



ITALY



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.



ITALY

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 Cyprus and France (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 for the opportunity to take the floor.
Let me first thank the Commission for its proposal.
We very much recognise the efforts of the Commission in this field.

We share with _____
_____ not only strong ambitions to improve the fairness of trade worldwide but also a joint positions on the draft proposal.

We have come to the conclusion that high social standards as proposed by the Commission cannot be the right approach. Instead, we advocate medium social standards because _____
_____.

Concerning the binding nature of the standards, we agree with the Commission's position.

We look forward to hearing the views of colleagues, and to reaching an agreement in the course of today's 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 Cyprus and France. 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:



YOUR ARGUMENTS

■ Italy produces mainly high-quality clothing. More than 100 000 people work in the textile industry. The fabrics and manufacturing processes are of a high quality. Wages are very high by international standards and working conditions are better than elsewhere.

■ Raising standards worldwide would benefit the European textile industry. It would prevent the European market from being flooded with cheap products and fast fashion. It is important to maintain a sense of proportion and not overburden companies in Cambodia, Bangladesh or Taiwan. Medium social standards would be a first step that should be followed by others.

■ Your red lines: above all, the regulation must result in better pay. This would also strengthen the position of European companies on the market.

■ Your notes:

ARTICLE 2

Binding nature of the standards

YOUR POSITION

■ 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.

■ 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 must be held accountable, and not on a voluntary basis. We need strict measures. Shops are already responsible for ensuring that clothes sold in the EU do not contain any harmful substances, even if they have been manufactured by other companies. It is only logical that they should also be responsible for the manufacturing process. On-the-spot checks would also be acceptable, i.e. moderate measures. However, the fact that these would take place outside the EU would make them more difficult to implement. The EU would have to rely on the cooperation of the producing countries. Clothing outlets will put pressure on their suppliers only when threatened with penalties. Strict measures require evidence that the standards are met. An absence of checks benefits only the cowboys, who fail to meet the standards and get away with it, thereby putting ethical companies at a disadvantage.

■ 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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