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A NEW STRATEGIC INNOVATION AND RESEARCH AGENDA FOR THE EUROPEAN TEXTILE AND CLOTHING SECTOR

Advanced fibre-based materials, digitisation of manufacturing and supply chains, new sustainable and customer-centric business models and access to growth markets will shape the future of the textile and fashion industries in Europe

Some 150 participants from 24 countries attended the conference “**European Textiles – going digital, going high-tech**” held on 12-13 October in Brussels. The key highlight of the event, organised by the **European Technology Platform for the Future of Textiles and Clothing** (Textile ETP), was the unveiling of the **Strategic Innovation and Research Agenda (SIRA)**.

The SIRA outlines the major innovation themes and research priorities which are expected to drive and shape the future of the textile and clothing sector in Europe over the coming decade. It has been jointly developed by over 100 textile industry, technology and research experts from across Europe.

The document is entitled “Towards a 4th Industrial Revolution of Textiles and Clothing”. It expresses the conviction that the interplay of **technology trends** such as digitization and automation, **market trends** such as growing technical textile applications and more demand for sustainable fashion products and **new business models** such as circular and sharing economy concepts and personalized product-services, will provide a new basis for a more knowledge-intensive, growing and more profitable textile and clothing industry in Europe.

In his opening words, **Textile ETP President Paolo Canonico** stated “The trends we foresaw during the development of the first Strategic Agenda in 2006, of an industry that is shedding production volumes in favour of higher value-added products for niche markets have played out very strongly in the last 10 years. The EU textile and clothing sector has reduced turnover by 19% while labour productivity has grown by 36% and extra-EU exports by 37%. Since the economic crisis in 2009 this trend has further accelerated and by 2015 virtually all key figures for the sector, including employment numbers have shown growth. This can continue for the foreseeable future provided research and innovation, education and training and technology transfer to the many small companies in the sector is smartly supported at EU, national and regional level.”

Representatives of the **European Commission** detailed the policies and programs in place to provide support to the industry for more research in materials, manufacturing technologies,



digitisation and new business models; a stronger sectoral education and training provision and investment in clusters and other innovation support mechanisms at regional level.

The strong presence of the textile machinery sector at the conference through companies such as Brückner, Lindauer DORNIER or PICANOL underlined the importance of a close collaboration between world-leading Europe-based technology developers and their local lead industry customers to exploit advantages arising from greater resource efficiency, digitisation and new material processing.

The conference also featured a number of young companies exploiting research know-how and advanced technologies for revolutionary textile based products for the health (Bioserenity), construction (Lucem, Raina Industries), energy (MACO Technology) protection (Clara Swiss Safety Tech) or outdoor (inuheat) markets.

Textile consultancy Gherzi-Van Delden presented the preliminary results of a study on the competitiveness and export opportunities for European technical textile producers showing impressive growth rates and export market shares for EU producers, especially on the attractive US market. This current position of strength is based on knowledge, innovation and investment in advanced manufacturing technologies by European companies.

To learn more about the event and the Strategic Innovation and Research Agenda, visit: www.textile-platform.eu

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4 Strategic Innovation Themes

	Smart, high performance materials
	Advanced digitised manufacturing, value chains and business models
	Circular economy and resource efficiency
	High value added solutions for attractive growth markets

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Textile ETP - the European Technology Platform for the Future of Textiles and Clothing is an experts network of all stakeholders involved in textile and clothing related research and innovation across Europe. Launched in 2004, the platform has grown into the largest European textile research and innovation network connecting some 200 member organisations and well over 500 individual experts across Europe.

More: www.textile-platform.eu