

EUROPEAN FASHION ALLIANCE:

On March 5th, the European Fashion Alliance (EFA) held its first conference 'The Status of European Fashion', in Brussels, Belgium. The event brought together industry leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders who discussed crucial topics shaping the future of European fashion.



(Commissioner Iliana Ivanova © European Fashion Alliance)

In his opening keynote, **Scott Lipinski, Chairman of the EFA**, emphasised: *"We created the European Fashion Alliance because we saw a gap. There was no organisation representing the creative side of the European fashion industry. There are a lot of brilliant regional organisations – also well-established textile organisations, but there was a missing link for a European fashion alliance focusing on a Creativity driven sector - an alliance of knowledge sharing, an alliance of shared interests, and a big ambition to create a better fashion ecosystem."*

The EFA represents the voice of creative fashion to the European public authorities and defends the sector's transition towards a more sustainable, innovative, inclusive and creative future. The aim is to facilitate **dialogue** between fashion professionals and public decision-makers. It also aims to share **experience and knowledge sharing** between its members: information, best practices, entrepreneurial creativity and innovation. EFA is a source of ideas on all issues in the value chain affecting the future of the fashion industry.

In preparation for the conference, EFA conducted a comprehensive **Europe-wide survey on the impending sustainability legislation and related challenges** affecting the fashion industry, which results and recommendations will be published until the end of April.

At the conference, 150 attendees experienced a dynamic program featuring keynote speeches, a presentation on 'the Status of European Fashion' report and four engaging panel discussions, which took place after a presentation of the study's key facts by **Elke Timmerman, Board Member of EFA**. The study showed that the negative image of the industry is mainly influenced by fast fashion, but that a positive change is influenced by SMEs. According to the survey participants, three main solutions would help improve the public opinion: consumer education, regulatory action and sustainable business models. One further main learning of the survey is that SMEs, despite reasonable efforts and investments in durability services to ensure the longevity of fashion products, are not fully aware of nor prepared for the upcoming EU regulations. Important and well overdue CSR-manager positions mainly can't be created due to missing resources. The following panel discussions on policy, education and innovation, led by prominent figures from the fashion industry, allowed panellists to share their perspectives and expertise on navigating the evolving sustainability landscape.

Commissioner Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, provided an inspiring conclusion to the conference day in her keynote speech: *"The insightful panels today underscored the vibrancy and resilience of your industry. The discussions also showcased the European Fashion Alliance's key role in supporting the European fashion and textiles industries based on creativity and cooperation - the driving forces of innovation. And as we look into the future and embrace the spirit of innovation, sustainability and education that has animated today's discussions, the European Fashion Alliance and its members have demonstrated that Europe is not just the cradle of fashion, but it is also its future."*

PANEL 1: Navigating the Path to Sustainable Growth: EU Policy, Legislation, and International Impact

Moderator: Simone Cipriani - UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, Founder Ethical Fashion Initiative, ITC

Guy Morgan - Sustainability Director Chanel

Henrik Vibskov - Fashion Designer

Ruth Reichstein - Policy Coordinator at Cabinet von der Leyen, President European Commission

Julia Aruni Kirschner - Armedangels Director Impact and Innovation

This panel examined the intersection between EU sustainability policy and legislation and challenges faced by the creative fashion industry as well as the solutions they develop.

This round table was an opportunity to reaffirm the key role of the design process for sustainable fashion products and to call for further and deeper reflection on crucial issues such as the appropriate assessment of the sustainability and durability of creative fashion products as well as the value of such products which need to be properly addressed by future EU regulations.

The panellists also discussed the need for simpler, more coherent sustainability policies, common terminology, and the necessary support tools for all the stakeholders involved in implementing them, in particular the SMEs.

PANEL 2: Creating an Impact through Skills and Education: Nurturing Creativity, Empowering Entrepreneurs and Shaping Sustainable Futures

Moderator: Jasmien Wynants Co-founder Masjien

Prof Dilys Williams - Director Centre of Sustainable Fashion

Paolo Naldini - Director Fondazione Cittadellarte

Carlota Barrera - Fashion Designer

This panel explored the future of skill building and education systems and their role in fostering sustainability and empowering young talents and entrepreneurs.

After navigating through stereotypes surrounding sustainable fashion, the panellists reaffirmed the essential role of education in preserving European craftsmanship and developing innovative solutions, allowing to express creativity in an ever more sustainable way. This roundtable was an opportunity to reiterate the need for the promotion of skills and connections all along the value chain towards a more sustainable fashion.

PANEL 3: Tech-infused Sustainability: Driving Industry Evolution Through Digital Innovation and Empowerment through knowledge Moderator: *Christine Goulay - Founder Sustainable Advisory Services*

Semora Mangnoesing - Commercial Director EON

Alexandre Capelli - Environmental Deputy Director LVMH

Federico Brugnoli - Founder and sole Director Spin360

Dr. Andrée-Anne Lemieux - Sustainability Chair Director IFM-KERING, Full Professor Institut Français de la Mode

This panel delved into the forefront of industry transformation at the intersection of innovation and sustainability.

Panellists demonstrated how innovative technological solutions could help address key issues and challenges for the future of sustainable fashion such as traceability throughout the value chain, eco-design or responsible management of product end of life.

The need for reliable and harmonized data was strongly reasserted, while panellists also explored the revolutionary potential of DPP in reshaping consumer trust and product authenticity.

PANEL 4: Centering Creativity: The Board Members on their Vision for the Future of the European Fashion Alliance

Moderator: *Simone Cipriani - UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, Founder Ethical Fashion Initiative, ITC*

Carlo Capasa - Chairman Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana

Caroline Rush - CEO British Fashion Council

Pascal Morand - Executive President Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode

Elke Timmerman - International & Business Relations Flanders DC

Scott Lipinski - CEO Fashion Council Germany

Zuzana Bobikova - CEO Slovak Fashion Council

Members of the Board of EFA shared their vision for the future of the creative fashion industry in line with EFA's values relying on sustainability, innovation, and education.

The economic importance of the creative fashion sector within the European Union was reiterated, as well as the need for future EU regulations to encompass the specificities of this industry while promoting sustainability and respect of human rights.

Board members called for the consideration of key elements in future policies, such as the protection of intellectual property or the evaluation of the durability of fashion products in a holistic way as well as the need to hear, protect and accompany SMEs in the green transition, the importance of which for the sector has been highlighted.



Lastly, the emphasis was placed on preserving skills, the need to raise consumer awareness in order to drive sustainable change as well as the reaffirmation of the power of SMEs to be the drivers of positivity and change in the industry.

The results of the survey as well as a summary of the conference day will be published via the EFA website by the end of April.

Downloads: [Press release, logo & imagery](#)

If you are interested in **interviews** or **further information**, please contact:

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