



## Sustainable Apparel and Textiles Conference

**From isolated action to scaled solutions: How we can build an industry ecosystem that delivers tangible impact for business, society, and the environment.**

**April 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> 2026 | Amsterdam**

*The Sustainable Apparel and Textiles Conference will bring together brand leaders, manufacturers, investors, policymakers, and innovators to explore what genuine systems transformation looks like for the industry.*

*Held behind closed doors and fully off the record, the forum offers an interactive, solutions-focused programme. Over two days, we'll examine how to shift from isolated action to true ecosystem change; addressing the financial, organisational, and technical barriers that prevent progress on issues such as clean energy, fair purchasing, circularity at scale, worker welfare, and traceability.*

*This is a practical, action-driven meeting that moves beyond PR and pledges to focus on what works, what doesn't, and how effective strategies can be implemented at scale. With a balance of high-level discussion, technical deep dives, and open debate, the conference will help leaders benchmark progress and accelerate tangible impact across the apparel value chain.*

For more information or to get involved, please contact Niamh Campbell at [niamh.campbell@innovationforum.co.uk](mailto:niamh.campbell@innovationforum.co.uk)

## Speaker list:

1. Adele Gingell, head of positive impact, Finisterre
2. Adil Rehman, head of human rights, ASOS
3. Akbar Ali, senior manager, responsible business projects, Artistic Milliners
4. Alaa Aldoh, postdoctoral researcher, University of Amsterdam
5. Amit Gautam, founder and CEO, TextileGenesis
6. Anders Schorling Overgard, materials research lead, BESTSELLER
7. Andrée-Anne Lemieux, sustainability director and professor, Institut Français de la Mode
8. Andres Fernandez, head of sustainability and sourcing, MANGO
9. Anna-Karin Dahlberg, CSO, Lindex
10. Ann-Kristin Erdmann-Burt, head of sustainable supply chain management, HUGO BOSS
11. Antonio Roade, director of sustainability and positive impact, Adolfo Dominguez
12. August Bard Bringéus, co-founder and CEO, ASKET
13. Becky Vernon, human rights manager, ASOS
14. Begüm Kürkçü, global senior director of sustainability, ON
15. Ben Pearson, senior manager government affairs EMEA, VF Corporation
16. Cecilia Guarás, I+D sustainability manager, Bobo Choses
17. Cecily Rooney, senior sustainability manager / founder, Axel Arigato / Informed Collective
18. Chris Oskam, head of sustainability, Tony's Chocolonely
19. Cornelius Wolf, senior director apparel development, PUMA Group
20. Danai Mangana, sustainability consultant, SimaPro
21. Daniel di Benedetto, geolead for Northern Europe, Centric Software
22. Devendra Gupta, head of product management, OEKO-TEX®
23. Diewertje Heyl, programme officer business and human rights, Arisa
24. Elizabeth Carttar, head of sustainability, Zalando
25. Femme van Gils, head of sustainability, SAMSØE SAMSØE
26. Gabriele Pilger, senior manager sustainability direction, adidas
27. Gemma Lynch, chief customer officer, Oritain
28. Gerbrich Kozijn, advisor on green consumer law, The Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets
29. Giulia Chiari, second life leader, Decathlon
30. Hakan Karaosman, associate professor, Politecnico di Milano
31. Jad Finck, CCO, Syre
32. Jane Blacklock, head of ESG, Passenger Clothing
33. Jayanth Kashyap B, investment lead, Good Fashion Fund
34. Jodie Leek, head of ESG, partner brands, ASOS
35. Joseph Mountain, sustainability manager, N Brown Group
36. Katharine Beacham, head of raw materials, packaging and sustainability, Marks and Spencer
37. Katrin Ley, managing director, Fashion for Good
38. Katrina Duck, vice president EMEA, Inspectorio
39. Kelly Sheridan, CEO, the Microfibre Consortium
40. Larkin Martin, president, Turnrow Farm Services
41. Lena Peleikis, head of human rights and responsible supply chain, Otto Group
42. Lewis Shuler, vice president of advanced concepts, Alpine Group

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43. Lewys Isaac, water stewardship manager, Primark
44. Linda Bulić, materials lead, ASICS
45. Liz Hershfield, executive director, COTTON USA™ and U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol
46. Liz Ricketts, co-founder and director, The Or Foundation
47. Lizzie Kroeze, director of product development, AGI Denim
48. Logan Duran, global head of ESG & sustainability, Tapestry
49. Louise Maguire, CFO, Finisterre
50. Lynne Walker, director of Primark Cares, Primark
51. Maliha Ameen, director – marketing and sales, Immi Garments
52. Maria Bystedt, programme director, H&M Foundation
53. Marije Slump, senior policy officer circular textiles, The Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
54. Mark Robertson, senior vice president, The Centre of Child Rights and Business
55. Marlot Kiveron, sustainability director / author, KARL LAGERFELD
56. Matjaž Malgaj, coordinator of sustainable products initiative, DG environment, European Commission
57. Mobeen Chughtai, group head ESG, CSR & corporate communications, Soorty Enterprises
58. Narina Mnatsakanian, partner, chief impact officer, Regeneration.VC
59. Nick Allen, director of transparency, Patagonia
60. Nikhil Hirdaramani, director, Hirdaramani Group
61. Pasquale Coppolella, consultant, chief operating officer and chief sustainability officer, Independent
62. Patrik Frisk, CEO, Reju.
63. Pauline Ström God, policy and industry expert, TrusTrace
64. Rosie Wollacott, head of sustainability, Mulberry
65. Ruth MacGilp, senior campaigner, Action Speaks Louder
66. Sarah Coleman, head of development, design and sustainability, Margaret Howell
67. Saskia Bloch, global sustainability director sourcing and production, Fenix Outdoor Group
68. Sean Sayer, supply chain lead, ITF
69. Selma Jakobsson, head of sustainability and quality, PeakPerformance
70. Shanon Poupard, graduate designer, Institut Français de la Mode
71. Shivam Gusain, sustainability strategist, independent
72. Simon Whitmarsh-Knight, global marketing and sustainability director, Hyosung
73. Thami Schweichler, founder and executive chair of the board, United Repair Centre
74. Venkat Kotamaraju, implementation partner, Saamuhika Shakti
75. Véronique Tjon, senior director traceability and product compliance, PVH Corp

## Day 0 – Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> April

### Afternoon: **Visit to BrightFiber Textiles factory and workshop**

Join us for an exclusive on-site visit to BrightFiber Textiles.

See firsthand how their factory is using locally sourced second-hand clothing and recycling them into new textile fibres. We'll look at their efforts in Amsterdam and how the city's textile waste stream could be a blueprint for large-scale recycling.

We'll then break into groups for discussions on the barriers to scaling circularity in the industry. These roundtables protected by Chatham House rules provide an opportunity for a genuine deep dive into the key obstacles and enablers for scaling T2T recycling, as well as questions around local supply chains. This visit kicks off the conference for honest, pragmatic discussions—culminating with preconference drinks at Hotel Casa.

*Please note, the workshop is full but we are operating a waitlist.*

17.30-18.30: **Early-registration networking drinks**

## Day 1 – Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> April – Tackling systemic issues

8.00–9.00 **Arrival and light breakfast**

9.00–9.05 **Opening remarks**

9.05–9.25 **Operationalising collaboration: Turning shared ambition into collective advantage**

One of the most classic conference tropes is the call for "more collaboration." And it's true, we do need collaboration. The business reality is stark: our challenges are too complex, our consumer base is too distracted, and our resources too fragile to continue operating in isolation.

But we can no longer simply call for collaboration without follow-through. We need to start practicing genuinely aligned approaches rather than gunning for first mover status. The question is: how? How do we move beyond rhetoric to forge genuine partnerships? How do we create spaces for pre-competitive dialogue where we can scale innovations collectively, establish common standards, and drive efficiencies that deliver real impact?

This keynote sets the tone for two days of pragmatic and honest conversations, reflecting on actionable strategies that turn collaboration from a talking point into tangible results.

Speaker: Pasquale Coppolella, consultant, COO and CSO, **Independent**

Moderated by: Ian Welsh, chair and co-founder, **Innovation Forum**

9.25–10.00 **C-suite priorities: Are quarterly results crowding out long-term survival in the boardroom?**

With average C-suite tenure now just 4.5 years, pressure for quick results often overshadows longer-term risks. Today's environment is volatile: tariffs are disrupting global supply chains, inflation is squeezing margins, and headlines declare the "retreat of ESG" and report that sustainability has dropped down the agenda ([2025 State of Fashion Report](#))

However, the reality is more nuanced. [Harvard Business Review](#) found that while some companies are scaling back, most are simply pursuing sustainability more quietly. Climate action remains core to risk management- supply disruptions, resource scarcity, and falling productivity are already here. Strong leaders recognise this investment: the returns may not appear next quarter, but they will determine whether the business endures the next decade.

We'll hear from C-suite leaders on:

- What are the top priorities in 2026, and where does climate fit when budgets are under pressure?
- What risks are we systematically missing in current assessments, and what's the cost of being unprepared?
- The structural and governance changes needed to move from quarterly survival to long-term resilience – KPIs, talent search, board structure
- How can we reframe sustainability as essential business investment for all C-suites

Speakers:

- August Bard Bringéus, CEO and co-founder, **Asket**
- Louise Maguire, CFO, **Finisterre**

Moderated by: Christine Goulay, founder, **Sustainabelle**

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## 10.00-10.45 **Fair purchasing or failed partnerships? What does real supplier-brand collaboration look like in practice?**

Sustainability in 2026 is fundamentally supply chain management. For brands with approved science-based targets, 96% of emissions are Scope 3 ([Aii](#)), and most social impact opportunities lie within supplier relationships. But whilst brands increasingly pledge long-term partnerships, the [Better Buying 2025 Garment Industry Scorecard](#) found that industry-wide progress on purchasing practices had stalled.

The gap between aspiration and practice reflects genuine complexity. Market volatility, shareholder pressure, and competing priorities create real constraints for brands, whilst suppliers face their own pressures around climate adaptation, capital investment, and margins. But 63% of suppliers surveyed by [Vogue Business](#) report that brands expect them to advance sustainability whilst continuing to squeeze margins; a financially untenable partnership for all.

Our multi-stakeholder panel will explore:

- What does partnership mean in practice?
- Brand and supplier perspectives on the tensions and trade-offs in sourcing relationships
- How can we shift from brand-led directives to supplier-informed collaboration to share investment and risk?
- What practical tools and technologies should we co-invest in to maximise efficiencies for all?

Speakers:

- Andres Fernandez, head of sustainability and sourcing, **MANGO**
- Lizzie Kroeze, director of product development, **AGI Denim**
- Gemma Lynch, chief customer officer, **Oritain**

*Moderated by:* Elisa Shepard, non-executive director and senior advisor for business practices, **Ethical Trading Initiative**

## 10.45-11.30 **Break and speed networking** (Sorbonne)

## 11.30-12.25 **Net-zero: Everyone pays for inaction. Who pays for action?**

Despite record numbers of science-based targets and pledges, industry emissions rose 7.5% from 2022 to 2023 alone ([Aii](#)). These emissions will have direct consequences, with [Aii](#) analysis showing that climate risks could impact bottom lines by up to 34% by 2030 and 67% by 2040.

But continued reliance on fossil fuels not only locks in emissions, it exposes the industry to escalating financial and geopolitical risk. Apparel manufacturing relies heavily on fossil fuel-based thermal energy, particularly in Tier 2 processing, leaving suppliers exposed to volatile oil and gas markets. The vulnerability of the Strait of Hormuz amid the 2026 Iran crisis is a stark illustration of this risk, driving up costs across the stages where emissions are most concentrated.

Decarbonisation will require action on multiple fronts—from curbing overproduction to scaling next-generation fibres—but tackling Tier 2 energy use is particularly critical. Heat needs of up to 150°C can already be electrified using existing technology, yet uptake remains limited. The challenge isn't technological readiness; it's finance, risk-sharing, and transparency. Without collective action, suppliers cannot absorb the multi-million-dollar costs of transition alone.

Our panel will explore the practical next steps for apparel's net-zero transition, asking:

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- Why is progress on decarbonisation so slow? Are the barriers operational, financial, or systemic?
- What proven, cost-effective solutions already exist?
- What role can brands play in grid advocacy and collective power purchase agreements to unlock renewable infrastructure at scale?
- What are the financial models and board-ready pitches for sharing upfront and operational costs?

Speakers:

- Katharine Beacham, head of raw materials, packaging and sustainability, **Marks and Spencer**
- Ruth MacGilp, senior campaigner, **Action Speaks Louder**
- Mobeen Chughtai, group head ESG, CSR & corporate communications, **Soorty Enterprises**
- Jayanth Kashyap B, investment lead, **Good Fashion Fund**

Moderated by: Amy Nguyen, researcher and writer, **Sustainable & Social**

12.25-13.00 **Workers rights: A 1.5°C world needs a just transition. Can we actually deliver it?**

The climate crisis is already reshaping garment-producing regions. In Dhaka, one pregnant worker reported that several people faint daily in the hot season ([My Body is Burning](#)). In Bangladesh alone, climate impacts have displaced 36% of garment workers, with heat stress driving rising absenteeism and a 6% production drop, hitting women hardest ([Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies](#)).

Yet none of the 65 major brands reviewed by [Business and Human Rights Resource Centre](#) have explicit ESG targets to protect workers from extreme heat or address the impact of climate change on labour. Most supply chain risk modelling has yet to fully recognise the lived experience of at-risk communities at the base of global supply chains, continuing to treat climate change as an operational issue. But as the ILR's [Higher Ground](#) report demonstrated, aligning climate ambition with worker protection is essential for both moral responsibility and resilient, functioning supply chains.

Our panel will discuss how far we've come and what still needs to be done on topics including:

- A just transition – what does this mean in practice?
- How to integrate worker voices, particularly women's, into climate planning
- What is the role of data for real-time assessment of climate risks to at-risk communities?
- Case studies of initiatives that practically alleviate the impact of climate change on workers and their families

Speakers:

- Hakan Karaosman, associate professor, **Politecnico di Milano**
- Anna-Karin Dahlberg, CSO, **Lindex**

Moderated by: Ian Welsh, chair and co-founder, **Innovation Forum**

13.00-14.00 **Lunch**

## 14.00-14.45 **Breakout sessions**

\* Join us in the 'This house believes' for high-energy debates where participants are randomly assigned a side to argue. Limited to 15 participants per room for more intimate, engaging discussion.

\*\* Join the learning group for double length sessions exploring financing, organizational, and logistical barriers in the industry. Expert-led discussions with groups of 15 participants working through solutions together. A follow-up call 6 weeks post-event allows participants to share insights after consulting their wider teams.

### 1. *Social impact* - **Opaque supply chains: How to identify and manage forced labour risks beyond tier 1** (UvA 1)

- Jane Blacklock, head of ESG, **Passenger Clothing**
- Véronique Tjon, senior director traceability and product compliance, **PVH Corp**
- Amit Gautam, founder and CEO, **TextileGenesis**

*Moderated by:* Janet Mensink, CEO, **Social & Labor Convergence Programme**

### 2. *Business value* - **Price parity: Can next-generation materials ever scale sufficiently to compete with traditional options?** (UvA 2)

- Narina Mnatsakanian, partner, chief impact officer, **Regeneration.VC**
- Simon Whitmarsh-Knight, global marketing and sustainability director, **Hyosung**
- Linda Bulić, materials lead, **ASICS**

*Moderated by:* Christine Goulay, founder, **Sustainabelle**

### 3. *Regulatory preparation* - **Reporting cycles and boundaries: What is the balance between accuracy and scalability?** (UvA 3)

- Femme van Gils, head of sustainability, **Samsøe Samsøe**
- Katrina Duck, vice president EMEA, **Inspectorio**
- Ann-Kristin Erdmann-Burt, head of sustainable supply chain management, **HUGO BOSS**

*Moderated by:* Ian Welsh, chair and co-founder, **Innovation Forum**

### 4. *This house believes\** - **Cotton faces a worse PR crisis than polyester** (Sorbonne)

*Moderated by:* Dana Davis, brand strategist and consultant, **Dana Davis Consulting**

### 5. *Learning group\*\** - **Global accountability in textile waste – what it is, why it matters, and the mechanisms for brands to take action** (Oxford)

- Liz Ricketts, co-founder and director, **The Or Foundation**
- Adele Gingell, head of positive impact, **Finisterre**

*Moderated by:* Thami Schweichler, founder and executive chair of the board, **United Repair Centre**

14.45-15.30 Breakout sessions

1. *Social impact* – **Blind spots and business risks: Why we can no longer ignore the water crisis?** (UvA 1)

- Lewys Isaac, water stewardship manager, **Primark**
- Devendra Gupta, head of product management, **OEKO-TEX®**
- Shivam Gusain, sustainability strategist independent

*Moderated by:* Ellen Atiyah, senior stakeholder engagement manager, **Innovation Forum**

2. *Business value* – **Overcoming the sustainability stigma: How can we build company-wide sustainability cultures** (UvA 2)

- Begüm Kürkçü, global senior director of sustainability, **ON**
- Marlot Kiveron, sustainability director / author, **KARL LAGERFELD**
- Chris Oskam, head of sustainability, **Tony's Chocolonely**

*Moderated by:* Niamh Campbell, senior project manager, **Innovation Forum**

3. *Regulatory preparation* – **Between greenwashing and greenhushing: What counts as credible evidence and substantiation for claims?** (UvA 3)

- Nick Allen, director of transparency, **Patagonia**
- Gerbrich Kozijn, advisor on green consumer law, **The Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets**
- Danai Mangana, sustainability consultant, **SimaPro**

*Moderated by:* Dana Davis, brand strategist and consultant, **Dana Davis Consulting**

4. *\*This house believes* – **We need to stop focusing on SBTi targets and focus on action**

*Moderated by:* Tara St James, founder, **Re:Source(d)**(Sorbonne)

5. *\*\*Learning group continued* – **Global accountability in textile waste – what it is, why it matters, and the mechanisms for brands to take action** (Oxford)

- Liz Ricketts, co-founder and director, **The Or Foundation**
- Adele Gingell, head of positive impact, **Finisterre**

*Moderated by:* Thami Schweichler, founder and executive chair of the board, **United Repair Centre**

15.30-16.00 Networking break

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16.00–16.30 Breakout sessions – Case study round

1. *Social impact case study* – **Grievance mechanisms: How to engage, respond and remediate with local context and sensitivity** (UvA 1)

- Lena Peleikis, head of human rights and responsible supply chain, **Otto Group**
- Mark Robertson, senior vice president, **The Centre of Child Rights and Business**

*Moderated by:* Mari-lou Dupont, senior vice-president social compliance, **Fair Labor Association**

2. *Business value case study* – **Profit vs Planet: Can Predictive Intelligence Bridge the Gap?** (UvA 2)

- Daniel di Benedetto, geolead for Northern Europe, **Centric Software**

*Moderated by:* Ian Welsh, chair and co-founder, **Innovation Forum**

3. *Regulatory preparation case study* – **DPP obligation to opportunity: How a refreshed data strategy can drive competitive advantage** (UvA 3)

- Pauline Ström God, policy and industry expert, **TrusTrace**
- Jodie Leek, head of ESG, partner brands, **ASOS**

*Moderated by:* Tara St James, founder, **Re:Source(d)**

4. *\*This house believes* – **CSRD reporting was/is a waste of everyone's time** (Sorbonne)

*Moderated by:* Amy Nguyen, researcher and writer, **Sustainable & Social**

5. *\*\*Learning group* – **Future Forward Factories: What pathways exist already to achieve inclusive decarbonised facilities at scale?** (Oxford)

- Akbar Ali, senior manager, responsible business projects, **Artistic Milliners**

*Moderated by:* Faiza Jamil, decarbonisation manager, **Fashion for Good**

16.30–17.15 Breakout sessions

1. *Social impact* – **Worker wellbeing: How living wages and social dialogue drive impact for workers** (UvA 1)

- Maliha Ameen, director – marketing and sales, **Immi Garments**
- Saskia Bloch, global sustainability director, **Fenix Outdoor Group**
- Diewertje Heyl, programme officer business and human rights, **Arisa**

*Moderated by:* Mari-lou Dupont, senior vice-president social compliance, **Fair Labor Association**

2. *Business value* – **Shortening supply chains: What are the opportunities of localised production and how do we unlock them?** (UvA 2)

- Cecilia Guaras, I + D Sustainability Manager, **Bobo Choses**
- Rosie Wollacott, head of sustainability, **Mulberry**
- Antonio Roade, director of sustainability and positive impact, **Adolfo Dominguez**

*Moderated by:* Nienke Steen, director consumer products and textiles, **Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute**

3. *Regulatory preparation* – **EPR readiness: How do we build resilient strategies as national frameworks evolve?** (UvA 3)

- Marije Slump, senior policy officer circular textiles, **The Netherlands ministry of infrastructure and water management**
- Ben Pearson, senior manager government affairs EMEA, **VF Corporation**

*Moderated by:* Miranda Beckett, project manager, fashion, **Ellen MacArthur Foundation**

4. *\*This house believes* – **“Luxury fashion is inherently sustainable”** (Sorbonne)

*Moderated by:* Katrina Duck, vice president EMEA, **Inspectorio**

5. *\*\*Learning group continued* – **Future Forward Factories: What pathways exist already to achieve inclusive decarbonised facilities at scale?** (Oxford)

- Akbar Ali, senior manager, responsible business projects, **Artistic Milliners**

*Moderated by:* Faiza Jamil, decarbonisation manager, **Fashion for Good**

17.15–18.15 Networking drinks

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## Day 2 – Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> April – Circularity in practise

8.00–9.00 **Arrival and light breakfast**

8.00–8.50 \*\*\***Coffee catch-up: Brand case studies**

\*\*\*Join the brand-led coffee case studies for morning sessions exploring a tangible brand strategy: what's been tried, lessons learned so far, and how the initiative might be scaled for greater impact. Limited to 20 participants per session for focused, interactive discussion.

- **What does meaningful union engagement look like for brands?** (Sorbonne)

Speakers:

- Becky Vernon, human rights manager, **ASOS**
- Adil Rehman, head of human rights, **ASOS**
- Sean Sayer, head of supply chain, **International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)**

Moderated by: Suhasini Singh, head of supply chain engagement, **Fair Wear**

- **Fibre fragmentation 101: What it is, where it happens, and how to integrate action into your sustainability strategy** (Oxford)

Speaker: Anders Schorling Overgard, materials research lead, **BESTSELLER**

Moderated by: Kelly Sheridan, CEO, **the Microfibre Consortium**

9.00–10.00 **The consumption cyclone: Can circularity fix overproduction?**

Despite meaningful progress in alternative business models and recycled materials, total emissions and fibre production continue to rise. According to [Textile Exchange](#), recycled polyester output increased from 8.9 to 9.3 million tonnes in 2024—yet its overall market share fell as virgin polyester grew even faster, undermining decarbonisation efforts. [Fashion Revolution](#) underscores the issue: only 9% of major brands disclose their production volumes, yet that small group alone accounts for 4.3 billion items annually.

In this session, our panellists will debate whether circularity will ever fix overproduction. We'll assess:

- Can brands really decouple growth from production while the industry models continues to rely on growth through production? What systemic changes could enable this?
- Do our alternative business models risk in the current policy environment becoming additional consumption cycles that don't displace virgin production?
- What does a truly circular textiles industry look like in practice—and are we actually following the waste hierarchy, or just skipping straight to recycling?
- Given overproduction's carbon impact, should we prioritise proven decarbonisation solutions like clean energy and material upcycling over circularity models that don't reduce total volumes?

Speakers:

- Logan Duran, global head of ESG and sustainability, **Tapestry**
- Lynne Walker, director of Primark Cares, **Primark**
- Nikhil Hirdaramani, director, **Hirdaramani Group**
- Patrik Frisk, CEO, **Reju.**

Halfway through the session, we'll flip the stage and invite the audience to join the debate.

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*Moderated by:* Christine Goulay, founder, **Sustainabelle**

### 10.00–10.25 **Q&A with the European Commission: What do we need to know about the ESPR and the Circular Economy Action Plan**

A fair transition to an effective circular economy requires strong regulation to level the playing field. The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) will standardise more durable, repairable, and transparent products across Europe, with textiles among the first industries facing compliance by 2027.

With the implementing acts confirmed as of February 2026, we'll address: does ESPR mean in practice for large corporations and SMEs? How can businesses evidence compliance? Where are the opportunities, and when should preparation begin? What happens with unsold or defective stock?

This session will equip you with the practical knowledge needed to navigate compliance and seize the opportunities ahead.

Speaker: Matjaž Malgaj, Head of Unit - Coordinator of Sustainable Products Initiative - DG Environment, **European Commission**

*Moderated by:* Ian Welsh, chair and co-founder, **Innovation Forum**

10.25–10.55 Networking break (1-2-1 individual tables in Sorbonne)

### 10.55–11.30 **Transitioning to regenerative cotton: Impact, opportunity, and operational reality from farm to brand**

A circular economy is often spoken of as a new concept, but in the natural world, circularity is the norm. Nutrients are renewed, systems regenerate and waste becomes input. Regenerative cotton applies these principles, restoring soil function, improving water retention and strengthening biodiversity, while supporting resilient farming communities. The opportunity is both tangible and measurable: in healthier soils, restored land, and improved farmer livelihoods.

Transitioning, however, requires more than ambition. Farmers face upfront investment, operational complexity and uncertain payback periods, often within supply chains shaped by short-term commercial cycles. The shift demands alignment and shared commitment across the value chain, from farm to brand.

This session will examine what it takes to move from small-scale pilots to commercially viable programmes, delivering verified environmental outcomes alongside long-term business value.

Speakers:

- Gabriele Pilger, senior manager sustainability direction, **adidas**
- Liz Hershfield, executive director, **COTTON USA™ and U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol**
- Larkin Martin, president, **Turnrow Farm Services**

*Moderated by:* Ian Welsh, chair and co-founder, **Innovation Forum**

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\*\*\*\*Join us in 'The other room' for candid conversations about the status quo and what needs to change to drive real progress. With no speakers, every participant is invited to contribute thoughts, experiences, and lessons learned. Pre-registration required, with sessions limited to 15 participants for open, honest dialogue.

*The other room:*

11.30-12.10 **Circular by design: What might our product development look like if durability and recyclability are prioritised from the start?**

**SMEs can't drive meaningful change because the system favours the giants**

The linear 'take-make-waste' model is deeply embedded across the value chain, especially within design teams. Success is still largely measured by low cost per unit and meeting functional or product standards, while the environmental footprint of fibres, production impacts, and end-of-life outcomes have long been treated as external factors – until the arrival of the ESPR.

*Facilitated by:* Dana Davis, brand strategist and consultant, Dana Davis Consulting

(Oxford)

Products are now required to have reduced impact, improved durability and recyclability, but still satisfy customers at an accessible price point. Our panel will assess how to support design teams to deliver on all fronts:

- Internal governance and upskilling: How do we reset, reframe, and reprioritise our ways of working?'
- Money talks: How will these changes be funded and how can teams demonstrate the ROI?
- Design trade-offs: What happens when efforts to make products more durable undermine their recyclability? What are the other trade-offs and how can these be overcome?

Speakers:

- Lewis Shuler, VP advanced concepts, **Alpine Group**
- Sarah Coleman, head of development, design and sustainability, **Margaret Howell**
- Selma Jakobsson, head of sustainability and quality, **PeakPerformance**

*Moderated by:* Sofie Schop, executive director Europe, **WRAP**

12.10-12.45 **Tis house believes (mainstage) - Resale does more to expand consumption and to boost linear production than reduce it**

**We're measuring what's easy, not what's actually happening – and it's costing us nature**

The global second-hand market is widely reported to be booming, outpacing the overall global apparel market 3x ([ThreadUp](#)) and resale is often presented as the most viable circular model, delivering both revenue and engagement.

*Moderated by:* Amy Nguyen, researcher and writer, **Sustainable & Social**

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But does it actually reduce production, or simply shift how people buy? A recent [Nature study](#) argues the latter. Affordability, not sustainability, is still the main reason people buy second-hand ([BCG](#)).

(Oxford)

The key challenge now is identifying credible proof points of impact. How do we measure whether resale is truly displacing new production, and can this be tracked in a meaningful way? Without clear evidence, there is a risk the industry is overestimating its progress.

Speakers:

- Joseph Mountain, sustainability manager, **N Brown Group**
- Giulia Chiari, second life leader, **Decathlon**

*Chaired by:* Christine Goulay, founder, **Sustainabelle**

12.45-13.45 **Lunch**

13.45-14:10 **A just transition: How we can centre waste pickers, not just waste, in the circular economy**

In India alone, [62 million tons of waste](#) are generated annually, and only 19% of the waste is processed and treated, the rest ends up in landfills. The largest driving force behind recycling is the roughly 1.5-4 million informal waste pickers. In Bengaluru, thousands of informal waste pickers work at the very beginning of the circular economy.

A huge opportunity exists to improve livelihoods, build value, and reduce landfill rates, but doing so requires a collective, collaborative approach grounded in local context.

In this session, we'll explore how Saamuhika Shakti is a first-of-its-kind initiative demonstrating a more inclusive model of circularity, centred on worker dignity, community partnership, and a just transition.

Speaker:

- Maria Bystedt, programme director, **H&M Foundation**
- Venkat Kotamaraju, implementation partner, **Saamuhika Shakti**

*Moderated by:* Nienke Steen, director for consumer products and textiles, **Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute**

14.10-14.50 **Breaking the deadlock: Can T2T recycling deliver beyond the pilot phase?**

(Continued) **Supplier engagement isn't**

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In 2017, the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#) found that less than 1% of material used to produce clothing was recycled into new clothing. Eight years later, despite a wave of start-ups and projections that recycling 30% of textiles could generate over \$50 billion in value ([BCG](#)), uptake remains stubbornly low. Less than 1% of the global fibre market still comes from pre- and post-consumer recycled textiles ([Textile Exchange](#)).

**the problem, the system is**

*Moderated by:*  
Mobeen Chughtai,  
group head ESG,  
CSR & corporate  
communications,  
**Soorty Enterprises**

We're stuck in a supply-demand deadlock. Designers aren't incentivised to design for circularity. Collection infrastructure is patchy. Sorters lack the capacity to improve segregation and traceability. Recyclers need long-term commitments and volume guarantees from brands to scale. Brands hesitate to adopt recycled materials at scale due to quality and price concerns – concerns that can't be solved without stronger consumer demand.

So, who breaks the cycle? Our expert panel will discuss.

Speakers:

- Cornelius Wolf, senior director apparel development, **PUMA Group**
- Katrin Ley, managing director, **Fashion for Good**
- Jad Finck, CCO, **Syre**

*Moderated by:* Ian Welsh, chair and co-founder, **Innovation Forum**

#### 14.50-15:25 **Emotional durability: Why consumers neglect their own wardrobe – and how psychology can help**

The transition to a circular fashion economy depends on people valuing what they already own: wearing garments for longer, caring for them properly, and, when the time comes, placing them in the right channels for textile-to-textile recycling rather than sending them to landfill.

However, research such as Zalando's [It Takes Many](#) report shows that whilst 74% of consumers say they want to wear clothes more sustainably, these values rarely translate into action. The say-do gap is well-documented: people care, but garments still end up neglected at the back of wardrobes or discarded to make space for new purchases.

Waiting for consumers to change on their own is not a viable strategy. The fashion industry must meet people where they are and find ways to build emotional durability into clothing to change this default behaviour.

Our panel will explore:

- What do consumers consider as 'sustainable fashion'? What does the data tell us, and how reliable is it?
- How can brands uncover what truly motivates consumers around garment care and disposal?
- What - if any - useful generalisations exist, given the emotional complexity of our relationship with clothing?

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- What practical interventions have we seen work in bridging the say-do gap and driving repeat purchase behaviour?

Speakers:

- Elizabeth Carttar, head of sustainability, **Zalando**
- Cecily Rooney, senior sustainability manager / founder, **Axel Arigato / Informed Collective**
- Alaa Aldoh, postdoctoral researcher, **University of Amsterdam**

*Moderated by:* Ellen Atiyah, senior stakeholder engagement manager, **Innovation Forum**

#### 15.25- **Closing reflections from the next generation of designers**

Speakers:

- Andrée-Anne Lemioux, sustainability director and professor, **Institut Français de la Mode**
- Shanon Poupard, graduate designer, **Institut Français de la Mode**

*Moderated by:* Ian Welsh, chair and co-founder, **Innovation Forum**