



GERMANY



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.



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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 Austria and Luxembourg (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:

Thank you, Madam/Mr President, for giving me the floor, and thanks to the Commission for presenting the draft.

We very much welcome the Commission's initiative towards fairer trade on the world markets and towards a more sustainable economic policy.

Generally speaking we support the Commission's approach. However, we wish to raise one critical point: _____

In talks prior to this meeting we agreed on a common position with _____

We suggest including medium social standards in the draft.

We are confident that we will be able to find a workable compromise in the course of this meeting.

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 Austria and Luxembourg. 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.

YOUR POSITION

■ Medium social standards

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

■ Basic social standards

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

■ Other option:



YOUR ARGUMENTS

- There are many examples of companies in the textile industry which voluntarily comply with social standards during production. Take, for example, the German network 'Partnership for Sustainable Textiles'. Its members include more than 100 top-selling companies, each of which has developed its own roadmap.
- Such initiatives should be strengthened and expanded, for example in a Europe-wide alliance. It is also right to point out that consumers have a responsibility. The problem with this is that currently anyone who wants to buy fair fashion is faced with a multitude of labels, which makes it difficult to identify which products genuinely stand for good working conditions.
- It is therefore time to go one step further. Medium social standards should be a given. The EU must also demand that these standards are met in its international relations with producer countries.
- In addition, the label could have even higher standards, enabling customers to further influence retailers' standards.
- Your red lines: a good compromise must be found that improves working conditions without overburdening companies. For example, the EU cannot impose minimum wages in non-EU countries.
- 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.

YOUR POSITION

■ Moderate measures

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

■ 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

- On-the-spot checks are commonplace in other industries, such as the nuclear energy industry, and in the case of organic and fair trade products from all over the world. These checks are not police work but the prerequisite for any company wishing to import fashion goods into Europe. It is important that compliance with binding standards is also reliably checked. Otherwise, the first scandal will result in people no longer trusting the standards to have an effect. Strict checks are fairer for businesses. After all, companies that comply with the standards set have nothing to fear.

■ 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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Brussels:
General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, 2020.

PDF ISBN 978-92-824-7152-4
doi:10.2860/05142
QC-02-19-968-EN-C

PDF ISBN 978-92-824-7123-4
doi:10.2860/352715
QC-02-19-968-EN-N

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Printed in Belgium