

# Textile Microplastics - Addressing the Challenges for Politics, Research and Industry

--- Conference on December 10, 2019 in Brussels ---



## Key topics:

- ▶ Causes and extent of microplastic loss in textiles
- ▶ Solution approaches from research and industry
- ▶ EU research agenda on plastic waste



In cooperation with:



Federation of the European  
Sporting Goods Industry

## About TextileMission

The joint project TextileMission aims to reduce the impact of textile related microplastics on the environment caused by household laundering of synthetic sports and outdoor clothing. Nine organisations from the sporting goods industry, household appliances and detergent industry, science and environmental protection agencies contribute with their respective know-how, pursuing an interdisciplinary research approach.

By developing sustainable textiles and researching on optimizing water treatment, the project makes important contributions to the protection of marine environments. TextileMission runs over a period of three years and is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) with around 1.7 million euros as part of the funding line „Plastics in the environment - sources, sinks, solutions“.

[www.textilemission.bsi-sport.de](http://www.textilemission.bsi-sport.de)

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# Textile Microplastics - Solutions from Research and Industry

Dear participants,

Studies have shown that 20 to 35 percent of the microplastics found in the oceans worldwide originate from garments made of synthetic fibres. The fibre fragments can cause inflammations and entanglements in the digestive tract of marine organisms. They influence natural behaviour, reduce fertility and can lead to the death of marine animals.

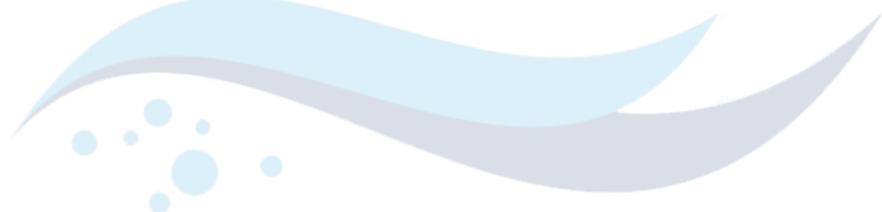
The sporting goods industry is one of the major producers of synthetic apparel worldwide and thus one of the actors responsible for the environmental textile-based microplastic pollution. Therefore, the sporting goods industry is committed to take over responsibility to find sustainable solutions. Together with its partners the Association of the German Sporting Goods Industry (BSI) has initiated TextileMission as a joint project on the reduction of the textile-based microplastic shedding, addressing textile research on the improvement of fabrics and processes as well the understanding and amelioration of the household washing conditions and water treatment.

Today's presentations will show that the TextileMission partners from Hochschule Niederrhein - University of Applied Sciences and TU Dresden have already identified some promising approaches that deserve to be further pursued. However, the challenges associated with textile-based microplastics are not yet fully scientifically explored. Further investigations in the fields of textile and material research and water chemistry are necessary in order to find holistic and sustainable solutions.

That's why we are delighted to present you two distinguished speakers who will give us an insight into the political research agenda of the European Union and of the next holder of the EU Council Presidency: Mrs. Anna Athanasopoulou (EU Commission, DG GROW) and Mr. Wilfried Kraus (Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany).

We are looking forward to a vivid exchange on the challenges that politics, science and industry will face in the years ahead.

**Your TextileMission partners**



## Program

9.00 am

### Opening address

9.15 am

### Microplastics - The challenges and requirements for sustainable solutions from a NGO's perspective

Photo: Daniel Seiffert / WWF



**Heike Vesper**, born and raised in Dortmund, completed her studies in biology at the University of Bremen, with interim study visits in Amsterdam and Jordan, and specializing in marine biology and ecology. In 1999, Heike joined the marine team at WWF Germany to work on the EU fisheries policy. She initiated the fisheries market approach - by involving both consumers as well as businesses - for WWF Germany and the European WWF network and engaged in political work to establish sustainable fisheries across European seas. In 2011, Heike became director of WWF Germany's oceans programme at the International WWF-Centre for Marine Conservation based in Hamburg, Frankfurt, Husum and Stralsund. She now oversees the oceans programme strategy focussing on international marine policies, marine habitat conservation, sustainable fisheries and seafood and on reducing plastic waste for a healthy ocean. In addition, from 2014 until July 2018 Heike has been the Chair of the Board of the International Baltic Sea Foundation for Nature Conservation.

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9.30 am

### Current research projects and initiatives of the sporting goods industry

**Jérôme Pero** is Secretary General of FESI Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry. He represents the sporting goods sector in Europe and speaks for EU companies, national federations and retailers. Jérôme joined FESI in 2007. In 2015, he became Public Policy Director and Board Member of the European Commission European Week of Sports Advisory Group. He was also Member of the European Commission Advisory Board to improve economic and policy knowledge in the field of sport related industries. In 2017, he was appointed Secretary General of FESI, overseeing all the activities related to the Federation, including advocacy, planning and strategy. He holds a Master's degree in political science and European Studies from the Université libre de Bruxelles. Jérôme is a Luxembourgish national. He is fluent in English, French, German, and Luxembourgish.



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## Program

**Nicole Espey** studied History, Political Science and French at the University of Hamburg and International Relationships at the University Paris I Sorbonne-Panthéon. She started her career in the cultural sector working for several theaters in Hamburg and passed a post-graduate program in cultural management. Afterwards she changed to the sport sector and worked for several sport federations like the German Tennis Federation in Hamburg, the office of the European Olympic Committees in Brussels and the German Olympic Sport Confederation (DOSB) in Frankfurt. In 2011 she was employed as policy officer at the Federation of the German Sporting Goods Industry and became General Secretary at the same organization in 2014. Her main focus is on Sports policy and sustainability topics for the sporting goods industry and she is also very active on the European political level.



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**10.00 am**

### TextileMission - A BMBF funded project targeting textile microplastics



**Prof. Dipl. Des. Ellen Bendt** is a fashion designer specialized in knitwear, innovative product development, knitting techniques and product management with references from several international companies. She is a professor for Fashion Design/Knitwear & Innovative Product Design at Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, faculty of Textile- and Clothing Technology, Mönchengladbach, Germany and for 25 years she has been lecturer/professor at Akademie Mode

Design, Hamburg with courses in textile technology / knitwear, clothing technology and in fashion and design management. Her main research field is the development and design of sustainable textiles and applications. Ellen's current research focuses on the reduction of textile based microplastic emissions in the marine environment and design solutions for the textile industry 4.0. 



## Program

**Prof. Dr. Stefan Stolte** is a chair of Hydrochemistry and Water Technology and director of the Institute of Water Chemistry at Technische Universität of Dresden, Germany. He is an environmental chemist whose research and teaching activities are directed to environmental and water protection. Occurrence, properties and (environmental) behaviour of in particular anthropogenic chemicals and materials such as pharmaceutical residues, microplastic particles or plant protection agents are being investigated. Moreover, treatment strategies allowing the efficient removal of trace pollutants from potable water and sewage are in our research focus. Another aspect of his investigations is dedicated to the proactive hazard assessment of novel (emerging) pollutants. These evaluations are conducted in close collaboration with users and distributors of chemicals to optimize the applied chemical products and processes. A low hazard potential for human and the environment and improved sustainability is hereby the overall aim.



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**10.30 am**

**Coffee Break**

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**10.45 am**

**EU policy agenda on plastic and microplastics with a specific focus on synthetic textiles**

**Anna Athanasopoulou** is Head of Tourism, Emerging and Creative Industries at the European Commission. An EU official since 2002, she has held posts relating to culture, media, creative industries, youth and external relations, serving as Deputy Head of Creative Europe and Assistant to the Deputy Director-General at DG Education and Culture, Member of Cabinet of European Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou and at the EU Council Office in Geneva. Before joining the EU civil service, Anna worked as Adviser to two Ministers of Culture in Greece and Director of Programme Planning for the Athens 2004 Cultural Olympiad. In parallel, she lectured on History of Art and Cultural Management. Anna studied Archaeology and History of Art (Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki) and specialised in History of Art (Master of Arts, George Washington University; Ph.D, Courtauld Institute of Art).



## Program

**11.00 am**

### Research policy agenda on ecology/plastics for the German Council Presidency



**Wilfried Kraus** is Deputy Director General “European Cooperation in Education and Research” at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Wilfried Kraus, born in Bensberg in 1956 is Deputy Director General of Directorate 22 „European Cooperation in Education and Research“ at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) since February 2019. He studied law in Cologne and started his career in 1988 at the Federal Ministry of Research and Technology (BMFT). From November 2006 until August 2009 he has been Head of the Education

and Research Division of the Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the EU. September 2009 until January 2019 he was head of Directorate 72 “Sustainability, Climate, Energy” at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Since February 2019 he is head of Directorate 22 “European Cooperation in Education and Research” at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

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**11.15 am**

### Panel discussion on research policy priorities followed by an Q&A

Moderation:

**Nicole Espey, BSI**

Participants:

**J rome Pero**  
FESI

**Prof. Ellen Bendt**  
Hochschule Niederrhein

**Heike Vesper**  
WWF Germany

**Marco Manfroni**  
EU Commission | DG GROW

**Prof. Stefan Stolte**  
TU Dresden

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**12.00 to 13.00 am**

### Networking Lunch





## **TextileMission**

C/O Federation of the German  
Sporting Goods Industry (BSI)  
Adenauerallee 134  
D - 53113 Bonn  
Tel.: +49 (0) 228 / 926593-0  
Fax: +49 (0) 228 / 926593-29  
E-Mail: [info@bsi-sport.de](mailto:info@bsi-sport.de)

[www.textilemission.bsi-sport.de](http://www.textilemission.bsi-sport.de)