

Warsaw Declaration

Adopted at the Polish National Seminar on 6 December 2024

Addressing Skills Gaps in the European Textiles, Clothing, Leather and Footwear Industries, emphasising Equality, Innovation and Resilience. Promoting Social Partnerships in the European Textiles and Clothing Industry

Poland has a long and proud tradition in textiles and clothing manufacturing, and today produces a broad range of products that cater largely to European markets, providing essential volume production that supports widespread commercial activities. There are around **130,000 people employed** in the sector, with around **20,000 companies** of which the vast majority are SMEs.

However, the sector is struggling due to tough competition on a global market and price pressures linked to issues such as high energy prices. On top of this, the European textiles and clothing industry is set for a major transformation which will affect both industry and workers, including in Poland.

The **EU's Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles** aims to ensure that by 2030, textile and clothing products placed on the EU market are long-lived, reusable, repairable and/or recyclable, with the industry moving from a linear to a circular business model. The Strategy covers the green and digital transitions, while stressing the need to ensure competitiveness in the global context.

In this context, the textile and clothing social partners are united in the fight to safeguard the sector and ensure a successful transition of the Polish textiles and clothing sector to a more sustainable sector, while ensuring that the sector remains competitive and resilient, with decent jobs for all.

The EU-funded project “*Stitch Together*” is the start of a long-term cooperation, where attention has been paid to putting together strategies for industrial development and social progress, enhancing the representativeness of employer associations and trade unions, developing skills and capacity, and opening the path towards improved social dialogue and collective agreements, including industry-level bargaining.

At the Polish national seminar on 5-6 December 2024 in Warsaw, the participating social partners agreed on the following:

- **To commit to work together to ensure a successful green and digital transformation of the industry**, making use of growth opportunities, and ensuring a socially just transition that creates decent work for all.
- To jointly call on the **Polish government to involve the textile and clothing social partners in talks to upgrade policies on industrial strategies** for the sector, and support innovation and digitalisation, as part of the new European transition pathway.
- **To work with the authorities and educational institutes to provide the necessary means to attract, train and/or reskill workers**, including through concrete support from the EU TCLF Pact for Skills.

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- **To work with brands and retailers sourcing from Poland** who should contribute to a positive transformation through responsible business practices, due diligence and support for social dialogue and living wages.
- To fully engage in social dialogue which is more vital than ever to ensure a sustainable transformation. The **mechanisms for social dialogue and collective bargaining need to be strengthened**, also taking into account the reference to collective bargaining coverage in the new EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages.
- To jointly call on the Polish government and the European Union to **provide funding for the upcoming textiles and clothing industries' transformation**, technology and skills upgrades, regional development, and Just Transition.
- To **engage in European-level social dialogue** which can support a successful change process.

The national social partners will approach the Polish government and will work with the European social partners towards the EU with their proposals on how to work together to ensure a sustainable and resilient future for the Polish textiles and clothing industries and their workers.

The European social partners will continue to support these important and positive processes.

Signed by

Federation of Apparel and Textiles Industry Employers (PIOT)

Federation of Trade Unions of Light Industry Workers

