



**GREECE**



## 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.



GREECE

## 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 Portugal, Malta and Spain (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:

*Thanks to the Presidency for giving me the floor and to the Commission for preparing a draft on this topic.*

*Together with our colleagues from \_\_\_\_\_ we discussed the draft in advance of today's meeting, and we agreed on the following position.*

*The standards in the draft are not fully in line with our approach. Let me briefly explain why: \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Consequently, we are in favour of medium social standards, taking into consideration \_\_\_\_\_.*  
*At the same time, we support on-the-spot checks for the implementation of the standards.*

*We look forward to a lively debate on this issue.*

*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 Portugal, Malta and Spain. 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

... which 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:

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## YOUR ARGUMENTS

■ There are many textile manufacturers in Europe, with around 560 000 people working in the textile sector. The conditions in the factories are much better than in Cambodia or Bangladesh, for example. Higher social standards worldwide would improve the market position of European enterprises.

■ However, European companies are part of the global supply chain. They use raw materials from other countries and benefit from lower wages and low prices. Therefore, standards that are too high would burden European companies and endanger jobs. There is still plenty of headroom for improving awareness of fair fashion among Europeans.

■ Binding medium social standards could help to raise the topic among the general public. The EU should not sit idly by, waiting for citizens to discover their own responsibility and to change their purchasing behaviour.

■ Your red lines: the regulation must not cost businesses too much.

■ Your notes:

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## 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:

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## 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

- Whether the standards are more stringent or less stringent, compliance should be monitored, so we support moderate measures for this. European companies should not be responsible for these inspections. No European company should be taken to court to prove that its partners are meeting the standards. European businesses must be protected from this. On-the-spot checks are already being carried out today, but so far only on products, for example to determine whether they contain chemicals. No one would ever think of rejecting these checks on the basis that they constitute interference in the affairs of another state. The EU must therefore be the monitoring body, either via its own inspectors or through partner institutes in production countries.

#### ■ Your notes:

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|             | 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*