

## 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.

The UK's RESET operation is being led by Bill Macbeth, the Managing Director of the Textile Centre of Excellence located in Huddersfield Yorkshire. Speaking at the launch of the project in Prato, Italy Mr. Macbeth 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 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 Textile Centre at [info@textilehouse.com](mailto:info@textilehouse.com)

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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.

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