



BELGIUM



NEGOTIATING AT 27

Regulation on a fair fashion label

Role profiles | EN



Council of the
European Union

Proposal for a
**REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL**
on the establishment of a fair fashion label

(presented by the Commission)

CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

When the Rana Plaza factory building in Bangladesh collapsed, killing more than 1 100 people, it was a wake-up call. It drew attention to an industry in which child labour, exploitation and abject working conditions are part of the business model.

This is why the EU is working towards a fairer global fashion industry and seeking to prevent child and forced labour and poor working conditions. It is not acceptable for a T-shirt to be sold for EUR 3. It is alarming that people now buy 400 % more clothes than they did 20 years ago.

The EU and most Member States already have policies in place to encourage sustainable consumption, but so far consumers have been faced with a patchwork of different national, regional, public and private schemes.

The new EU label for fair fashion responds to consumers' increasing demand for sustainable products and aims to provide greater clarity for consumers throughout the EU.

Article 1

MINIMUM SOCIAL STANDARDS

The fair fashion label sets **high social standards** which provide for living wages, prohibit child and forced labour and guarantee good, safe working conditions.

Article 2

BINDING NATURE OF THE CRITERIA

Strict measures hold businesses liable for proving compliance with the standards and for answering to the European courts if the standards are not met.



BELGIUM

Agenda

On the Competitiveness Council agenda today is the Commission's proposal for a new regulation on the establishment of a fair fashion label. You will discuss the draft with the representatives of the other member states, aiming to reach a compromise.

Your primary objective

A common position of the Council that reflects your interests. You can also consider supporting a compromise option that partly reflects your interests.

Your tasks

1. Carefully **read your group information** which sets out your interests and positions.
2. You share **similar positions with Denmark and Ireland (like-minded countries)**. To achieve your common goals more efficiently, you should cooperate closely. Use informal breaks to talk to each other.
3. Prepare an **opening statement** (maximum 1 minute) for the first round of official negotiations. State your position on Articles 1 and 2. The following script might help you:

Thank you, Madam/Mr President, and thank you to the Commission for presenting a draft on this crucial issue.

We are very much in favour of further developing fair trade schemes in the EU and worldwide and we are pleased to be here today for the debate on a new fair fashion label.

However, we question the Commission's approach of including high social standards as we are not fully convinced of the need for this. The same is true for Article 2. We argue for basic social standards implemented by means of general commitments on the part of retailers.

We have agreed on a common position with _____.

We are confident that we will be able to find a workable solution today.

Thank you.



4. Make your opening statement when the Presidency (who chairs the meeting) gives you the floor. If you agree with other countries' positions that have already been mentioned, make this clear.
5. Listen carefully to the positions of the other countries. **Fill in the table on page 7** to keep track of their positions. A major part of the negotiations is about listening to each other and finding solutions that work for everyone.
6. During the official negotiations, **present your positions and arguments** together with the like-minded countries. Decide in advance who is going to take the floor to speak on behalf of your countries on Articles 1 and 2.
7. Of course, it is **your decision how to vote** in the end. But you might want to discuss this with your colleagues from Denmark and Ireland. Be aware that when it comes to the final vote on a compromise proposal, you need to decide whether you prefer a compromise with which you may not be 100 % satisfied or no result.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Source: Eurostat 2019, Eurobarometer 2018



1. Average amount spent on clothing by EU citizens every year (in euro)

0 - 250 250 - 500 500 - 750 >750

2. Percentage of people surveyed who responded 'yes' to the question "Do you make ethical choices when you shop for groceries, clothing, etc.?"

Yes, in %

ARTICLE 1

Minimum social standards

■ High social standards

... which prohibit child and forced labour and guarantee good, safe working conditions and provide for living wages.

■ Medium social standards

... which prohibit child and forced labour and guarantee minimum requirements for wages and working conditions.

YOUR POSITION

■ Basic social standards

... which eliminate the worst forms of child labour and prohibit forced labour.

■ Other option:



YOUR ARGUMENTS

- The trend towards fair fashion should be supported - but not by means of EU regulations.
- EU citizens want to buy more fair products. But the industry will comply with this wish on its own. Many designers are already placing considerable emphasis on sustainable production.
- There are already some great initiatives that people have developed without there being any laws telling them to do so. For instance, the Belgian city of Ghent is a 'Fair and Ethical Trade City'. Many retailers and initiatives offer fair products.
- Your red lines: consumers must be free to choose whether they want to invest more money in fair fashion. If it is simply not important to people, the EU should not force them to do so.
- Your notes:

ARTICLE 2

Binding nature of the standards

■ **Strict measures**

Making businesses liable for proving compliance with the standards and for answering to the European courts if the standards are not met.

■ **Moderate measures**

On-the-spot checks whereby independent bodies monitor whether the standards are being met.

YOUR POSITION

■ **Light measures**

General commitments ('code of conduct') whereby the retailers themselves take measures to comply with the standards.

■ **Other option:**

Strict measures

businesses are liable to prove compliance with the standards

Moderate measures

on-the-spot checks whether the standards are being met

Light measures

general commitments to comply with the standards

YOUR ARGUMENTS

- Companies should be believed when they say they want to fulfil their customers' wishes. They will follow the rules of their own accord. Customer satisfaction and trust guarantee their success in the market. Violations of the standards will become public and damage the reputation of the company in question. No business can afford that. The notion that EU officials should go to textile factories like some kind of world police, uncovering wrongdoings in foreign lands, is a strange one. That is not the EU's role in the world. European companies cannot be brought to justice for something that companies elsewhere in the world have done. This is contrary to the rule of law as advocated by the EU worldwide.

■ Your notes:

	Article 1				Article 2			
	High social standards	Medium social standards	Basic social standards	Other suggestions/notes	Strict measures	Moderate measures	Light measures	Other suggestions/notes
Belgium			■				■	
Bulgaria								
Czechia								
Denmark								
Germany								
Estonia								
Ireland								
Greece								
Spain								
France								
Croatia								
Italy								
Cyprus								
Latvia								
Lithuania								
Luxembourg								
Hungary								
Malta								
Netherlands								
Austria								
Poland								
Portugal								
Romania								
Slovenia								
Slovakia								
Finland								
Sweden								
Commission								



Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175
1048 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË
Tel. +32 (0)2 281 61 11
www.consilium.europa.eu

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Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175
1048 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË
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