

Social Dialogue Textile & Clothing: Work Programme 2021 - 2022

Brussels, 16 December 2020

Introduction

The European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in the Textile & Clothing industries was established in the early 90's. It is the structured dialogue forum between workers, represented by industriAll European trade union (industriAll Europe), and employers, represented by Euratex. The SSDC is supported by the European Commission and facilitates joint discussions on key topics (e.g. international trade and skills) and has led to joint work including an EU funded project to establish a CSR risk assessment tool.

The European Social Partners intend to continue this fruitful cooperation and set out common areas of interest in this Work Programme (2021-2022).

Key areas of interest 2021- 2022

The European Social Partners plan to follow a range of topics (listed below) and will decide on possible joint-work as required on an ad-hoc basis.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the European textiles and clothing sector. The closure of retail stores in various Member States during national lockdown(s) and stoppages in some industrial sectors, such as the automotive sector, resulted in cancellations of order and drops in production. However, opportunities also arose for example in developing PPE, especially masks and gowns. The TCLF sectors social partners (including CEC and Cotance) signed a [TCLF Social Partners Joint Statement on COVID-19](#) in July 2020.

The social partners will:

- **Continue to monitor the progress of the main areas identified in the TCLF Social Partners Joint Statement.**
- **Continue to call for the strong recovery of the sector at a national and European level.**

EU Textiles Strategy

The European Commission's proposed **EU Textiles Strategy** (expected Q3/Q4 2021) will be a focal point for the social partners' work in 2021-2022. This strategy will be a critical opportunity to set a forward-looking framework for our industry, based on sustainability, innovation and skills, and global competitiveness.

The social partners will:

- **Continue to work closely with the Commission ahead of the release of the EU Textiles Strategy and will take part in consultations, hearings and expert groups as required.**
- **Discuss the strategy bilaterally and will undertake joint action(s) on an ad-hoc basis as needed.**

Areas of interest

The social partners have identified various areas of interest and will discuss these issues and agree on potential joint action (e.g. statements, letters, events, campaigns or projects) as required.

Industrial Policy

The social partners support the need for a strong European industrial policy which allows the European textiles and clothing sector to remain competitive in the face of fierce international competition. The social partners will follow relevant files including the **New EU Industrial Policy Strategy** (Q2 2021) and the **EU Textiles Strategy** (Q3/Q4 2021).

Trade Policy

Fair international trade is a key issue for the social partners and all relevant trade issues will be followed including monitoring the **negotiations of EU trade agreements** (ongoing) and reviewing the Commission's draft proposal on **GSP Regulation (2021)**.

Sustainability Policy

The social partners will continue to monitor European discussions and files in relation to sustainability including the **Circular Economy Action Plan** (and the future EU Textiles Strategy), the **Action Plan on Critical Raw Materials** and all relevant initiatives included in the **European Green Deal**.

Skills & Innovation

Social issues, including the importance of attracting young people to the sector and identifying and tackling skills gaps (including digital and green skills) remain important topics. The social partners will continue their engagement with the **Skills4Smart TCLF Industries 2030** project and their work on a potential **EU Pact for Skills** for the TCLF sectors.

Furthermore, promoting innovation in the textiles industry, as a means to create more sustainable jobs (i.e. "green" and competitive jobs) will be a priority.