

Press Release

European City Mayors Sign Pioneering Declaration to Drive Sustainable Fashion

The Declaration Calls on the EU, G7 and OECD to Impose Regulations to Pave the Way for Slow Fashion Industry

PARIS, France — May 26, 2023 — Over 30 Mayors from around the world have today gathered at ChangeNOW, the largest event of solutions for the planet, to denounce fast fashion and the economic harm it is causing their cities and the planet.

Representing 6.5 million citizens, mayors from ten European cities, including Dublin, Paris, Strasbourg, Bordeaux, Leuven, Annecy, Bologna, Rzeszów, Terrassa and Turku, today signed a declaration to Slow Fashion to call on the European Union, the G7 and OECD to impose regulations that will level the playing field between slow fashion entrepreneurs and fast fashion multinationals. The goals of the declaration include:

- **Raising awareness** among the general public about the social and environmental impact of fast fashion, here and on the other side of the Planet, while valuing local know-hows and craftworks
- Facilitating the access to production and sales sites, using public support to help **decrease rents** for Slow Fashion actors
- Providing **financially support for research and innovation** in the quest for technical solutions which are more respectful of the environment and create localemployment
- Providing financial **support for new business models** in the fashion sector, among other enterprises in the social, circular and/or functionality economy, and **reorienting financial tools** such as grants and loans to support positive impact companies
- Using the vector of **public procurement** to create new markets and customers for these businesses

The textile industry today is responsible for major environmental devastation and violations of human rights. Slow Fashion aims to apply ethical and fair principles in the production of clothing for environmental reasons, while ensuring better working conditions for producers and suppliers in the industry.

The Slow Fashion Declaration aims to push for ambitious regulations which drive the sustainable fashion industry across Europe and textile companies to respect their workers and the environment on different levels:

At the international and European level:

- **Ban Unfair Trading Practices**, in order to protect the weaker contractual party committed by brands and retailers and enforce more ambitious social and environmental provisions in trade agreements
- **Support producing countries**, including via governance reforms and better law enforcement
- **Ban incentives to consume** by prohibiting fast fashion advertising

At the European level:

- **Adopt and implement an ambitious Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** and extend its scope so that it applies to the textile industry
- Quickly **adopt a strong and ambitious *Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence EU directive***, which puts true obligations on the fast fashion big players to ensure the respect of social and environmental rights along their value chain business partners, as well as an equally ambitious **Regulation on *Prohibiting Products Made with Forced Labour*** – and the adoption of equivalent texts at the level of other international organisations
- **Ban the presence of chemicals** in the textile industry and stop postponing the revision of the ambitions in the **REACH Regulation**
- Make the **textile industry** a pillar of the **European Green Deal Industrial Strategy**
- **Adopt a European Slow Fashion Label**, which informs consumers about the origin and the environmental impact of the clothes they buy
- Support the return of the **cultivation of organic textile raw materials** in Europe, such as hemp fields, and promote **educational and lifelong learning programs** which value ‘forgotten skills’ such as the know-how related to textile machineries

At national and regional levels:

- **Adopt favorable taxation, reorient financial tools and use public procurement** in order to support **positive impact companies**

“We don’t want to wait for more nature and biodiversity to be destroyed. We don’t want another Rana Plaza, nor do we want to see the slow fashion designers and entrepreneurs go bankrupt. We want a ban on ultra-fast fashion, fair competition rules so that we can all be sure that the clothes we wear are made by people who like their jobs, and that they don’t harm the environment”, **says Barbara Trachte**, State Secretary for the Economic Transition and Scientific Research in the Brussels Capital Region Government, and initiator of the Slow Fashion Declaration.

“Cooperation is a key element to work out the changes that are necessary and expected from all parties. Services related to recycling, lending, sharing, exchange and second circulation should be disseminated as widely as possible. It is necessary to develop appropriate regulations, but even small bottom-up initiatives are important. In Rzeszów, we support producers who purchase products manufactured in Poland based on proven, safe for health raw materials. Produced by companies whose owners can be reached out to, talked to or simply checked and made sure of the quality of the offered assortment. Now that we are in the Net Zero Cities mission, circular fashion has become an element that fits perfectly into our climate contract,” **says Konrad Fijołek**, Mayor of Rzeszów, Poland

"More and more of us are aware of the disastrous social and environmental consequences of the (over)production and (over)consumption of our clothes. Local solutions must be built to produce, distribute and consume differently. In Paris, we are working on the circular economy of this textile sector, which creates local jobs, in particular by opening manufacturing facilities. But national and international standards must evolve to massively change production methods and consumption behaviour.” **says Florentin Letissier**, Deputy Mayor of Paris in charge of Social and Solidarity Economy, Circular Economy, and Zero Waste Plan, France

"In Terrassa, we are committed to the sustainable development in line with the Agenda 2030. We are working at European level, through the ACTE network (European Textile Collectivities Association), in order to share methodology, ideas and innovation in the textile sector with other cities in Europe," according to **Núria Marin**, Deputy Mayor for Economic Promotion and Projection of the City, Terrassa. "Joining the Slow Fashion Declaration promoted by the Brussels Capital Region is a way to be stronger calling on supranational organisations in order to adopt new regulations and cope with the environmental impact of the textile industry."

"In Leuven, we have been contributing to a more sustainable fashion landscape for some time now by collaborating with local entrepreneurs and creative makers," **says Mohamed Ridouani**, Mayor of the City of Leuven. "However, more is needed to transform the fashion industry. The clothing sector is among the most polluting industries in the world. The significant water consumption, high CO2 emissions, and overproduction have a tremendous impact on the environment. With this signing, we want to urge policymakers at the European and global levels to take action for a fairer and more ecological fashion sector."

Signatories include:

- Barbara Trachte, State Secretary for the Economic Transition and Scientific Research, Government of the Brussels-Capital Region, Belgium
- Minna Arve, Mayor of Turku, Finland
- François Astorg, Mayor of Annecy, France
- Jeanne Barseghian, Mayor of Strasbourg, France
- Dimitri Boutleux, Deputy Mayor in charge of Artistic Creation and Cultural Expressions, Bordeaux, France
- Caroline Conroy, Lord Mayor of Dublin, Ireland
- Konrad Fijołek, Mayor of Rzeszów, Poland
- Matteo Lepore, Mayor of Bologna, Italy
- Florentin Letissier, Deputy Mayor of Paris in charge of Social and Solidarity Economy, Circular Economy, and Zero Waste Plan, France
- Núria Marin, Deputy Mayor for Economic Promotion and Projection of the City, Terrassa, Spain
- Mohamed Ridouani, Mayor of Leuven, Belgium

The Declaration remains open to additional signatories until 1st of July 2023. It will then be shared with representatives from the international organisations we are calling upon.

For more information please contact:

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