

**Open Letter to the EU27 Deputy Ambassadors and national governments:****Urgent action needed to address the EU's textile crisis**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Ahead of the Environment Council taking place in June, the RREUSE network is contacting you with an appeal for the meeting's agenda to include the escalating crisis in the EU's used and waste textile sector. This crisis threatens the EU's economy, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability.

The EU's second-hand textile market is oversaturated, sorting facilities are closing, and reusable textiles are being incinerated for lack of viable alternatives. Having managed used and waste textiles for decades, and having always strived to do so at the highest possible levels of the EU's waste hierarchy, social enterprises are now facing an existential threat. The EU could lose the invaluable waste management infrastructure they have put in place, along with tens of thousands of local jobs, many supporting individuals at risk of social exclusion.

Despite the EU-wide obligation for separate textile collection that took effect on 1 January 2025, most Member States lack the infrastructure and the funding mechanisms needed to implement this mandate effectively, and to ensure that the collected textiles are managed in the most environmentally and socially responsible manner. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes, while essential in the long term, will not provide relief for several years.

Immediate action is needed to prevent irreparable damage to the entire downstream value chain, the environment, and the economy. We therefore call on you to:

- **Urgently place the textile crisis on the agenda of the June Environment Council.**
- **Support the immediate adoption of an EU-level Textile Emergency Action Plan (TEAP).**
- **Ensure that this burning issue is addressed, and funding unlocked, by the EU27 national governments.**

Our call for an EU-level Textile Emergency Action Plan (TEAP) is aimed at the creation of an **interim funding mechanism** to sustain the sector until EPR schemes become fully operational. Existing EU financial instruments, including the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the Just Transition Mechanism (managed by CINEA), and loans from the European Investment Bank, should be mobilised. We appeal for the Environmental Council to support this way forward.

We urge you, as your national government representatives, to ensure that the gravity of this crisis is also firmly placed on the **national agenda** so that a concerted and decisive deployment of every available funding stream can be put in place:

- Where EPR schemes are already in place, obligated producers must be required to provide emergency funding.
- Across the EU, the Cohesion Policy funds (including ESF+, ERDP and CF) that are managed by national authorities can, among other things, support facilities and systems of separate collection for textiles, reuse centres, repair networks, and other measures to prepare for reuse and recycling; and they can actively support the social economy sector and its stakeholders through various measures in EU Member States and their regions, including financial instruments such as micro-finance and micro-credit. These options were included in the official response we received from the European Commission to our call for TEAP.

- As the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment also pointed out, National authorities also have State aid possibilities, especially those enshrined in the General Block Exemption Regulation.

Any such funding, whether grants or loans, must be **rapidly deployable and tailored** to the urgent needs of textile collectors, sorters, and especially social enterprises that consistently prioritise local reuse and contribute significantly to environmental goals, social cohesion and local economic development.

Without immediate intervention, the EU risks losing the very infrastructure and expertise it needs to transition to a circular economy for textiles. The collapse of this sector would not only hinder progress on waste management but also result in higher costs and diminished capacity in the future.

We urge you to act swiftly and decisively to preserve this critical sector and uphold the EU's commitments to sustainability, social inclusion, and circularity. Placing this topic on the agenda of your next meeting would be an essential first step.

We are at your disposal if we can support your evidence-based policymaking activities with concrete examples of what is at risk or with any other information.

Yours sincerely,



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on behalf of the RREUSE network

RREUSE is Europe's largest network of social enterprises active in the circular economy, with a focus on reuse, repair and recycling. Our members play a key role in waste prevention, collection, (preparing for) reuse and recycling, while they also generate remarkable social and economic benefits. Each year, social enterprises in the RREUSE network collect over one million tonnes of goods and divert nearly 70% of them from landfills. They create, on average, 70 jobs per 1,000 tonnes of material collected in view of being reused, and generate an annual turnover of over one billion euros, thereby fostering a competitive and circular economy.