



ESTONIA



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.



ESTONIA

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 Poland, Czechia and Slovenia (like-minded countries)**. To achieve your common goals more efficiently, you should cooperate closely. Use the 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:

Colleagues,

It's important to keep fair trade at the top of our political agenda. The Commission proposal is an important step in this regard.

However, we should also take alternative solutions into consideration.

We cannot agree to the high social standards proposed by the Commission because _____.

For Article 2, we consider general commitments in the form of a 'code of conduct' to be sufficient, i.e. we are in favour of light measures.

Regarding these aspects, we share a common position with our colleagues from _____.

We look forward to working with you on a balanced and consistent regulation.

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 Poland, Czechia and Slovenia. 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

■ Consumers have the power. It is up to them to change the fashion industry. They must adapt their buying habits and demand fair working conditions from fashion labels. Therefore, you argue for basic social standards.

■ The EU should support a rethink among consumers. In Estonia there is still a lot to do: less than one in seven people consider ethical standards when buying clothes. Many countries already have good initiatives for raising customers' awareness of the problems in the fashion industry. The EU should build on these approaches.

■ Your red lines: poor working conditions and poor pay are problems that need solving. However, they should not be addressed by the EU unilaterally.

■ 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

- Fair fashion thrives on public awareness. Consumers must demand transparency. Anyone who is out shopping for clothes can ask where and under what conditions the clothes were made. If many customers ask these questions, companies will react. The EU can help by proposing best practices that companies can implement. Information about promising approaches in the member states could be shared. Companies deciding of their own accord to commit to something is the best way forward. Otherwise, fashion labels will lose face in public and look like fraudsters.

■ 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								



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