

## PRESS RELEASE

# *Systemic change essential to achieve textiles circularity, says EuRIC's event*

Brussels, 31 March 2025

EuRIC's [Textiles event](#), held in Brussels on 27 March, brought together sorters, recyclers, manufacturers, retailers, policymakers, academics, and circularity experts to address the need for bridging the gap between policy and industry in the textile sector. The event emphasised the **need for a systemic shift towards a circular economy**, with a strong focus on legislative action and innovation.

The event that gathered more than 130+ participants, began with a presentation by **Mariska Boer**, President of EuRIC's Textiles Branch, who outlined EuRIC's [manifesto](#) and its key recommendations for achieving textile circularity by 2030. These include defining robust ecodesign requirements, strengthening fair trade, implementing efficient EPR schemes, and balancing chemicals legislation.

**Karolina D'Cunha**, Acting Head of the Waste to Resources Unit at the European Commission, delivered a keynote speech reaffirming that the transition to a circular economy remains central to EU policies, particularly through initiatives such as the **Circular Economy Action Plan** and more recently the **Clean Industrial Deal (CID)**. She acknowledged that while progress has been made in modernising EU waste legislation, much remains to be done to **create a level playing field between virgin and secondary raw materials and establish a unified market for waste**.

**Lars Fogh Mortensen** (European Environment Agency - EEA) presented key findings from the EEA's latest briefing on the circularity of the EU textiles value chain, which suggests that succeeding with the EU's textile strategy will require a systemic shift towards higher quality, longer use, and increased reuse, repair, and recycling.

In this context, panelists such as Greens/EFA Danish MEP **Rasmus Nordqvist**, stressed the need to tackle challenges related to emerging online platforms and fast fashion. **Jana Hrčková** (Decathlon) emphasised the importance of harmonised EPR systems, with the European Commission ought to play a key role, as well as securing financial support at both EU and national levels to promote recycling. **Bertram Wevers** (Frankenhuus) pointed out that while recycling technology is available, demand for recycled materials remains insufficient, and there is a narrow focus on fibre-to-fibre recycling rather than a more holistic approach.

**Debbie Shakespeare** (Avery Dennison) discussed how digital innovations, such as RFID and data traceability, can help implement the Digital Product Passport, optimise supply chains, improve sorting, and engage consumers.

**Elisa Tonda** (United Nations Environment Programme - UNEP) stressed that to make the textiles sector more circular and sustainable, clarifying the definition of textile 'waste', creating infrastructure for circularity, and improving company practices are essential.

On a global scale, **Dr. Hannah Parris** (University of Cambridge) presented [recommendations](#) for reforming international textile trade codes (HS Codes) to better support the circular and sustainable textile economy. **Chiel Berends** (European Commission) emphasised the need for implementing legislative measures and collaborating with international partners, including advocating for textile waste to be included in global regulatory frameworks like the Basel Convention. **Ana Rodes** (Recover) and **Martin Bösch**, (TEXAID) called for clear regulations and guidelines for customs authorities inspecting shipments of used textiles or recycled fibres, as well as the importance of financing waste streams through mechanisms such as EPR schemes. **Mustafa Sattar** (Retex Global) raised concerns about the competitive pressures from countries like China, urging the need for better data to address these challenges. The panel concluded with a call for stronger global cooperation, clear regulations, and incentives to create a sustainable circular textile economy.

In conclusion, EuRIC's textiles event highlighted the importance of stronger collaboration between industry, policymakers, and global partners to build a circular textile economy. Key barriers to achieving circularity such as low demand for recycled materials, the gap between EU policies and business realities, unfair competition from countries like China, and the dominance of fast fashion remain prominent. Despite these challenges, the ongoing commitment from both industry and policymakers offers hope for progress.

We extend our sincere thanks to all speakers and presenters for their valuable insights and expertise, and to the lively audience whose questions enriched the discussions. The event's presentations and material are available [here](#).

Note to editor:

For press-related enquiries, please contact Zoi Didili, EuRIC Senior Communications Advisor, by email at [zdidili@euric.org](mailto:zdidili@euric.org) or by phone at +32 (0) 489 09 46 02. The [European Recycling Industries' Confederation \(EuRIC\)](#) is the umbrella organisation for the recycling industries in Europe. Through its 75 members from 23 European countries, EuRIC represents more than 5,500 large companies and SMEs involved in the recycling and trade of various resource streams. They represent a contribution of 95 billion EUR to the EU economy and 300,000 green and local jobs. By turning waste into resources, recycling reintroduces valuable materials into value chains over and over again. By bridging circularity and climate neutrality, recyclers are pioneers in leading Europe's industrial transition.