh that killed more than 1,000 people. It is present in 100 countries around the world where it creates consumer awareness to create the widest possible demand for ethical products in the field of fashion and collaborates with governments and institutions to create laws and standards to regulate the textile sector. Together with 60 NGOs, the movement submitted the shadow policy "Fair and Sustainable Textiles" to the European Parliament on 3/6/2020.

In Italy, Fashion Revolution organises events, discussion panels and social media campaigns to educate consumers about the social and environmental impacts of fast fashion and promote more sustainable alternatives.

CLEAN CLOTHES CAMPAIGN

The Clean Clothes Campaign aims to spread knowledge about the true face - the dark face - of fast fashion. The ultimate goal is to transform the consciences of consumers, who are called upon to include social justice among the parameters guiding their purchasing choices.

The Clean Clothes Campaign operates through regional coalitions in Europe, Asia, Australia, North and Central America. The network intervenes in support of requests for assistance and solidarity in solving cases of human rights violations in the countries of production, through the realisation of campaigns and the launch of strategic actions.

The Italian coalition is coordinated by Fair and includes Altraqualità, Centro Nuovo Modello di Sviluppo, Fondazione Finanza Etica, Guardavanti Onlus, Movimento Consumatori, OEW, Hoferlab.

The activist community that supports it is made up of young people, teachers, artists, academics and workers. The combination of activism and artistic research - understood as a powerful language capable of effectively speaking to consciences - is the Campaign's new testing ground.



FASHION DETOX

The initiative encourages consumers to become aware of the life cycle of clothes, to reflect on their purchasing choices and to adopt more sustainable consumption practices. Fashion Detox invites people to reflect on their shopping habits and consider alternatives to fast fashion, such as buying second-hand clothes, creative recycling or adopting a minimalist approach to wardrobe.

The initiative provides information on the damage caused by the fast fashion industry, such as the pollution of water resources, the accumulation of textile waste and the exploitation of workers. Through events, workshops and awareness-raising campaigns, Fashion Detox promotes consumer education and awareness on sustainable fashion issues. In addition, the initiative collaborates with responsible and sustainable fashion brands, encouraging transparency in the production chain and disseminating positive examples of companies striving for positive change in the fashion industry. The main objective of Fashion Detox is to encourage critical reflection on current consumption patterns and promote more sustainable fashion practices that respect the environment, workers' rights and product quality. The initiative aims to raise awareness and involve a wide range of audiences, from consumers to companies, in order to build a more responsible and conscious future of fashion and explore sustainable alternatives such as second-hand markets, renting clothes or sharing clothes.

POLO DELLA MANIFATTURA SOSTENIBILE

Strengthening the dialogue between business, academia and institutions, to promote research and innovation with a view to the ecological transition of Italian manufacturing and fashion. This is the objective of the Polo della Manifattura Sostenibile in Campania.

The Pole of Sustainable Manufacturing works to obtain the first prototypes to be tested and start the industrialisation process aimed at producing accessories no longer in animal skin but in sustainable materials, in line with the principles of the circular economy.



The Pole is structured as a consortium in which universities, companies from the entire manufacturing sector and also category representatives - such as Assopellettieri and Confindustria Moda - come together.

The goal is to increase the capacity to develop competitive research projects.

Entry into the Pole of Sustainable Manufacturing is possible only possible for qualified, healthy companies, also to banish those who do not comply, protecting them by creating a blockchain for the sector.

This is the start of a path of innovation in putting into practice the European E.S.G. (Environmental, Social, Governance) directives.



NELLE GRANDI FAUCI

NELLE GRANDI FAUCI is a small workshop located in the hills of Irpinia (Campania), in the South of Italy. NGF makes clothing respecting the ancient traditions of tailoring, using quality fabrics, and the know-how of master craftsmen.

The treatments on the finished product, where present, are always carried out with particular attention to environmental sustainability. No chemical agents are used in the finishing, but only natural materials such as vegetable tannins obtained from tree bark waste, used coffee grounds recovered from bars and destined for organic waste, or even wine.

The desire to give new life to waste materials, environmental sustainability and circular economy are concepts that are always at the center of NGF way of conceiving products.





LIVING MORE SUSTAINABLE LIVES

CIRCULAR SOLUTIONS FOR REFUGEES INTEGRATION EUROPE

A tailoring workshop with a focus on environmental issues is an initiative of Cooperativa Sociale Less in Naples, first realised within the project "Living more sustainable lives: Circular Solutions for refugees integration Europe" co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme.

A further objective is to bring the recipients of the course closer to social issues such as ecology and eco-sustainability, environmental care and the circular economy. Concepts that are not so obvious, especially for those coming from other countries. For example, with tailoring, they were able to reuse all those particularly damaged garments to give them a new life.

SO, TO SUM UP

The Italian fashion industry is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by a comprehensive regulatory framework aimed at promoting sustainability and combating the adverse effects of fast fashion. The array of policies, regulations, and initiatives described highlights Italy's proactive stance in fostering a sustainable fashion ecosystem. Moreover, the government's support for sustainable fashion, through promotions and collaborations, alongside awareness campaigns targeting consumer behavior, underscores a multifaceted approach to environmental and social responsibility in fashion. Furthermore, the initiatives aimed at raising consumer awareness about the negative impacts of fast fashion, along with those promoting responsible fashion practices, indicate a growing consciousness among consumers and producers alike.

Overall, Italy's fashion industry is at a pivotal juncture, with sustainability at the forefront of its evolution. The comprehensive regulatory framework, coupled with industry-led initiatives and a growing awareness among consumers, sets a promising path towards a more sustainable and ethically responsible fashion industry. This transition, while challenging, is essential for mitigating the environmental impact of the fashion sector and ensuring its long-term viability and prosperity. As the industry continues to evolve, it is crucial for all stakeholders to remain committed to the principles of sustainability, innovation, and social responsibility, ensuring that Italian fashion not only leads in style but also in sustainability.

WHAT ELSE?

THE SURVEY

What emerged from the analysis of policies and best practices in the three countries involved in the research is that *something is moving*.

Prompted by the European Commission, as well as the voices and demands of activists, governments are beginning to adopt policies to limit pollution from the fashion industry. Sometimes these policies directly target the textile and fashion industries, while others include them along with other sectors of the economy that are pushed to become more sustainable.

In addition, in partner countries, several entities - from Slow Fashion Show in Sweden to The Circular Project Shop in Spain - are working to promote a more sustainable approach to fashion. Some do so with the full support of institutions (as in the case of Mistra Future Fashion in Sweden or the Polo della Manifattura Sostenibile in Italy), others do it autonomously in response to market demands or because of an ethical choice of the founders (such as ECOALF in Spain or Nelle Grandi Fauci in Italy).

We wondered, then, what moved consumer choices in fashion in these countries.

How many citizens are aware of the policies their country has put in place to promote more sustainable fashion? How many are aware of the environmental impact of the fashion industry? And those who are aware of the negative impacts of fast fashion, what are they doing to reduce the environmental impact of their fashion choices?

The survey involved 49 respondents (18+) and can be accessed [here](#). Most of them were not aware of any particular policies put in place by their country to promote sustainable fashion (Fig. 1).

DOES YOUR COUNTRY HAVE ONE OR MORE POLICIES TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FASHION?

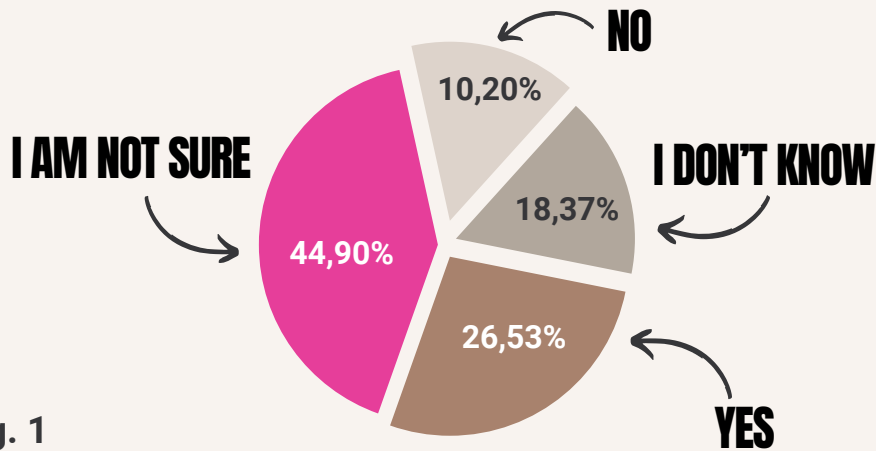


Fig. 1

At the same time, the majority of respondents (53.06%) believed that more laws and/or policies were needed to promote sustainability in the fashion industry.

Even among those who said they knew their country had one or more policies to promote sustainable fashion, the majority (69.23%) felt that these were not enough.

In general, respondents showed some awareness of the need to make fashion companies more sustainable, and they would prefer to buy from the most sustainable ones. Most respondents think it is very important for fashion companies to make public data and measures about their environmental commitment (Fig. 2), while they are more divided regarding the importance of fashion companies sharing information about their supply chain, location of their production factories and what their relationships are with the local communities where production takes place.

HOW IMPORTANT IS FOR YOU THAT FASHION BRANDS/COMPANIES MAKE PUBLIC THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS AND MEASURES THEY ARE TAKING TO HELP MINIMISE THE POLLUTION IN THEIR SUPPLY CHAIN?

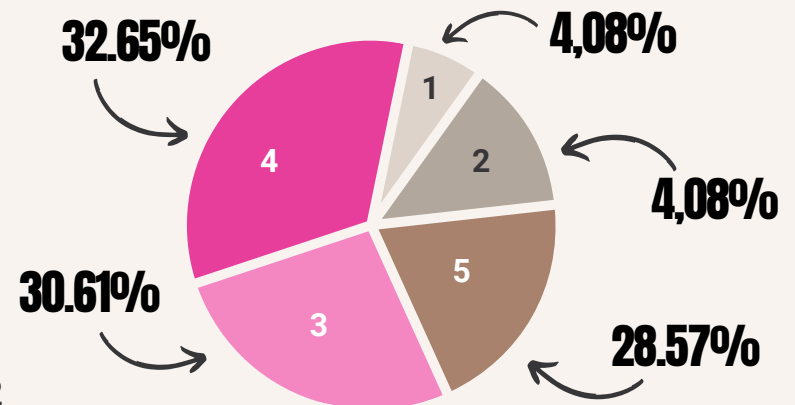


Fig. 2

On a scale from 0 to 5 (where 0=not at all important and 5=very important).



We then asked respondents how they find information about sustainable brands.

Most (48.98%) believe that it is very difficult to find out which company meets high sustainability standards, and in fact they believe that the fashion industry does not inform consumers about the environmental and social impact of clothing production (44.9%). This is something that worries the majority of respondents (40.82%), who are afraid that the clothes they buy have a negative impact on the environment and would stop buying a particular brand of clothes if it was associated with environmental pollution through its production processes (71.43%) or poor working conditions for the employees who produce the clothes (65.3%).

The last part of the survey, on the other hand, sought to understand what the purchasing habits of the respondents were.

In general, most respondents consciously made sustainable fashion choices, such as buying clothes made from sustainable materials (40.82%) or seeking information with respect to how sustainable the brand or company they were buying clothes from was (28.57%).

Only a few, however, buy clothes from brands recognized as sustainable, such as Patagonia or Saye.



THE SURVEY

Interesting is the figure on buying sustainable clothes, with 40.82% of respondents buying sustainable clothes and an identical percentage saying they do not know if they have ever bought sustainable clothes. **This figure seems to support the argument that it is difficult to find information on how sustainable a brand is.**

Among those who do buy sustainable clothes, the reasons behind this choice range from concern about the fashion industry's production of waste to concern about labor conditions to a more general concern for the environment.

Those who do not buy sustainable garments, on the other hand, say they do so because these are too expensive or not in line with their style.

Some of them also say that they have never thought about buying sustainable clothes.

Among those who say they do not know whether the clothes they buy are sustainable, however, there emerges a tendency to buy what is in line with their tastes and is available in the area where they live, and what does not cost too much.

Finally, we tried to find out what happened to respondents' unused clothes.

Most of the unused clothes are donated or given to friends and relatives. Some are used as cleaning items, sold (online or in flea markets) or thrown away. Few are those who reuse them to make new clothes.



SO, TO SUM UP

In conclusion, the survey results underscore a growing public awareness and desire for more action toward sustainability in the fashion industry. However, challenges related to lack of transparent information and difficulty in accessing truly sustainable products clearly emerge.

Indeed, the survey shows a strong desire for greater government and industry commitment to promote sustainability in fashion, reflecting a broad awareness of and concern for the environmental and social implications of the fashion industry.

The data collected indicate a collective aspiration toward greater transparency and accountability on the part of fashion companies, with particular emphasis on the importance of making environmental commitments public. However, there is also evidence of difficulty in finding reliable information about brands' environmental and social impacts, resulting in a sense of frustration and an inability to make informed consumer choices.

The division between those who are aware that they are buying sustainable products and those who are unsure of the sustainability credentials of their purchases highlights the persistent challenge of navigating the sustainable fashion market.

Unused clothing management practices reveal a positive attitude toward recycling and waste reduction. This indicates a growing awareness of the importance of reducing environmental impact through conscious post-consumer choices.

Starting from these conclusion, the SAFEST Consortium has developed a set of activities aimed at raising awareness on the impact of one's fashion choices on the environment and fostering the principles of the slow fashion movement among consumers.

SAFE



SLOW FASHION FOR THE FASHION INDUSTRY

PROJECT № 2022-1-SE01-KA210-ADU-000081031

