

## End Textile waste

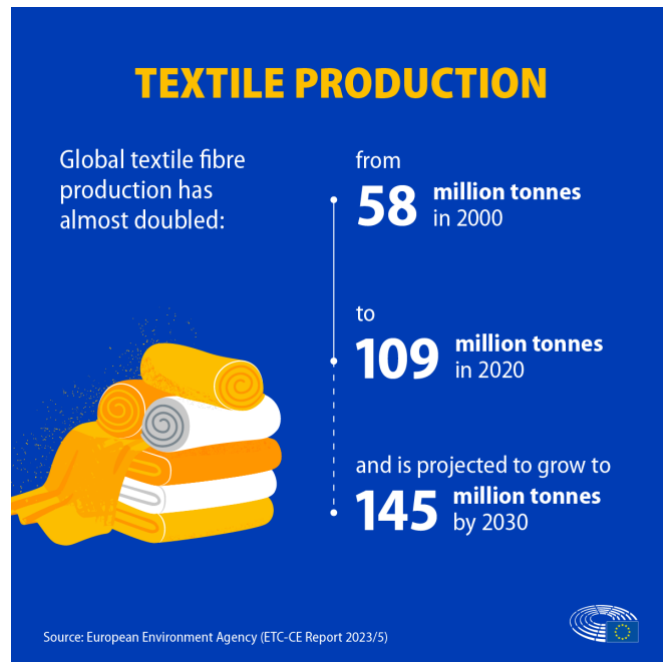
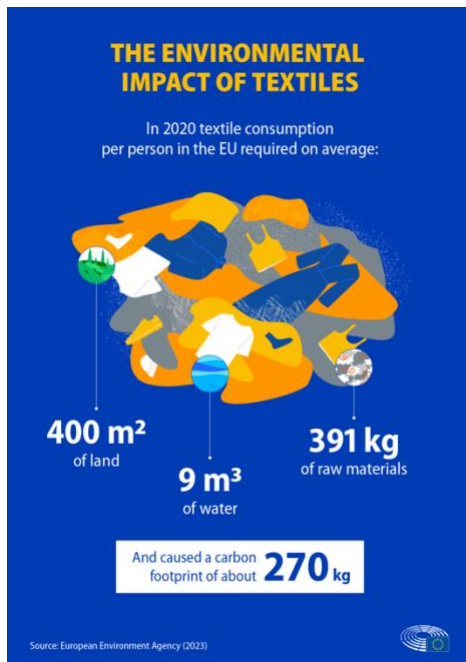
How clothing impacts climate change

Clothes cause 35% of the microplastics in our environment. We need more awareness of the impact of synthetic clothes and what we can do about it.

In the EndPlasticSoup Platform meetings in April and June we had presentations from Precious Dogbatse from Ghana about Secondhand clothes in Ghana, and from Lilian Merckx, of our Ambassador Club RC Bruxelles Amitié about how clothing impacts climate change.

## Waste created by Textile Facts & Figure

- Global textile fibre production has almost doubled from 58 million tonnes in 2000 to 109 million tonnes in 2020, and projected to grow to 145 million tonnes by 2030.
- 50% clothes is synthetic, the Chinese brand SHEIN has about 40% of the market, most clothes are almost 'single use'.
- The rise of fast fashion has been crucial in the increase in consumption, driven partly by social media and the industry bringing fashion trends to more consumers at a faster pace than in the past.
- On average Europeans use nearly 26 kilos of textiles and discard about 11 kilos of them every year.
- In Netherlands an average person buys 46 clothes every year (not including underwear and socks) and discards 40. In 2030 a growth of 63% is expected, equivalent to 500 mio T-shirts.
- Used clothes can be exported outside the EU, but are mostly (87%) incinerated or landfilled.
- Less than 50% used clothes are collected for reuse and recycling, **only 1% is recycled to new clothes.**
- Destination of secondhand clothes: Guatemala, Chile, India, Ghana. 15 mio pieces of discarded clothing come into Ghana every week.



Source: European Environment Agency

## Impact of textile on our environment

- **Overconsumption of natural resources:**  
We have an overconsumption of natural resources: an estimated 2700 liters of fresh water is required to make 1 T-shirt, the same as one person drinking needs for 2.5 year.
- **Water pollution:**  
Textile production is estimated to be responsible for 20% responsible of clean water pollution.
- **Microplastics:**  
A single laundry of polyester clothes can discharge 700,000 Micro Plastic fibres. More than half a Million Tonnes of Micro Plastics finish on the bottom of the ocean.
- **Health and biodiversity:**  
Garment production and the microplastics in the air, soil and water have a devastating impact on the health of local People, Animals and Ecosystem.
- **Greenhouse gas emissions:**  
The fashion industry is estimated to be responsible for 10% of Global Gas Emissions, more than International Flights and Maritime shipping combined.

## Textile waste



Source: European Environment Agency

### Microplastics:

- 35% microplastics come from clothes
- 28% from car tires
- 26% from city dust (including cigarette filters and personal care products)

Source: <https://www.plasticsoupfoundation.org/en/plastic-facts-and-figures/>

### European Union (EU) strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles:

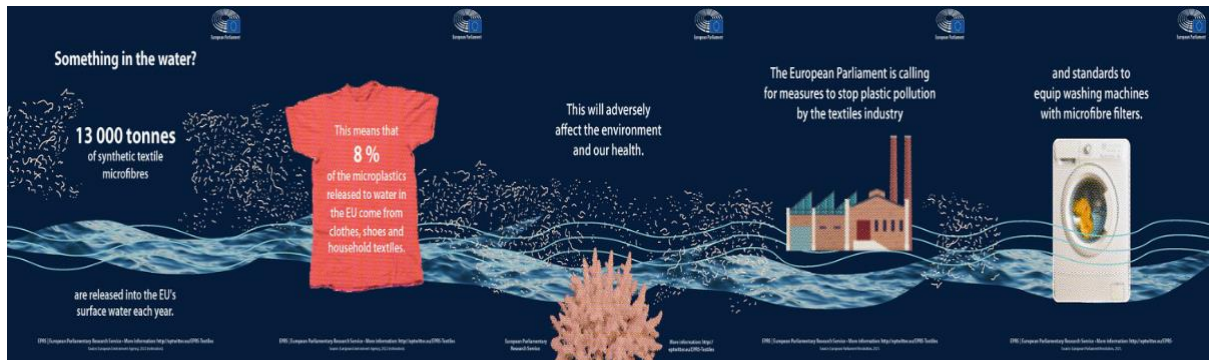
- The EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles addresses the production and consumption of textiles. It implements the commitments of the European Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action plan and the European industrial strategy.
- EU consumption of textiles has, on average, the fourth highest impact on the environment and climate change, after food, housing and mobility. It is also the third highest area of consumption for water and land use, and fifth highest for the use of primary raw materials and greenhouse gas emissions.

- The strategy looks at the entire lifecycle of textile products and proposes coordinated actions to change how we produce and consume textiles.
- The EU is an important participant in the UN negotiations for the Plastic Treaty with the next INC meeting in Korea in November 2024.

### **EU Actions:**

- Set design requirements for textiles to make them last longer, easier to repair and recycle, as well as requirements on minimum recycled content.
- Introduce clearer information and a Digital Passport .
- Reverse over production and overconsumption and discourage the destruction of unsold or returned textiles.
- Addressed the unintentional release of microplastics from synthetic textiles
- Tackle greenwashing to empower consumers and raise awareness about sustainable fashion.
- Introduce mandatory and harmonized extended Producer Responsibility rules in all member states and incentivise producers to design products that are more sustainable.
- Restrict the export of textile waste and promote sustainable textiles globally.
- Incentive circular business models, including reuse and repair sectors
- Encourage companies and Member States to support the objectives of the strategy.
- The Ecodesign for sustainable Products Regulation, proposed in 2022, creates a framework to set:
  - Ecodesign requirements for products, including textiles.
  - Empowering Consumers in the Green Transition Directive and Green Claim Directive proposed in 2022 and 2023, aim to tackle green washing.
  - The “Reset the Trend ” campaign (#REFashionNow) was launched in 2023 to raise awareness about sustainable fashion.
  - The Waste shipment regulation. proposed in 2021, will help restrict the export of textiles waste.
  - Transition Pathway for the Textiles Ecosystem, published in 2023 and the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (since 2018) promote and foster cooperation between industry, public authorities, social partners and other stakeholders.
  - Calls have been launched under Horizon Europe to further develop technologies and processes increasing circularity and sustainability of the textile sector.

- In 2023 the Commission proposed a revision to the waste Framework Directive to introduce mandatory and harmonized Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes for textiles in all EU Member states.
- June 2024 The relevant legislation is being put in place and will apply to 27 EU Countries.



Source: European Environment Agency

### What can we do:

- Wearing Clothes 50 times instead 5 (the fast fashion average) and reduce carbon emissions and microplastics (>10x less for 2nd hand clothes).
- Consumers have the power to make a difference by changing their shopping habits and being more aware of the environmental impact of their choices.
- Buy Second-Hand clothes, shopping at second hand stores or marketplaces, you can find high quality clothes at a lower cost.
- Choosing Eco Friendly fabrics; Clothes made from organic cotton, linen, hemp and bamboo that are biodegradable and require less water and Energy to produce.
- Choose Quality over Quantity; invest in clothes made with High-Quality material and craftsmanship made to last.
- Repair and Repurpose Clothes; upcycling old discarded clothing items into something new and fashionable by adding embellishments, cutting, sewing.
- Renting clothes.
- Buying from sustainable fashion brands with transparent supply-chain.
- Taking action ourselves by buying less clothes that last longer and tell our family, friends, colleagues and neighbours why we do it. Then you have given the example and you started to create awareness.
- Take club actions:
  - Creating programs to raise awareness exactly like we do for EndPlasticSoup.
  - Engage with schools, sport clubs & scouts with education programs and fun.

- Workshops on how to upcycle second hand clothes.
- Support projects worldwide to accelerate solutions together with companies, organizations and authorities.
- Increase the impact of projects and include awareness and waste management ;
- Increase participation of Rotary. Rotaract and Interact clubs and members.
- Expand our reach outside Rotary and get inspired by other organizations.
- <https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/reset-trend>
- <https://changingmarkets.org/>