



SLOVAKIA



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.



SLOVAKIA

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 Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania (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 thanks to my colleagues for the contributions made so far.

Above all, I would like to thank my colleagues from _____

for the targeted deliberations prior to this meeting, where we reached joint positions.

We would like to take this opportunity to express some points of criticism regarding the Commission's draft: _____

Against this background, we argue for basic social standards implemented by means of general commitments on the part of retailers to _____

We look forward to working together 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 Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania. 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

- Less than 10 % of people in in your country consider ethical standards when shopping. If the issue is not important to people, the EU should not legislate in this area.
- By passing new laws, the EU is creating even more dissatisfaction. People feel patronised, treated like small children being taught by the EU how to behave.
- If you really want to change something, you first have to create awareness of the problem. So much more is gained if you can convince people to change their buying habits.
- Basic social standards would be acceptable. If countries want more, they can offer additional support measures.
- Your red lines: the regulation must not make clothing more expensive. People should not be given any more reasons to be angry with the EU.
- 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

- Many people rightly complain about the kind of unnecessary EU bureaucracy proposed in Article 2. EU officials monitoring factories around the world? European courts putting companies worldwide on trial? And all paid for by the European taxpayer. Yes, the EU champions human rights worldwide. But that does not mean it should act like some sort of world police and jury rolled into one. That is arrogant and invasive. Fairer trade must come from the people. As long as they have no interest in fair products, the EU should not impose them. General commitments are the way to go, because they encourage consumers to force companies into creating fairer conditions by asking questions and, in the event of infringements, buying elsewhere. The EU is the wrong authority to try and enforce this.

■ 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