

# Fashion CEO Agenda – Policy Gaps and Opportunities

## Smart Material Choices

19 May 2021, 15.30-16.05 CEST

Following the launch of the Fashion CEO Agenda 2021<sup>1</sup> on 12 May, Global Fashion Agenda takes a closer look at each of the five priorities set forth to discuss how policy potentially can support the further activation of each priority. Full draft programme available [here](#).

### Priority context

The material mix is one of the biggest drivers of a fashion brand's environmental footprint and comes with implications for climate change, waste and biodiversity. Across segments it can determine up to two thirds of a brand's impact on water, energy and land use, as well as its air emissions and waste.

Deciphering the environmental, social and ethical impact of raw materials is necessary to guide action but remains a complex undertaking. The picture is muddled further by the diversity of calculation methods applied. There is a general lack of data on the environmental impact across all fibre types and debates on how to weigh the different trade-offs within existing fibres remain.

### Policy Gaps and Opportunities

Governments and consumer need to be factored into how to best guide action and drive impact. Consumers should have access to and fully comprehend the impacts of a product, material, or technology through accurate, comparable and reliable information.

Policy makers can help streamline this by **supporting a common methodological approach** for environmental footprint impact assessment. The Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) and the associated PEF Category Rules (PEFCRs) is the methodology put forward by the European Commission with the intention to become a common approach to "assess, display and benchmark the environmental performance of products, services and companies" across the EU.

Additionally, a major innovation push is necessary to improve existing materials and to develop new materials that are less resource intensive. Compared to other industries such as pharma and food, **government funding for material science research in fashion and textile** is minimal and policy makers can help change this. Recent years have seen encouraging **developments around a more sustainable material mix in collections**. Policy makers can **incentivise and stimulate the scaling** of such efforts and push for a more robust database for the environmental impact of new fibres and virtuous agricultural practices.

**Focus of the discussions: Policy action is most needed in the deployment of a common methodology that measures the environmental performance of materials to ensure the comparability of claims on the environmental performance of products, which can also serve as the foundation for directing further material science research and innovation.**

### Main related legal conversations

- The PEFCRs for Apparel and Footwear are under development and will be delivered by the end of 2022
- As part of the 2020 EU Circular Economy Action Plan:
  - o [Sustainable Products Policy Initiative](#) (Q4 2021)
  - o [Substantiating Green Claims Initiative](#) (Q4 2021)
  - o [EU Textile Strategy](#) (Q3 2021)

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<sup>1</sup> The *Fashion CEO Agenda* is a guide to what every CEO in fashion needs to prioritise to future-proof their company. The publication outlines the most pressing issues and the biggest opportunities for environmental and social impact and provides guidance on how to move from words to action. Priorities include: Respectful and Secure Work Environments, Better Wage Systems, Circular Systems, Efficient Use of Resources and Smart Material Choices.

- [Empowering consumers for the green transition](#) (Q4 2021)

#### **Speakers**

- Introduction: Claire Bergkamp, COO; Q&A: Ashley Gill, Director of Standards, Textile Exchange
- Paola Migliorini, Deputy Head of Unit. Sustainable Production, Products, and Consumption. DG Environment. European Commission
- Baptiste Carrière-Pradal, Chair, Policy Hub- Circularity for Apparel and Footwear
- Nellie Lindeborg, Assortment Sustainability Responsible, H&M Group
- Krishna Manda, Senior Manager Sustainability Integration Corporate sustainability, Lenzing
- Moderator: Lars Fogh Mortensen, Consumption, Products and Plastics Expert, European Environment Agency