

## RESET Press Release

### **New collaborative project promises to clean-up Europe's textile and clothing industry**

A new project has been launched which promises to introduce a wide range of new and effective solutions to the growing problem of environmental pollution created by the manufacturing of textiles and clothing around the world.

The 'RESET' project, which is funded by the EU's Interreg Programme involves partners from Europe's top ten textile manufacturing regions who will identify the best new environmentally friendly processes and integrate them into each of the regions' development plans.

Daniela Toccafondi, Alderman for Economic development of the City of Prato, that is leading the consortium, conveys the following message on the project: "Business sustainability is becoming the most important objective of the Textile and Clothing industry. Beyond the economic factors, critical to the success of any business, many companies are now also considering the financial impact from environmental and social issues. Innovative business strategies try to find the right balance of investment and benefits across the 'people, planet and profit' aspects of sustainability. Networking between regional and local authorities, T&C clusters, R&D centres and other stakeholders is an essential part of the transition to a more sustainable future. The RESET project aims to contribute to the efforts of the textile and clothing industry in this direction by sharing experiences across the European Union that have succeeded in linking technological evolution of products and processes with a more sustainable approach to the market, enfolding ecological, safety, ethical, social and economic values. By combining forces, sharing resources and raising awareness amongst the various actors and stakeholders of the T&C value chain, we believe that socially responsible and environmentally friendly production can become the main strength of the European textile and clothing industry in the near future."

Speaking at the launch of the project in Prato, Italy Mr. Bill Macbeth from Textile Centre of Excellence said, "The textile and clothing industry is still a massive part of Europe's economy, employing nearly 2 million people. UK and European manufacturers produce goods at the very top end of the market and it is the quality of our products that differentiate us from the rest of the world. And yet it is reported that ours is the second most polluting industry on the planet after oil, and that, for instance it takes 2,700 litres of water to produce just one T shirt and one pair of jeans.

When you realise that over 2 billion pairs of jeans are produced every year, that 85% of clothing ends up in landfill and that 10% of all garments manufactured around the world are never sold, never worn and go straight into landfill then you start to understand the scale of the challenge we are facing".

The project will identify the most successful and commercial approaches in a number of key areas from around the world, including garment recycling and waste disposal, water consumption and energy saving, reducing the use of chemicals and the use of natural fibres. Mr Macbeth added, "this



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

is a tremendously important project. It's not about trying out new approaches, it's about identifying and sharing the practices that have been shown to be most effective, both environmentally and commercially. That will be crucial for the future of our sector globally. It's not just about being greener, it's also about recognising that customers are becoming much more discerning when they choose what they wear. Where things are made and how they are made is becoming more important to consumers. We need to identify and implement that best practice if our industry is going to prosper in the future. This important project is going to help us to do that".

For more information on the RESET project contact the Lead partner, Municipality of Prato at:  
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## Notes for Editors

RESET is an Interreg Europe funded project which aims to change the way European Structural Fund policies and programmes are implemented in the projects partners' regions. Its key objective is to improve policy instruments in order to promote a more sustainable approach to the production processes and product development in the EU's textile and clothing sector. This means supporting policy improvement and capacity building in the partners' regions leading to the creation, management and enhancement of Research and Development and Innovation infrastructures, in order to develop greener and more sustainable textile and clothing products and processes. These include the promotion of ecological, safety, ethical, social and economic values which will distinguish the products of partner regions' companies from those of their competitors, who continue to base their competitive strategy on cost reduction and market price.

Textile and clothing accounts for 4% of the total added value of EU manufacturing. The sector in Europe includes 173,000 companies with a turnover of €165 billion. The sector still employs more than 1.87 million people in the EU. While it is a mature sector, its competitiveness is linked to increased investment in innovation and research, both public and private. While this has traditionally been in terms of productivity, product innovation and technology development, more recently the focus has shifted towards new drivers such as sustainability and environmentally friendly production, due to the significant impact textile and clothing production has on the environment.

The sector consumes high levels of raw materials and natural resources such as fibres, water, energy and chemicals. At each stage of production vast amounts of energy, water and chemicals are used. In turn, textiles and clothing production generates air, water and soil pollution through often untreated effluent disposal and waste generation, which has a big impact on the environment.

Ideally information about sustainable solutions developed and adopted by textile and clothing companies in other regions should be widely available along with effective measures to revitalise the sector through sustainable products and processes,. Informing both stakeholders and policy makers about existing good practices and solutions would allow those solutions to be adopted in other regions.

The RESET project is exploiting the learning potential arising from interregional exchange between the partners to share and promote take up of best practice. It supports excellence in Research and Development, promoting investment by businesses in the sector, developing the skills of textile and clothing sector stakeholders and allowing a greater integration of the Research and Development policies that impact on the sector's sustainability. It addresses 6 key themes:

- Recycling in textile and waste disposal
- Water consumption and energy saving, sustainable company organisations
- New sustainable chemistry, including reduction of chemical substances
- Smart textiles and new ways of production
- Eco-creativity, natural fibres, short value chains
- New materials and new applications

Each partner will develop an Action Plan to ensure that the lessons learned from the project are acted upon and good practices deployed within regional policies. The plans will provide details on how policy instruments are to be improved in each region, indicating the actions, timeframe, players, possible costs and funding sources to implement them. They will be designed in collaboration with the partners' stakeholders in order to strengthen common ownership and will be embedded into the participating regions' National and Structural Fund Programmes with the aim of significantly reducing the environmental impact of textile and clothing production across Europe whilst increasing the competitiveness of the sector.

**Project partners:**

MUNICIPALITY OF PRATO – ITALY

NEXT TECHNOLOGY TECNOTESSILE - ITALY

LODZKIE REGION – POLAND

CLUTEX – CLUSTER TECHNICAL TEXTILES – CZECH REPUBLIC

TEXTILE RESEARCH INSTITUTE AITEX – SPAIN

TEXTILE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE – UNITED KINGDOM

SAXON TEXTILE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (STFI) - GERMANY

TECHNOLOGICAL CENTRE FOR TEXTILE AND CLOTHING OF PORTUGAL (CITEVE) – PORTUGAL

NATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE FOR TEXTILES AND LEATHER – ROMÂNIA

CENTRE OF EUROPEAN TEXTILE INNOVATION – FRANCE

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