



# CROSS INDUSTRY AGREEMENT FOR THE PREVENTION OF MICRO- PLASTIC RELEASE





# FESI – FEDERATION OF THE EUROPEAN SPORTING GOODS INDUSTRY

Brussels-based, independent non-profit association representing sporting goods industry in Europe, advancing its members' priorities and promoting initiatives that benefit the sector, EU citizens and the society as a whole.

FESI represents some 1.800 European sporting goods companies, either directly or indirectly, with a total annual turnover of about 81 billion €.



# THE ISSUE OF MICROPLASTIC

The unintentional release of microplastic into global marine and freshwater is of concern for **human health and the environment** even though the potential risks remain to be fully assessed.

- [SAPEA report](#): evidence on microplastics does not yet point to widespread risk; more research needed
- [WHO report](#): Based on limited information, microplastics in drinking water don't appear to pose a health risk at current levels; more research needed

**Identify and quantify sources of microplastic pollution** to ultimately find solutions. Research has highlighted the **washing of clothing**, especially those using synthetic fibres, as one of the direct sources of microplastic release into the aquatic environment.



# MICROPLASTIC LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT (1)

- Past and Future EU political context:
  - Plastic Strategy;
  - [Revision](#) of the eco-design directive for washing machines and dryers
  - European Green Deal;
  - Commissioner for Environment and Ocean
- Member States' initiatives on circular economy
- ECHA restriction for intentionally added microplastic
- Voluntary industry initiatives (Fashion Pact)

## FESI RESPONSES:

- CIA
- Policy Hub for the circularity of the textile sector



## MICROPLASTIC LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT (2)

*Mission Letter from EU President-elect Ursula von der Leyen to Commission-Designate for ENV*

“You will lead on delivering on our **zero-pollution ambition**. This will require a wide-ranging approach looking at air and water quality, hazardous chemicals, emissions, pesticides and endocrine disruptors.

I want you to lead the work on a new **Circular Economy Action Plan** to ensure sustainable resource use, notably in resource-intensive and high-impact sectors. This should support and feed into the new industrial strategy.

As part of this, you will lead efforts towards plastic-free oceans. I want you to address the issue of **microplastics** and ensure that the existing legislation on plastics is implemented.”



# MICROPLASTIC AND CLOTHING SECTOR

Currently there is **no scientifically accepted standardised method** available to measure the release of or shedding rates of microplastic over the course of a garment lifetime. With the limited research in the area showing **disparities in shedding rates of up to four orders of magnitude**, suggesting methods so far use inappropriate methodologies or methods of analysis.

Brands as downstream users are very scrutinized. Therefore they will increasingly ask for developments into materials that are more durable and shed less microplastics. To this end, some of them will start pilot testing such a method once its ready.”



## WHO ARE WE?

We are a group of **European industry associations** representing the global value chain of garments and their associated maintenance.

Through our collective memberships we represent approximately **180.000 companies**, the majority of which are SMEs, employing an estimated **2.400.000 people** and generating a turnover of around **€ 288 billion**.



# WHAT IS THE CROSS INDUSTRY AGREEMENT (CIA)?

- **A voluntary industry initiative** to tackle microplastic release into the aquatic environment during the washing of synthetic textiles
- **A cross-sector response to an issue:** many efforts were ongoing, but no coordination, no common ground





## KEY INDUSTRY CONSIDERATIONS:

- No Harmonised method yet
- Legislative proposals based on varying data
- Not enough certainties about emission mechanisms, routes, hot spots
- Not enough certainties about the options with the greatest impact
- Too much believe in simple blanket solutions (labelling, filter, detergents, type of fibers)
- Need to look at the entire supply chain to have a real impact



## KEY NEEDS:

- **R&D:** understand fibre shedding mechanism and sources to address potential options
- **Quality Assurance Standard:** reproducible lab testing (Affordable and scalable test method (may vary for particular purpose))
- **Effluent sampling for process improvement** at manufacturing and washing level to determine best process
- **Environmental fate shedding**
- **Solutions.....**



## WHAT WE DO:

- **Define common measurement methods:** Agree on a reliable and harmonised test method to identify and quantify the type of fibres present in water and in the environment
- **Share knowledge:** Call for collaboration across all relevant industry sectors and other organisations, including research, to share information, define common priorities to fill knowledge gaps and advise on mid and long-term measures
- **Industrial research:** Support and participate in industrial research activities to investigate feasible options to tackle the release of microplastic and to contribute towards addressing a global problem



## WHERE ARE WE?

**Draft core method** is finalised!

- Applicable both to synthetic and natural fibres
- Presented to the Commission and CEN. Confidential, but soon public version
- More time, research and funding needed to finalise the very last problematic parameters. Next Technical meeting expected in Q1 2020
- New **CEN TC248 Working Group** titled “Microplastics from textile sources” to be created soon.

**Outreach:** Engaging with EU Commission, ISPO, Microfiber consortium; very good media coverage



## PHASE 2:

- Kick-off meeting on 22 October
- Testing method in real life scenario
- Discussing internally and promoting the uptake of the core method
- Microfiber consortium: observer in CIA; also working on their roadmap, make sure to be aligned



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!



+32 (0)2 762 86 94



[pero@fesi-sport.org](mailto:pero@fesi-sport.org)



43 Avenue des Arts  
1040 Brussels, Belgium



[www.fesi-sport.org](http://www.fesi-sport.org)



@FESIsport