

Report on the needs of
**THE EUROPEAN
CREATIVITY-DRIVEN
FASHION INDUSTRY**

2025

TABLE OF CONTENT

Foreword	02
EFA	04
Introduction	08
Methodology	09
Challenges & Recommendations	10
01 Sustainability	10
02 Innovation	18
03 Education	24
04 Communication and distribution	34
05 Responsible consumption	42
06 Systemic support to the creative fashion industry	54
07 Strengthening the whole value chain	68
Summary of Recommendations	76
Appendix	130
Imprint	132

FOREWORD

The European fashion sector stands at a critical juncture — one shaped by environmental urgency, technological transformation, and shifting global dynamics. Amidst these changes, creativity remains Europe's most powerful asset. It is within this context that the European Fashion Alliance (EFA) presents this comprehensive report, focused on the current needs and future priorities of the creativity-driven fashion industry, with a particular emphasis on the challenges and opportunities facing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

This focus on SMEs is not new to our work. It continues the strategic direction outlined in our previous initiatives — notably, the EFA Manifesto — and reflects our deep commitment to supporting the unique role of SMEs in shaping a diverse, sustainable, and culturally rich fashion landscape. As we reaffirmed in that manifesto, ensuring the visibility and resilience of smaller creative actors is not only a matter of equity, but a prerequisite for long-term sectoral vitality.

Throughout Europe, SMEs form the backbone of the fashion industry. They are not only vital engines of innovation, sustainability, and cultural identity, but they also embody the diversity and resilience that define European fashion. Yet, these businesses often face structural disadvantages that inhibit their ability to scale, digitize, or meet emerging regulatory and environmental demands. This report seeks to address these gaps by offering concrete policy recommendations and support measures that will empower SMEs to thrive in the face of rapid transformation.

Rooted in detailed qualitative research, the report draws on the insights of EFA members and key stakeholders across the continent. It highlights seven key areas requiring systemic support: sustainability, innovation, education, communication and distribution, responsible consumption, structural reinforcement of the value chain, and strategic alignment between industry and EU institutions.

At its core, this report aligns with the European Commission's objective to ensure the global competitiveness of European industries, including the fashion sector. The transformation of the fashion ecosystem must go hand in hand with the safeguarding of its economic strength. A future-oriented, creativity-driven fashion sector — empowered by SMEs — is essential for Europe to lead in sustainable value creation, both within and beyond its borders.

We are convinced that Europe can become a global benchmark for responsible and creative fashion — but this vision will only materialize if public authorities and the private sector work hand-in-hand to unlock the full potential of its creators, especially those operating on a smaller scale. With this report, the European Fashion Alliance aims to contribute meaningfully to EU policymaking and to foster a fashion ecosystem that is inclusive, competitive, future-ready, and uniquely European.

Board of Directors
European Fashion Alliance



The European Fashion Alliance: A Creative Force for the Future of Fashion in Europe

Founded in 2022, **the European Fashion Alliance (EFA)** is the first trans-national alliance of European fashion institutions and organizations. It unites a diverse network of creative fashion brands, designers, and cultural stakeholders — including both emerging talent and established houses — with a shared mission: to shape a **sustainable, innovative, inclusive, and competitive European fashion ecosystem**.

EFA acts as a **collective voice** for the creativity-driven fashion industry. It brings together fashion councils, cultural bodies, and industry organizations from across Europe to advocate for policies and initiatives that reflect the **unique values, challenges, and opportunities** of this vital sector. With a particular emphasis on **supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)** — which make up the backbone of the European fashion industry — EFA fosters collaboration, knowledge exchange, and systemic transformation.

European fashion is more than commerce — it is culture, identity, and craftsmanship. EFA works to ensure that this sector continues to thrive, not only as an economic contributor but also as a key driver of **social progress, environmental responsibility, and creative innovation**. The alliance plays an essential role in connecting the fashion sector with European policy agendas, including the Green Deal, the EU Industrial Strategy, and the New European Bauhaus.

Our Values: *The EFA 10-Point Manifesto*

The EFA Manifesto articulates the shared vision and commitments of Europe's creative fashion community. It outlines ten principles that guide our work and the evolution of the industry:

1. Promoting European Values

Fashion is deeply rooted in European humanistic and cultural traditions. It reflects values of creativity, freedom, tolerance, and diversity — inspired by historical movements from the Renaissance to Modernism.

2. Creativity as a Core Driver

Creative expression is the foundation of the fashion industry. Designers lead with imagination, innovation, and cultural awareness, shaping unique styles that combine heritage with modernity.

3. Fashion as a Cultural Connector

Fashion is part of a wider creative community. Designers collaborate with artists, musicians, filmmakers, and architects to enrich both fashion and the broader cultural landscape.

4. Fashion Weeks as Artistic Events

Fashion shows are more than commercial showcases — they are cultural productions. Set in iconic European cities, they celebrate fashion as a living art form and contribute to Europe's cultural vibrancy.

5. Sustainability as a Principle

Sustainability is central to creative fashion. From local production to the use of deadstock and circular design, fashion brands are pioneering new models of environmental responsibility.

6. Support for Environmental Policies

EFA supports EU-led reforms that encourage green transition, circularity, and transparency. Fashion must be aligned with public sustainability goals to foster systemic change.

7. Commitment to Social Responsibility

Fashion must be fair. The industry supports local jobs, ethical production, inclusivity, and gender equality. Human-centered design and diverse representation are non-negotiable.

8. Valuing Quality Over Quantity

Creative fashion favors excellence and longevity over mass production. This shift counters the negative impacts of fast fashion and redefines value through craftsmanship and durability.

9. Backing European Industry and Employment

Fashion is a pillar of European manufacturing. Creative houses sustain jobs and preserve traditional skills — contributing to reindustrialization and economic resilience.

10. Driving Innovation and Knowledge

From artisanal techniques to AI, creative fashion thrives on innovation. Designers are at the forefront of merging low-, mid-, and high-tech solutions to redefine production and consumption.

Together, these values position the **European Fashion Alliance** as a strategic partner in shaping the future of Europe's fashion industry — **one that is creatively rich, socially just, economically strong, and environmentally sound.**

INTRODUCTION

In December 2024, the European Fashion Alliance published its “Status of European Fashion” report, based on the results of a survey conducted with 211 industry representatives, in collaboration with EFA’s 27 members. The survey aimed to capture a broad spectrum of insights across various perspectives of the fashion industry, ensuring a representative overview of current trends, challenges, and opportunities and was completed by qualitative interviews featuring prominent industry opinion leaders and experts.

Its results revealed a strong commitment of EFA members towards an environmentally and socially responsible fashion, in line with EFA’s values, but also exacerbated the need for stronger support from public authorities to achieve this, particularly for SMEs.

In this context, the European Fashion Alliance has launched a new survey to identify concrete proposals and recommendations on how the EU can support the needs of the creativity-driven segment of the fashion industry.

In 2012, a working document by the European Commission on policy options for competitiveness of the European Fashion Industries already noted that *“in the current globalised world, it is becoming a challenge, if not impossible, for Europe to compete with the emerging economies on price alone. An increasingly knowledge- and innovation-based industry, based on higher-value-added products, processes and services, can however ensure that Europe’s position as global leader remains intact.”*

This statement is more relevant than ever and reflects the views shared by EFA members during the survey.

Its conclusions are presented in this report.

METHODOLOGY

In order to collect valuable insights and recommendations, EFA undertook a comprehensive qualitative research initiative, conducting in-depth interviews with 16 of its members. These interviews were carefully structured to explore feedback across seven key focus areas that are critical to the future growth and resilience of the organisation and its stakeholders, representing the creativity-driven segment of the European fashion industry.

- Sustainability
- Innovation
- Education
- Communication and distribution
- Responsible Consumption
- Systemic support to the creative fashion industry
- Strengthening the whole value chain

Prior to the interviews, a structured questionnaire was provided to EFA members. This preparatory step ensured that the discussions were targeted, efficient, and productive, allowing participants to reflect on the topics in advance and provide more thoughtful and comprehensive feedback during the one-hour interview sessions.

The insights gained from these interviews have led to the identification of 63 recommendations that will be submitted to the European Union authorities in order to implement concrete measures dedicated to supporting the development and competitiveness of the creativity-driven fashion sector in the abovementioned key areas.

(01) Sustainability

“

It's challenging for my brand to source fabrics with verifiable sustainability credentials. Even locally sourced materials often lack credentials, making it difficult to confirm their origins and sustainability standards.

North Macedonia

While 88% of respondents to the “Status of European Fashion” survey indicated that they invested financial or human resources to commit to sustainability, 59% of companies shared that they still lacked the tools or support needed for high-quality practices to transition to a more sustainable business.

Sustainability in the fashion sector can take many forms and be achieved through various levers. Our respondents identified the following key challenges and priorities:

1.1 Sourcing Sustainable Materials

Context & Concerns

Using responsible materials is, of course, one of the key levers for offering sustainable fashion. However, EFA members emphasised three main barriers to sourcing such materials:

High costs

The high prices of materials labelled as “sustainable”, sometimes unjustified, are a significant deterrent, especially for emerging brands or SMEs with limited resources.

Unreliable certification labels

The landscape of labels and certifications is complex. With many different certifications originating from various private actors and with varying levels of transparency regarding the attribution criteria and monitoring procedures, several members pointed out the difficulty for brands to find their way around such labels and certifications, and even, for some, to trust them.

Lack of information on available sustainable materials

Many brands, particularly young designers and SMEs, do not have access to sufficient data on suppliers of sustainable materials.

Allow for reduced VAT for certified sustainable materials

To encourage the use of sustainable materials, EFA suggests that the EU should define clear sustainability criteria and authorise reduced VAT rates on materials that meet them, by **revising Annex III of the VAT Directive and encouraging Member States to adopt a reduced rate**. This would directly support SMEs and would be an effective instrument to achieve the sustainable goals set by the European Commission.

Introduction at EU level of strong and reliable certifications labels, both for final products and materials.

This is in line with the ongoing revision of the EU Ecolabel initiated by the European Commission. This is also crucial with regard to future regulations such as the ESPR that introduces a requirement for the incorporation of recycled content into final products. Implementing such a requirement **without an adequate framework on recycled materials from the EU authorities** could lead to abusive practices on the part of private players, both in terms of the pricing charged and the certification and quality of materials sold as “recycled”.

Funding for a platform listing certified suppliers of sustainable materials available within the EU

This tool would:

- Facilitate access to reliable sources
- Encourage brands not yet committed to sustainable sourcing to take action
- Support European producers, shorten supply chains, and relocate part of the production within the EU.

In order to avoid any issues of competition or market distortion, we recommend that this platform be overseen by the EU rather than by private actors. In particular, we suggest that this initiative be part of the current revision of the EU Ecolabel.

Recommendations

1.2 Supporting Sustainable Practices

Context & Concerns

Interestingly, the interviews did not point to a systematic demand for support when it comes to implementing sustainable practices. Many EFA members, SMEs and emerging brands, **have already placed sustainability at the core of their business models**. These companies often adopt **inherently responsible approaches** such as working with upcycled or deadstock materials, producing locally, operating in small batches, or opting for made-to-order models.

However, while these practices reflect a genuine commitment to sustainability, companies can still face **practical challenges in scaling or formalising their efforts**. For instance, even committed brands may lack access to the expertise or resources needed to develop structured sustainability strategies or obtain credible certifications.

Moreover, respondents also stressed the importance of connecting with like-minded peers and stakeholders to exchange knowledge and gain visibility.

Guidance - consultancy vouchers

EFA calls for EU-supported guidance to enhance sustainability in fashion, through the form of:

- Open access resources on sustainable practices
- “Sustainability checklists” accessible to fashion companies
- Vouchers for consultancy services or access to dedicated service within the EU (*see Fashion Hub proposal below*).

Financial support for access to certifications

While these can add value for companies that invest in sustainability, their cost is often prohibitive. EFA recommends creating **financial aid mechanisms for SMEs wishing to access these certifications**.

EU funding for sustainable fashion fairs and other events

Support events that focus on sustainable fashion practices, including fairs, exhibitions, roundtables, etc. These should:

- Foster knowledge sharing or exchange of good practices within the eco-system
- Offer visibility to smaller, creativity-driven fashion brands already implementing innovative sustainable practices
- Encourage matchmaking or networking opportunities.

Recommendations

(02)

Innovation

As with sustainability, innovation in the fashion industry spans a broad range of areas, from circular business models and new materials to digital tools and traceability systems. Concerning large-scale technological innovation, notably in recycling techniques and infrastructures, the **European Fashion Alliance welcomes the European Commission's initiative to establish the "European Partnership for Textiles of the Future"** as a positive step forward and is keen to be involved in any relevant programme in this regard.

The most frequently expressed concern among respondents focused on the **accessibility of current and emerging technologies, particularly Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) tools, blockchain, and Digital Product Passport (DPP).**

Besides, fashion is a hybrid industry that blends cultural, creative, and manufacturing elements, with an innovation process that differs significantly from the pure manufacturing or service sectors. In this respect, innovation in fashion can represent both an opportunity, for example in the fight against counterfeiting, and a threat, with the challenge of preserving intangible creativity and know-how while remaining at the forefront of competitiveness. It is essential to support the sector in this transition.

75%

of the «Status of European Fashion» survey reported that they **did not use innovative solutions to ensure** product traceability.

2.1 Improve the Accessibility and Implementation of Innovation tools

Context & Concerns

The aforementioned technologies are becoming increasingly essential, not only for **compliance with upcoming EU regulations** such as **ESPR**, but also for enabling brands to **communicate transparently** and credibly with consumers.

SMEs, in particular, face **significant challenges in accessing and implementing these technologies**, due to limited financial resources, lack of technical expertise, and human capacity constraints, despite their willingness to be transparent and adopt responsible practices.

To ensure a level playing field and preserve the diversity of the European fashion ecosystem, **it is essential that SMEs are not left behind in the technological transition.**

To improve the accessibility and implementation of innovation tools, EFA suggests the following measures:

Recommendations

Financial support to access and develop innovation

Provide grants or co-financing schemes to help SMEs acquire or implement essential technologies, particularly when these are required for regulatory compliance.

Funding for training

Create targeted training programmes co-developed with industry experts and technology providers to ensure that SMEs can fully understand and use relevant innovation tools for sustainability, traceability, and reporting.

Mentoring programmes between large and small companies

Encourage cross-sector knowledge sharing by funding structured mentoring programmes where larger companies guide SMEs in implementing innovation practices and tools. This can also promote greater cohesion across the value chain.

Promotion of partnerships between academic institutions and the industry

Development of “SME-Friendly” versions of complex technologies

Fund the adaptation or simplification of existing tools to ensure that they are accessible, affordable, and manageable for small businesses.

2.2 Introduce Fashion / Creative-Industry Specific R&D Schemes

Context & Concerns

In view of the industry’s ongoing structural transformation, such incentives would be critical, not only in enhancing the sector’s competitiveness but also in encouraging investment in cutting-edge technologies, ensuring the European fashion industry remains at the forefront of global trends.

Recommendation

Introduction of fashion- or creative industry-specific R&D incentives, such as targeted tax credits or dedicated funding schemes

2.3 Fund AI powered IP Monitoring Tools

Context & Concerns

The development of online marketplaces and social media platforms has exponentially increased the circulation of counterfeit fashion goods, posing a **severe threat to intellectual property rights, brand integrity, and consumer trust**. While existing IP frameworks at EU and national levels provide legal recourse, the speed and scale of digital infringement, especially through AI-generated content and cross-border e-commerce, demand more proactive and technologically advanced solutions

Recommendation

Funding AI-powered IP monitoring tools **providing automated monitoring and alert systems that detect and remove counterfeit fashion goods, advertising use of brand images, logos etc in real-time.**

(03) Education

Education in the creative fashion sector can cover two main aspects. First, in order for companies to thrive and remain competitive, it is essential for the industry to develop new skills that respond to emerging challenges — particularly in terms of sustainability, innovation and business aspects — while continuing to preserve the traditional know-how and craftsmanship that are integral to the identity of European fashion.

Second, in light of the increasing regulatory complexity at EU level, a major educational challenge lies in ensuring that creative fashion companies — particularly SMEs — are properly informed and trained to understand, anticipate, and comply with current and upcoming legislation.

Most of the survey respondents have raised the issue of the lack of skills and knowledge needed to achieve the transition of the fashion industry. In this regard,

72%

of the respondents considered that this lack of skills could be solved through training programs.

3.1 Training Future Talents in Fashion

Context & Concerns

In 2012, a European Commission working document on policy options for competitiveness of the European Fashion Industries already noted that “*skills shortages, mismatches and gaps [could] lead to the disappearance of certain activities and know-how from Europe*”, a statement that was also shared in the context of the EU Pact for Skills.

Indeed, while the vast majority of respondents underlined the **quality of design education in their respective Member States**, more emphasis was placed on the **need to develop and promote manufacturing skills** as well as the need to **make the link between design and other skills**, particularly in terms of business management.

EU-wide campaigns to promote fashion careers, with a focus on manufacturing skills.

Recommendations

Mandatory sustainability modules in EU-supported fashion and design education programmes (linked to Erasmus+ or Creative Europe).

Subsidised training for existing professionals

Provide funding for continuous education and reskilling.

Cross-disciplinary learning

Encourage the integration of business and sustainability modules into design education programmes and vice versa, to foster a new generation of fashion professionals capable of combining creative vision with strategic, ecological, and commercial understanding.

69%

of the «Status of European Fashion» survey indicated they were **planning or hoping to work with educational or research institutes** on their business development.

Incentivise professional-academic exchange programmes

Provide EU co-funding for vocational schools

Offering certifications in technical fashion professions (pattern making, prototyping, etc.).

Launch of an EU programme to preserve and modernise traditional know-how, especially in regions with rich artisanal heritage. This could include **grants** for intergenerational transmission of knowledge through formalised **apprenticeships or mentorship schemes**.

Cross-border mobility for apprenticeships

Expand Erasmus-style programme to include apprenticeship mobility, allowing young Europeans to learn manufacturing skills in other EU countries.

3.2 Education on Current and Future Regulations

EFA members expressed concerns about the lack of accessible, clear and practical information on the current and upcoming regulations applicable to fashion companies, which is particularly critical with regard to the recent multiplication of such regulations in the context of the European Green Deal.

Creation of a regulatory compliance checklist for fashion companies and access to dedicated services within the EU (*see Fashion Hub proposal below*)

In line with the Commission's recommendation on measures to combat counterfeiting¹ that encouraged Member States and industry stakeholders to participate in the development of a **comprehensive checklist** for SMEs in the IP domain, the European Fashion Alliance calls for the development of a **similar checklist aimed at ensuring their compliance in the regulatory area**.

Context & Concerns

Recommendations

The EFA "Status of European Fashion" survey showed that only

52%

of the respondents were familiar with the ESPR, although one of the key UE regulations concerning the textile, and thus fashion, sector.

“

Complexity is the challenge. With a simple manual for large and small companies alike, and a simple scenario or roadmap explaining step-by-step how to comply with different laws, Europe can make a big difference. Right now, we spend a lot of time deciphering exactly what to do.

Belgium

¹ Commission's recommendation on measures to combat counterfeiting and enhance the enforcement of intellectual property rights, 19/03/2024
https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/publications/commission-recommendation-measures-combat-counterfeiting-and-enhance-enforcement-intellectual_en

“

The role of associations should also involve accompanying companies in implementing action and ensuring compliance.

Italy

Open-access content, targeted webinars and training material

To support companies in gaining a practical understanding of the current and future regulations applicable to their activities, and in line with the objectives of the Better Regulation Strategy, EFA calls for specific and regularly updated guidelines and FAQ's to be made available on a dedicated web page or website (in line with similar initiatives implemented for the EU deforestation free regulation).

EU institutions, in cooperation with national fashion councils and organisations like EFA, could also organise regular webinars and provide practical guidance materials on regulatory updates.

(04) Communication and distribution

In the current climate marked by global crises, inflation, and increasing trade tensions, **supporting the European fashion sector is more crucial than ever** to ensure it remains competitive and visible.

This section focuses on **measures to support the communication, sales, and distribution** of creativity-driven European fashion brands, particularly SMEs, independent designers, and local actors who play a central role in building sustainable business models.

During interviews with EFA members, this area revealed **significant disparities between Member States**. While some national fashion councils, especially in Western and Northern Europe, receive strong support from public authorities and are therefore able to assist emerging brands, others (particularly in Eastern Europe) lack similar backing. In these countries, **fashion is not always recognised as a strategic sector**, leaving brands without the institutional tools to scale or professionalise. **These disparities could be mitigated by subsidies for small markets through the European Regional Development Fund**.

Additionally, members from **smaller EU Member States** highlighted how the limited size of domestic markets restricts growth opportunities. Across the board, respondents agreed that **facilitating exchanges between brands**—particularly from smaller to larger markets—would strengthen the creative fashion ecosystem across Europe.

Lastly, it has been stressed on numerous occasions that the creative fashion sector in the European Union counts a large number of local fashion brands, independent designers or SMEs, for which it is a valid model to remain small and local rather than seeking large expansion and the production of large number of units, as long as they are able to maintain a financial viability. As mentioned above, these brands often adopt inherently sustainable business models. These models, aligned with EFA's values, deserve visibility and institutional support at the EU level.

4.1 Support Digital Presence and E-commerce Capabilities

Many SMEs lack the technical or financial resources to build and maintain an e-commerce platform, despite this being a vital condition for visibility and commercial success today. **Granting subsidies to finance the digitisation of these brands was therefore widely supported by respondents.** Not only would this help responsible fashion brands to thrive, but it would also serve the competitiveness of the European creative fashion sector in general, as it would strengthen the online presence of these brands and thus raise consumer awareness of this segment of the market in the face of the omnipresence of ultra-fast fashion brands using aggressive digital marketing campaigns.

Provide funding dedicated to:

- Website development
- Online marketing
- Integration of circular or sustainable commerce solutions: In addition, **training could be provided on sustainable e-commerce practices, including strategies to reduce return rates and environmental impact.**

Context & Concerns

Recommendation

4.2 Support the Professionalisation and Internationalisation of Creative Fashion Brands

Context & Concerns

As stated above, there are, to date, discrepancies between Member States when it comes to the support provided to brands. In order to address these disparities, EFA suggests the following measures:

Recommendations

Grants for participation in international trade fairs, incubators and showrooms, thus allowing the brands to expand their activities, but also to be trained in the workings of new markets, each having its own codes. This could be implemented within existing programmes such as the EIC's "International Trade Fairs" programme, which could include a newly-created group dedicated to the fashion or textile sector.

Subsidised travel and promotion packages for brands from smaller markets to attend professional events and fashion weeks in bigger markets.

Funding for mentoring programmes and cross-border initiatives

Funding for European networking events creating connections within the ecosystem. These events should not be limited to gathering fashion brands but also suppliers, manufacturers, PR agencies etc. These should complement national fashion weeks and help bridge markets and ecosystems across Europe.

Vouchers for consultancy services on international sales and export strategies or access to dedicated services within the EU (*see Fashion Hub proposal below*)

Several respondents pointed out the need for support for brands on those aspects. While some national agencies exist to provide companies with such support, the survey revealed discrepancies between Member States in this regard.

4.3 Promote Responsible Digital Marketing Practices

Influencers have become key players in the fashion industry and digital marketing. However, the lack of a standardised code of conduct or regulation has led to inconsistencies and legal uncertainties.

Provide a EU-harmonised framework for digital marketing practices

In this regard, EFA welcomes the launch of consultations on the future Digital Fairness Act by the Commission.

Context & Concerns

Recommendation

(05) Responsible consumption

5.1 Raising Awareness towards Consumers to Promote More Responsible Consumption Choices

Context & Concerns

Over the last years, fast fashion and ultra-fast fashion have led many consumer choices to be guided mainly by price and no-longer by other purchasing factors such as durability, quality or even design in some cases.

It is thus important to educate current and future consumers on the actual impact, both environmental and social, of fashion products, as well as to promote more circular habits.

EFA "Status of European Fashion" survey demonstrated that

66%

of its respondents believe the general public image of the fashion industry is "rather negative" or "negative".

As a partial answer to this finding, respondents unanimously agreed on the need to better educate consumers on their consumption choices, while communication about the actual impact of fashion needed to be enhanced.

Indeed, survey respondents clearly emphasised that changing consumer behaviour and consumption habits plays a pivotal role in promoting responsible and sustainable fashion and thus, supporting the European creative fashion brands.

“

Everyone should play a role. Consumers play a crucial role in driving change through their purchasing decisions and demands for sustainable, ethically produced clothing. Fashion and textile companies are also responsible for prioritizing ethical and environmental friendly practices in their operations. Policy plays a vital role in setting standards, regulations, and incentives that encourage responsible practices and hold companies accountable for their environmental and social impact.

Ireland

For this EFA calls:

Recommendations

For the organisation of awareness campaigns under several angles:

- **Inform consumers about the environmental and social impact of fashion**, particularly the hidden costs of fast fashion and the implications of extremely low prices
- **Reinforce the cultural and emotional value of fashion**, encouraging attachment to well-made garments and reducing overconsumption
- **Support the visibility of fashion produced in Europe**, highlighting the added-value and characteristics of each production area and placing quality, traceability, and responsible production as key differentiators.

For the support for public education events and practical workshops targeting diverse age groups and communities

For encouraging Members States to integrate modules on responsible fashion consumption and the impact of fashion in school curricula in order to educate future consumers at an early stage (parallels were drawn with similar education campaigns on smoking or the use of plastic, for example).

“

We have to ensure that the purchasing decision is not dictated by the lowest price.

Spain

5.2 Providing the European Creative Fashion Sector with Adequate Tools to Promote the Specific Characteristics and Strengths of its Products

Switching consumer habits **back to responsible brands** requires fostering trust in those brands, being transparent about the environmental and social sustainability, durability and quality that can be expected from the purchase of a more expensive product.

In this sense, support is needed from the European authorities to provide the European, creativity-driven fashion sector with **the tools it needs to communicate and promote the specific characteristics and strengths of its products in terms of sustainability and social responsibility**.

To help responsible brands articulate and promote the sustainability, quality, and social impact of their products, EFA calls for:

Funding for an EU research project aimed at establishing a method for assessing extrinsic sustainability

In its resolution of 1 June 2023 on an EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, the European Parliament called *“on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the policy framework on textiles takes a holistic view of durability, including both the physical and the emotional durability of textile products put on the market, which describes the garment design that takes into account long-term relevance and desirability to consumers, as clothing represents a cultural value.”*

The EFA fully endorses this request and calls for an EU-funded research project dedicated to establishing a method for evaluating extrinsic durability.

Context & Concerns

Recommendations

Only
27%

of the respondents to the «Status of European Fashion» survey indicated that they measured their own social sustainability impact.

Funding for an EU research project aimed at establishing a social labelling in fashion

EFA strongly believes that **social considerations are equally important as environmental ones** when communicating on the impact of a fashion product and should therefore be addressed with the same rigour. We therefore call for the funding of an EU research project dedicated to setting up the framework for fashion social labelling within the EU.

Such a project would also contribute to promoting European creative fashion as it would allow brands to promote their virtuous practices to consumers and strengthen their competitiveness against third-party players.

Establishing a truthful footprint data base for environmental impacts

Despite the efforts of dedicated fashion companies and brands, the European Textile Footprint Database remains unsatisfactory and far from meeting its intended goals. Beyond the urgent need to extend granularity, numerous ambiguities subsist among which:

- **Insufficient granularity:** The weak degree of granularity of the database, which obscures diversity of the industry and unfairly penalises high-quality products.
- **Biased comparisons:** The fact that the comparative impacts of natural and synthetic fibres are generally at the benefit of the latter, which can be obviously challenged.
- **Data inconsistencies:** Frequent and major differences with regards to the impact, for instance, of a given fabric between two databases.
- **High standard deviations:** The high degree of constant standard deviations, which questions the current evaluation of average values.
- The insufficient consideration of textile innovations.

There cannot be a viable environmental policy in such a harmful framework. Endorsing any private company, whatever its competences are, is far from being enough.

EFA **calls upon the European Public authorities to address these crucial topics and challenge public policy**. This effort should involve mobilising all stakeholders in the fashion sector—brands, manufacturers, and innovators—alongside academia and scientific institutions, ensuring that the expertise and resources needed to reform the database are fully leveraged.

Creation of a label for production within the EU

Today, the current criteria allowing to affix a “Made in” label if the product’s last substantial transformation has been carried out in one of the Member States can be misleading for consumers. A discussion on the revision of these criteria could be envisaged in the future, within the context of the Textile Labelling Regulation revision and in line with future requirements on traceability introduced by ESPR and through the DPP.

However, as a first step and without undermining the existing “Made in” for producers wishing to highlight national production, EFA is calling for the **creation of a specific label for products for which all design, craft and manufacturing elements of the production process (excluding fibre, fabric & trimmings) have taken place in the EU**, which could also be implemented in the future Textile Labelling Regulation.

This would be an effective way of promoting European fashion abroad, boosting competitiveness of EU fashion companies, and providing consumers with a guarantee that the goods have been made under responsible production conditions, in line with European standards, while highlighting the richness of each European production area.

64%

of the respondents to the «Status of European Fashion» survey believed that a «made in Europe» label could help reduce the fashion industry’s carbon footprint.

Incentivise Circular Behaviour at the Consumer Level

To help embed circularity into consumption habits, EFA encourages:

- **Implementation or expansion of repair bonuses**, similar to France’s *Bonus Réparation*, at EU or Member State level. These schemes reduce the cost of garment repairs for consumers and can be designed in partnership with certified repairers and circular fashion SMEs.
- **Support for local tailoring and mending services**, through subsidies, microgrants, or inclusion in national circular economy plans.
- **Promotion of circular practices**: reuse, repair, sort, recycle and educate about those. To date, for example, many fashion brands can come up against consumer unawareness when they want to highlight the specific features of their products such as ease of disassembly in the design process, as consumers are not aware of what it entails.
- **Education of consumers to reduce their return rates**

(06)

**Systemic support
to the creative
fashion industry**

Beyond targeted measures on sustainability, innovation, education or communication and distribution, many stakeholders highlighted the need for more systemic support to ensure that the EU-based creative fashion sector can grow and operate under fair and enabling conditions, including with regard to offensive third-country players.

This includes better visibility and coordination of existing support instruments at EU level, improved access to funding and programmes — particularly for SMEs — and stronger institutional cooperation between the European Fashion Alliance and EU bodies. It also calls for a strong **intellectual property protection** as well as strengthened **customs and market surveillance mechanisms** to safeguard creative assets, combat counterfeiting, and ensure fair competition within the Single Market. Addressing these horizontal challenges is essential to unlock the full potential of policy and funding measures already available and to ensure that they reach the companies and territories that need them most.

6.1 Understanding and Recognising the Economic Value of the Creative Fashion Sector

Context & Concerns

As a preamble to this section dedicated to systemic support to the creative fashion sector, it must be stated that, despite its cultural and economic value, the full economic weight and contribution to regional development, and employment of the creativity-driven segment of the EU fashion industry is likely underrecognised due to a lack of data. This lack of visibility can also limit the capacity of EU institutions to design tailored policy responses.

Recommendation

EFA calls for the **funding of a comprehensive economic study** dedicated to **mapping the creative fashion segment across the EU**, with a focus on:

- Turnover and business models of creative fashion companies
- Employment, including artisans and freelancers
- Export potential and market reach

This study would serve as a foundation for more targeted, effective policy support and reinforce the recognition of creativity-driven fashion as a strategic economic sector.

6.2 Supporting Companies and especially SMEs in Benefitting from Existing Measures

Throughout the interviews and research conducted for this report, EFA members expressed a common concern: **a lack of clarity and accessibility regarding the existing EU support schemes** available to the fashion sector. While some members have taken part in EU-funded initiatives at regional levels, the **fragmentation and limited visibility** of these programmes hinder their broader adoption and potential.

Centralised online information

Develop a dedicated EU-hosted webpage and downloadable guide listing all available support mechanisms for the fashion sector, clearly organised by theme and type of funding (innovation, sustainability, training, SME Fund for Intellectual Property etc.).

Strategic cooperation with EU services:

Establish a long-term collaboration between the EFA and relevant EU services to:

- Regularly review and promote programmes aligned with the needs of the creative fashion sector
- Adapt or co-design initiatives to better fit sector-specific challenges
- (See also: Fashion Hub below)

Simplification of and assistance in application procedures:

Introduce more SME-friendly application pathways to EU calls for proposals, including:

- Pre-filled templates and application kits
- Co-writing support or mentorship support from expert consultants
- Dedicated hotlines or helpdesks for small businesses with limited administrative capacity.

Context & Concerns

Recommendations

“

We strongly believe that there is a need for legislation that brings financial incentives to reduce fashion's footprint. If we are to achieve change on a large scale, we need a level playing field where businesses are affected more directly than now.

Denmark

6.3 Providing Strategic Funding and Tax Incentives for a Sustainable Fashion Industry

Context & Concerns

During the interviews, many members have expressed their wish for the EU to implement financial and tax measures **to enable the European-based creative fashion industry to remain competitive against third country-based players**, especially business models favouring high volumes and low prices at the expense of sustainability and human rights requirements.

Recommendations

Implement EU low interest loans and micro-financing credit guarantee schemes dedicated to small and medium scale, EU-based producers

To address SME's financing gaps, these financial instruments should specifically target independent brands artisans, working with local supply chains. EFA calls for policy measures aimed at vitalising the SMEs financial opportunities and alleviating their credit constraints, as the COSME Programme or the COSME Loan Guarantee Facility dedicated to digital transformation. Special attention should be given to SMEs from smaller / less developed markets.

Dedicated EU funds to support sustainable business models, including “pre-order” / “made-to-order” model – other sustainable business models based on criteria to be defined by EU authorities.

In connection with the eco-modulations under the future EPR schemes, consider taxes or penalties for fashion companies or products with low environmental qualities and, or bonuses for companies or products that exceed sustainability standards.

Differentiated taxes could help leverage the price-difference between ultra-fast-fashion and sustainable fashion products. The malus collected could also be used to finance actions to promote sustainability and innovation.

6.4 Strengthening Intellectual Property Protection in the Creative Fashion Sector

Intellectual property is a key part of the creative ecosystem in fashion. It protects the originality, reputation, and economic value of design and brand identity, from young designers and SMEs to established fashion houses. However, the sector faces growing challenges related to the expansion of online markets and appearance of new players infringing on intellectual property rights and offering counterfeiting goods. While the EU has already taken important steps in this regard, **it is crucial to continue strengthening IP protection frameworks in order to ensure fair competition, preserve cultural and creative value, and maintain Europe's global leadership in the field of fashion.** Besides, even though IP rights are key assets to fashion brands, their protection still represents a challenge for some stakeholders, both from an administrative and financial point of view. It is essential to pursue efforts in improving access to intellectual property protection.

Creation of a task force against counterfeit fashion, involving e-commerce platforms and in collaboration with EUIPO

Development of fashion-specific resources and interfaces in collaboration with EUIPO

Funding for AI-powered IP monitoring tools (*see above*).

Context & Concerns

Recommendations

6.5 Ensuring Fair Competition and Regulatory Coherence across the Single Market

Context & Concerns

The rise in low-value imports from third countries has exposed gaps in compliance and product safety controls. While EU producers must meet strict regulatory and sustainability standards, many third-country imports fail to comply with such norms due to effective custom controls. Stronger, risk-based customs enforcement is needed to ensure consumer protection and a fair level playing field between stakeholders.

Recommendation

Strengthen customs and market surveillance mechanisms for low-value imports

EFA welcomes the current discussions and regulatory initiatives on these issues and advocates for strong policy measures in this regard.

6.6 Adjusting De Minimis Rules for Creative Fashion SMEs

Context & Concerns

During the consultation process, concern was raised regarding the constraints imposed by the EU “de minimis” regulation on public support granted to creative fashion SMEs. While the de minimis framework offers a simplified procedure for granting small amounts of state aid, it can **limit the scope and duration of support** needed to effectively sustain creative and sustainable business models in the EU fashion sector.

By contrast, other cultural sectors — including theatre, music, and heritage — benefit from **specific exemptions under Article 53 of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)**, which allow public support to be granted without falling under the ceiling. Despite its clear cultural dimension, the **creative segment of the EU fashion industry is not explicitly recognised under these exemptions**, leaving creativity-driven fashion companies subject to stricter aid thresholds.

Recommendation

In light of these disparities, the European Fashion Alliance calls on the European Commission to:

Clarify the eligibility of fashion-related projects under the cultural exemptions of the GBER

Explore the possibility of including creative fashion (according to criteria to be defined with the EU authorities) in the scope of Article 53 in future revisions

Such a measure would ensure that **creative fashion receives the same recognition and regulatory flexibility as other cultural and creative sectors**, enabling Member States and EU institutions to more effectively support this segment of the industry.

6.7 Creating a European Fashion Hub for Creative Brands

Throughout this report, a number of key recommendations have highlighted the need for improved **access to information, tools, and tailored support** for creativity-driven fashion brands and especially SMEs. Whether regarding sustainability, compliance with evolving EU regulations, innovation adoption, or internationalisation, the same challenge emerges: resources often exist but remain **dispersed, fragmented, or difficult to access**.

To maximise the impact of these proposed measures, the European Fashion Alliance recommends the creation of a **centralised, digital support hub**: a single entry point designed **to integrate and implement several of the strategic actions outlined in this report**.

EFA proposes the creation of a **European Fashion Hub**: a digital and operational platform tailored to the needs of **creative fashion brands across the EU**.

The Hub would:

- *Centralise access to:*
 - EU and national support schemes
 - Regulatory guidance
 - Tools for sustainability, innovation, and business aspects
- *Offer tailored support services:*
 - Open-access toolkits and checklists
 - Access to consultancy or mentoring programmes
 - Educational content and training modules
 - Assistance in applications to EU programs
- *Foster visibility and collaboration:*
 - Matchmaking and networking within the ecosystem
 - Showcasing best practices and EU-wide events
 - Promoting Europe's creative fashion identity and values.

This Hub could be developed in partnership with the European Commission and relevant stakeholders, and would act as a **key structural enabler** for ensuring the success and scalability of the recommendations formulated in this report.

Context & Concerns

Recommendations

“

Education is a question of change management where policymakers can support in providing open-source training. The content must be adapted to different types of companies in terms of size, supply chain organisation, commercialisation, etc., in order to create a real impact.

France

(07)

Strengthening the whole value chain

The competitiveness, resilience, and sustainability of the European creative fashion industry not only rely on fashion brands but also on the entire value chain.

To support this systemic perspective, it is essential to reinforce the ecosystem in which creative fashion companies operate. This includes facilitating access to responsible materials for small-scale producers, preserving and modernising artisanal and manufacturing know-how across Europe, and promoting more transparent, traceable, and fair supply chains, both within the EU and through partnerships with trusted third-country suppliers. By strengthening each link in the value chain, the EU can create the conditions for a more competitive, circular, and culturally rich fashion system ecosystem.

7.1 Supporting Manufacturers and Artisans

Context & Concerns

Small manufacturers or traditional craft practitioners are integral to the excellence of European creative fashion. It is thus essential for European production to keep on relying on the know-how of small artisans, in order for those timeless techniques to be perpetuated. However, many of these stakeholders operate, with limited visibility to date.

Recommendations

Funding for manufacturing SMEs and artisans:

- Provide direct funding to support the **digitisation of artisan businesses**, including website development and online sales tools
- Fund the creation of a **European database or platform showcasing artisanal know-how and techniques**, promoting cultural heritage, and facilitating market access.

7.2 Enabling Better Access to Materials for Producers of Small Volumes

A major barrier identified by many EFA members, particularly SMEs and independent designers, lies in the difficulty of sourcing materials in small quantities. The current structure of the textile supply chain tends to favour large-scale buyers, creating systemic disadvantages for small and medium-sized fashion companies:

- **Minimum Order Quantities** (MOQs) set by suppliers are often too high for small production runs, particularly for certified sustainable or innovative materials
- **Smaller orders come with higher prices**, leading to a cost imbalance between small and large players
- Suppliers often prioritise large clients, which leads to longer lead times or even supply refusals for smaller brands
- These conditions **limit the capacity of brands to produce only small volumes of products and avoid overproduction**, despite their strong commitment to sustainable practices

Context & Concerns

Recommendations

To overcome this structural imbalance, the following measures are proposed:

Funding for a platform listing certified suppliers of sustainable materials available within the EU (see 01, Sustainability)

Subsidies or grants for small-batch sourcing

- Provide **financial support for companies to offset the additional costs** incurred when purchasing materials in small volumes
- Encourage national governments or the EU to **introduce vouchers or partial reimbursements for sourcing materials** at higher per-unit prices.

Encourage cross-border cooperation between EU Member States to connect material producers and small fashion brands across regions

Incentivising suppliers who:

- Offer smaller MOQs to European designers
- Prioritise sustainable materials for diversified buyers
- Create specific product lines or catalogues for small brands.

7.3 Encouraging Responsible Sourcing In and Beyond Europe

Context & Concerns

While production in Europe remains a central pillar of the EFA's vision, the reality of the global textile supply chain means that a significant portion of raw materials used in European fashion continues to be sourced from outside the EU. This presents ongoing challenges in terms of traceability, transparency, and alignment with European environmental and social standards.

At the same time, there is a clear opportunity, and need, to strengthen the EU's own raw material production capacity through the support of **sustainable and regenerative agriculture**, particularly for fibres such as flax and hemp. These local supply chains are not only environmentally preferable but also contribute to the resilience and sovereignty of European fashion.

Recommendations

Tax incentives for EU farmers producing low-impact fibres

Introduce tax breaks and financial support for farmers cultivating sustainable fibres such as flax and hemp, especially those using regenerative agricultural practices.

Responsible International Partnerships

- Support partnerships between European fashion companies and third-country producers of raw materials who demonstrate high environmental and social standards
- Facilitate EU-supported traceability initiatives and capacity-building programmes in producer countries to reinforce ethical sourcing and mutual benefits.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The above-mentioned recommendations are summarised in the table below. Each recommendation is accompanied by a proposed type of EU-level action, indicating the most relevant instrument the European Commission could mobilise for its implementation:

- **Legislative or regulatory initiative**
- **Integration into existing EU Programmes**
- **Launch of EU pilot programme or platform**
- **Strategic guidance / soft law**
- **Research, awareness, or communication action**

Where applicable, relevant EU programmes have also been suggested, though the final allocation and implementation would ultimately fall under the Commission's discretion.

Address the Barriers in Sourcing Sustainable Materials

LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY INITIATIVE

Allow for reduced VAT rates for certified sustainable materials

LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY INITIATIVE

Introduce strong and reliable EU certifications for sustainable materials and final products

LAUNCH OF EU PILOT PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM

Create a platform listing certified sustainable material suppliers across the EU

Expected Results

- Shortened supply chains
- Enhanced use of sustainable materials in fashion products
- Improved competitiveness of EU fashion companies

PRIORITY ●●●

1

Support and Promote the Implementation of Sustainable Practices

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
STRATEGIC GUIDANCE / SOFT LAW	Provide open-resource content and checklists on sustainability		●●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Provide consultancy vouchers for SMEs	SMP, Creative Europe, ESF+	●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Provide financial support for SMEs to access sustainability certifications	SMP, Creative Europe, LIFE	●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Support sustainable fashion fairs and other sustainability events	Creative Europe, COSME, SMP	●●

Expected Results

- Enhanced use of sustainable materials in fashion products
- Accelerated transition towards sustainable business models

Improve the Accessibility and Implementation of Innovation Tools

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Provide grants for SMEs to access, and implement technologies like LCA, DPP, blockchain	Horizon Europe, Digital Europe Programme, SMP	●●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Create training programmes co-developed with tech experts on innovation tools	Erasmus+ , Digital Europe Programme, SMP	●
LAUNCH OF EU PILOT PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM	Create and promote mentorship programmes linking large companies with SMEs	SMP, COSME, Creative Europe	●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Create and promote partnerships between academia and industry	Horizon Europe, Erasmus+ , Creative Europe	●
LAUNCH OF EU PILOT PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM	Develop “SME-friendly” versions of complex tech tools	Digital Europe Programme, Horizon Europe	●●●

Expected Results

- Enhanced regulatory compliance
- Increased transfer of knowledge
- Enhanced transparency and traceability along the value chain
- Reduced technical and financial barriers
- Support the industry in meeting competitiveness objectives, as pursued by the Commission

Introduce Fashion- or Creative Industry-Specific R&D Incentives Schemes

INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES

Introduce fashion- or creative industry-specific R&D incentives schemes, such as targeted tax credits or dedicated funding schemes

EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)

Horizon Europe, SMP, EIC programme

PRIORITY ●●●

●●

Expected Results

- Boosting innovation while preserving the creativity and expertise inherent to the sector
- Support the sector’s innovative transition while enabling it to remain at the forefront of global trends

Develop Innovation in the
Fight against Counterfeiting
and the Protection of IP Rights

LAUNCH OF EU PILOT
PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM

Fund AI powered IP monitoring tools

EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)

PRIORITY ●●●

Horizon Europe, Digital Europe EUIPO

●●

Expected Results

- Reduced circulation of counterfeit fashion goods and IP infringements
- Improved enforcement efficiency for IP rights holders, lowering legal and administrative costs
- Increased consumer trust
- Fairer and more transparent digital markets

Address the Skills Shortage – Training Future Talents in Fashion

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
RESEARCH, AWARENESS, OR COMMUNICATION ACTION	Launch campaigns to promote fashion careers		●●
LAUNCH OF EU PILOT PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM	Implement mandatory sustainability modules in fashion curricula	Erasmus + Horizon Europe	●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Subsidise training and reskilling programmes for fashion professionals	Erasmus+ ESF+	●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Develop cross-disciplinary learning (design / business / sustainability)	Erasmus + Horizon Europe	●●

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
LAUNCH OF EU PILOT PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM	Create and promote professional-academic exchange programmes	Erasmus+	●●
LAUNCH OF EU PILOT PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM	EU co-funding for vocational certifications and schools	ESF+ Erasmus+	●●
LAUNCH OF EU PILOT PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM	Launch programme to preserve and modernise textile craftsmanship know-how	ESF+ Erasmus+	●●●
LAUNCH OF EU PILOT PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM	Promote cross-border mobility for apprenticeship	ESF+ Erasmus+	●

Expected Results

- Strengthened and reskilled European fashion industry
- Preservation of traditional know-how and techniques

Address the Lack of Knowledge on Regulations

STRATEGIC GUIDANCE /
SOFT LAW

Create and provide regulatory compliance
checklists for companies

EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)

PRIORITY ●●●

●●●

INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING
EU PROGRAMMES

Provide open-access resources, create and provide
webinars and training materials on regulations

SMP, Erasmus+, COSME

●●●

Expected Results

- Enhanced regulatory compliance
- Reduced financial and administrative burden for companies
- Achieving the objectives of the European Commission’s Better Regulation strategy

Support Digital Presence and E-commerce Capabilities

INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES

Provide grants for website development, online marketing

EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)

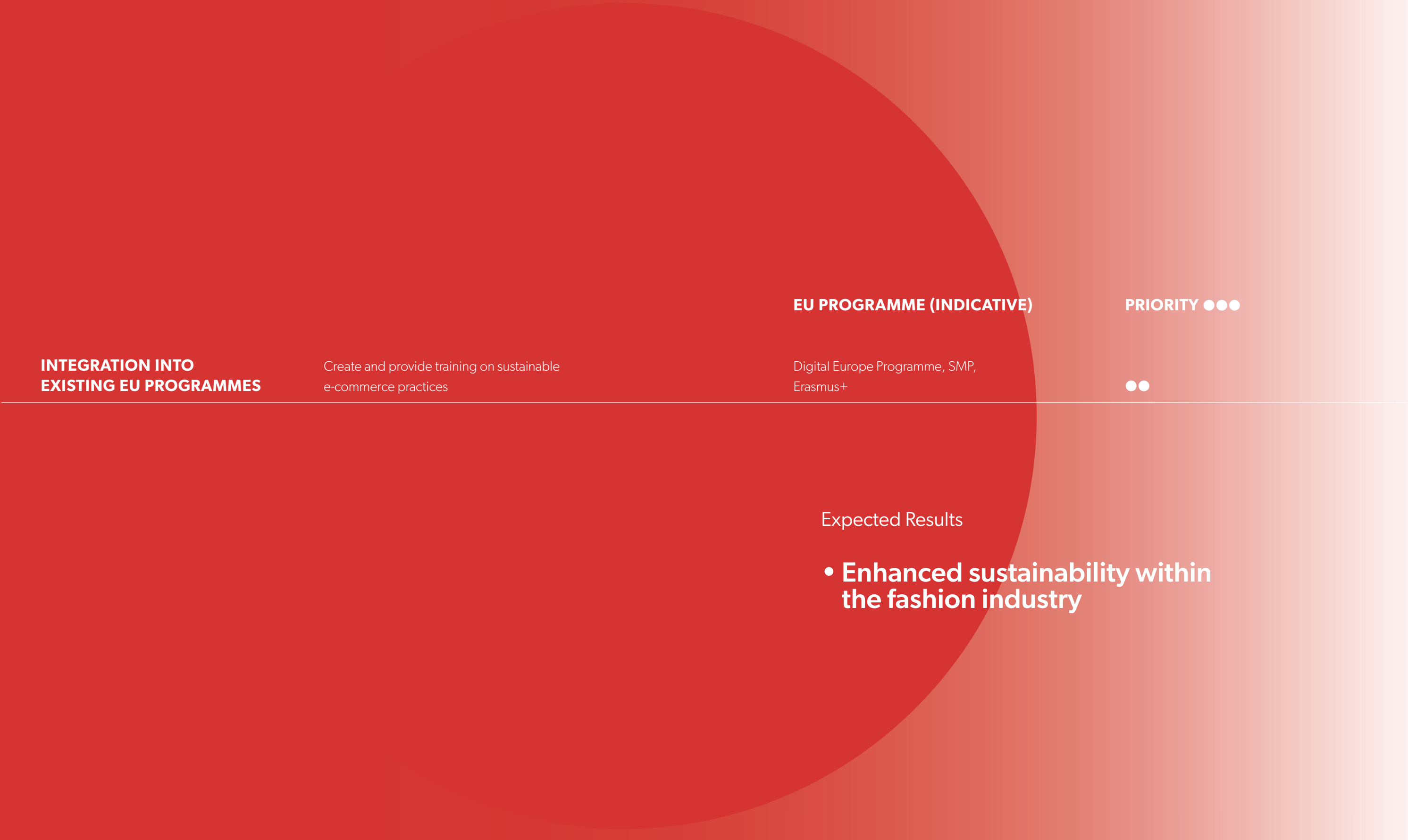
Digital Europe Programme, COSME, Horizon Europe

PRIORITY ●●●

●●●

Expected Results

- Development of a responsible EU fashion sector
- Strengthened competitiveness of the European creative fashion industry
- Improved digital visibility and market reach for responsible fashion brands



Support the Professionalisation and Internationalisation of Fashion Brands

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Provide grants for participation in international trade fairs and showrooms	Creative Europe, SMP, COSME, EIC Community	●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Subsidise travel and promotion packages for brands from smaller markets to attend professional events in bigger markets	SMP, ESF+, Creative Europe	●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Subsidise mentoring and cross-border networking programmes	SMP, Erasmus+, COSME, EEN	●
LAUNCH OF EU PILOT PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM	Create and promote professional networking events across the EU	SMP, Creative Europe, COSME	●●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Provide vouchers for consultancy services on international sales and exports or access to dedicated services within the EU	SMP, COSME	●●●

Expected Results

- Development and internationalisation of responsible EU brands
- Strengthened competitiveness and visibility of the European creative fashion industry
- Enhanced export capacity and market readiness for EU companies

Promote Responsible Digital Marketing Practices

EU LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY INITIATIVE

Provide a EU-harmonised framework for digital marketing practices

EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)

PRIORITY ●●●

●●●

Expected Results

- Reduce compliance confusion
- Enhance consumer trust
- Create a fair and accountable digital advertising environment

Raising Awareness towards Consumers

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
RESEARCH, AWARENESS, OR COMMUNICATION ACTION	Organise awareness campaigns on the environmental and social impact of fashion		●●●
RESEARCH, AWARENESS, OR COMMUNICATION ACTION	Support the visibility of EU fashion		●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Organise public workshops and educational events on circular practices	LIFE, Erasmus+, Creative Europe	●●

Expected Results

- Better consumption habits
- Decline in ultra-fast fashion consumption
- Reduction of textile waste
- A stronger “Made in Europe” fashion industry

STRATEGIC GUIDANCE /
SOFT LAW

Introduce modules on the impact of fashion in
school programs

EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)

PRIORITY ●●●

●●

Expected Results

- Increased early-stage awareness and a cultural shift toward more responsible and sustainable fashion choices

Providing the European Creative Fashion Sector with Adequate Tools to Promote the specific Characteristics of its products

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
RESEARCH, AWARENESS, OR COMMUNICATION ACTION	Launch an EU research project aimed at establishing a method to assess extrinsic durability		●●●
RESEARCH, AWARENESS, OR COMMUNICATION ACTION	Launch an EU research project aimed at establishing a social labelling system in fashion		●●●
LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY INITIATIVE	Establish a reliable and transparent EU Textile Footprint Database		●●●
LEGISLATIVE OF REGULATORY INITIATIVE	Create a label for production within the EU		●●

Expected Results

- Enhanced consumer awareness
- Promotion and strengthening of responsible EU fashion
- Reduction of ultra-fast-fashion consumption
- Increased accountability of the fashion sector

Incentivise circular behaviour at consumer level

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
LEGISLATIVE OF REGULATORY INITIATIVE	Implement repair bonus schemes		●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Subsidise tailoring and mending services	ESF+, SMP, LIFE	●
RESEARCH, AWARENESS, OR COMMUNICATION ACTION	Organise awareness campaigns to promote circular practices		●●
RESEARCH, AWARENESS OR COMMUNICATION ACTION	Educate consumers on return rates		●

Expected Results

- Enhanced circularity – reduction of textile waste
- Increased lifespan and durability of products

**RESEARCH, AWARENESS OR
COMMUNICATION ACTION**

Fund a comprehensive economic study on the
creative fashion segment

EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)

PRIORITY ●●●

●●

Expected Results

- **Better understanding of the sector**
- **Better targeted support**

Support Companies in Benefitting from Existing Measures

	EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
STRATEGIC GUIDANCE / SOFT LAW	Centralise EU information on support mechanisms	●●●
STRATEGIC GUIDANCE / SOFT LAW	Establish strategic cooperation between EFA and EU services	●●●
STRATEGIC GUIDANCE / SOFT LAW	Simplify and support application processes for EU funding and programs	●●●

Expected Results

- Better access to already existing EU programmes
- Strengthened EU fashion industry

Strategic Funding and Tax Incentives for Sustainable Fashion Industry

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Implement low-interest loans and credit-guarantee schemes for small and medium scale EU-based producers	SMP, InvestEU, ESF+, COSME	●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Create dedicated EU funds to support sustainable business models	LIFE, SMP, Horizon Europe	●●
LEGISLATIVE OF REGULATORY INITIATIVE	Implement eco-modulated taxes and bonuses under EPR frameworks		●●

Expected Results

- Strengthened sustainable EU fashion industry
- Development of sustainable business models

Strengthen Intellectual Property Protection in the Creative Fashion Sector

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
LAUNCH OF EU PILOT PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM	Creation of a task force against counterfeit fashion, involving e-commerce platforms and in collaboration with EUIPO	EUIPO	●●
STRATEGIC GUIDANCE / SOFT LAW	Development of fashion-specific resources and interfaces in collaboration with EUIPO	EUIPO	●●

Expected Results

- Address the growing challenges and threats of online markets and counterfeting
- Support EU creatives brands in protecting their essential IP assets

Ensure Fair Competition and Regulatory Coherence across the Single Market

LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY INITIATIVE

Strengthen customs and market surveillance mechanisms for low-value imports

EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)

PRIORITY ●●●

●●

Expected Results

- **Fairer competition between EU-based and third-country producers**
- **Increased compliance with EU product safety and sustainability standards**
- **Reduced entry of non-compliant or unsafe goods into the EU market**
- **Improved consumer protection and trust in the Single Market**

Adjusting De Minimis Rules for Creative Fashion SMEs

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY INITIATIVE	Clarify the eligibility of fashion-related projects under the cultural exemptions of the GBER		●●
LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY INITIATIVE	Consider including creative in the scope of Article 53		●

Expected Results

- Recognise the cultural dimension of the creative fashion sector
- Expand the scope and duration of the EU support to creative fashion SMEs

**LAUNCH OF EU PILOT
PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM**

Create a European Fashion Hub for creative brands

EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)

SMP, COSME, Creative Europe, Digital
Europe Programme

PRIORITY ●●●

●●●

Expected Results

- **Centralisation of EU support measures – efficiency gain**
- **Enhanced impact through a single EU-wide entry point**
- **Strengthened creative EU Fashion industry**

Support Manufacturers and Artisans

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Provide direct funding for digitalisation and visibility of manufacturers and artisans	SMP, Digital Europe, Creative Europe	●
LAUNCH OF EU PILOT PROGRAMME OR PLATFORM	Create a platform to showcase European artisanal know-how	Creative Europe, SMP, Digital Europe	●

Expected Results

- Strengthened creative EU fashion industry
- Enhanced production in Europe
- Preservation of traditional know-how and techniques

Enable Access to Materials For Producers of Small Volumes

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Provide subsidies for small-batch sourcing of sustainable materials	SMP, LIFE, COSME	●●
INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING EU PROGRAMMES	Provide financial incentives for suppliers to lower MOQs and offer small-brand product lines	SMP, LIFE, COSME	●●

Expected Results

- Development of sustainable business models
- Strengthened EU SMEs

Encourage Responsible Sourcing in and beyond Europe

		EU PROGRAMME (INDICATIVE)	PRIORITY ●●●
LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATORY INITIATIVE	Introduce tax breaks for EU farmers producing low-impact fibres		●
STRATEGIC GUIDANCE / SOFT LAW	Promote EU-backed partnerships with responsible third-country suppliers		●

Expected Results

- Enhanced use of sustainable materials in fashion products
- Enhanced responsible production
- Greater traceability

APPENDIX

Participating Members

Asociación de Creadores de Moda Española
Austrian Fashion Association
Bulgarian Fashion Association
Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana
Council of Irish Fashion Designers
Czech Fashion Council
Estonian Academy of Arts
Fashion Council Germany
Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode
Finnish Textiles & Fashion
Flanders DC
Icelandic Fashion Council
ModaLisboa
Slovak Fashion Council
State of Fashion
Wallonie Bruxelles Design Mode

IMPRINT

November 2025

All data in the tables and charts are the copyrighted property of the European Fashion Alliance.

This report is published exclusively by the European Fashion Alliance and may not be published or distributed without its prior written permission.

The modelling and results presented here are based on the survey results as well as on the interviews with industry experts relied upon by the European Fashion Alliance in preparing the report and forecasts. Any subsequent revisions or updates to this data will affect the assessments and forecasts presented.

If you have any further questions, please contact:

European Fashion Alliance e.V.
Meinekestr. 12
10719 Berlin | Germany
info@europeanfashionalliance.org
www.europeanfashionalliance.org

Study & Report Lead:

Salomé Roch
salome.roch@gmail.com

