

# EU POLICY BRIEF

## UNDERSTANDING THE “COMPREHENSIVE EU STRATEGY FOR TEXTILES” OUTLINING NEW RULES BEING DEBATED

### Introduction and Overview

The European Union’s (EU’s) comprehensive strategy for textiles comes out of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan, which resulted from the EU’s Green Deal law. The strategy for textiles aims to foster sustainability across the entire textile value chain, from production to consumption. Footwear is included in the definition of textiles. By addressing environmental, social, and economic aspects, the strategy aims to promote sustainable fashion and support the transition toward a circular economy. The focus of the strategy is making textile goods more durable, as well as setting up more infrastructure and systems for repair and recycling.

FDRA provides individual policy briefs on each section of this strategy. Please visit [FDRA’s Shoe Sustainability Briefs page](#) or contact FDRA to gain access for deeper dives.

### Objectives and how the EU Ecodesign rules could affect the footwear sector

- **Seeks to set design requirements (mandatory Ecodesign requirements) for textiles to make them longer-lasting and easier to repair and recycle.**
  - **For footwear:** The rules seek to influence ‘design to circularity’ where materials should be easily recycled – with specific focus on how intertwined materials make it harder to create circular systems. There have been advocacy efforts to strip footwear out of the first phase of the EU work on this to give time to build capacity.
  - See FDRA’s separate [policy proposals on eco design](#) for full insights.
- **Seeks to introduce clearer information on textiles and a digital product passport.**
  - **For footwear:** Digital passports will absolutely happen. The government will require RFID or QR codes with product information. The debate is how much information will be required (this is where traceability is key) and how to scientifically ensure consumers understand what this information means. Life-cycle assessments (LCAs) will be critical here – looking at air, water, earth and biodiversity issues. How LCAs will function is also a large debate in Europe.
- **Seeks to empower consumers and tackle greenwashing by ensuring the accuracy of companies’ green claims.**
  - See FDRA’s separate [policy proposals on green marketing](#) for full insights.
- **Seeks to harmonize EU Extender Producer Responsibility rules for textiles and economic incentives to make products more sustainable.**
  - **For Footwear:** Right now, France is the only EU country with an official EPR program. The difficulty for EU policymakers is that there is no real waste infrastructure that can properly sort shoes and textiles with a focus on recycling them. Each locality in Europe has different waste management systems. It may be that EPR starts with an additional tax on goods imported (i.e. twenty cents per pair) to provide funding to develop the necessary infrastructure. There may also be tax benefits for shoes that are more easily recycled or repaired to encourage the development of industry-specific circular systems as the government continues to build EPR policy and enactments.
  - See FDRA’s separate [policy proposals on EPR](#) for full insights.

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- **Seeks to address the unintentional release of microplastics from synthetic textiles.**
  - **For footwear:** This is a major focus in Europe. Companies should begin to look into microplastic release from the outsole of their shoes. There may be rules around percent releases and testing schemes to start to reduce the impact of microplastics. This could look similar to the EU’s rule around chemicals in textiles/footwear.
  - See FDRA’s separate [policy proposals on microplastics](#) for full insights.
- **Seeks to address the challenges from the export of textile waste.**
  - **For footwear:** There is also a major focus on chain of custody, and Europeans are extra aware of this issue as it relates to dumping in Africa – especially with the hot politics of colonialism. This is another reason why the push for circularity as a solution is gaining momentum.