PART 1 · TRUSTEX AGORA · FOUNDING SESSION · ONLINE

Programme

# Worn to Last: Designing Circular Fashion

Who pays for the clothes we discard, and what should the fee reward?

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**DATE**
Thursday 5 November 2026, 14:00 to 17:30 CET

**FORMAT**
Online broadcast, in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee

**CO-HOSTED BY**
Saskia Bricmont MEP and Delara Burkhardt MEP

**ORGANISED BY**
The Horizon Europe project TRUSTex with Generation Climate Europe

## Objectives

How should the new European fee on clothing be designed so that it rewards garments that last? By 17 April 2028, every Member State must operate an extended producer responsibility scheme for textiles under Directive (EU) 2025/1892, with fees modulated according to the environmental performance of products.

Organised by the Horizon Europe project TRUSTex with Generation Climate Europe, in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee and co-hosted by two Members of the European Parliament, this afternoon brings together the people preparing the rules and the people who live with their effects: the European Commission, the European textile industry, collectors and sorters working under existing schemes, researchers on garment durability and on the social cost of discarded clothing, young Europeans, and the traders of Kantamanto market in Accra. It asks one question in two parts: where does the value chain break today, and what should the fee reward?

This session is the first TRUSTex Agora. In the Greek city the agora was the open square where citizens met to debate the matters that concerned them all before the assembly decided; the TRUSTex Agora revives that space for the textile transition, as a place where anyone who buys, wears, repairs or discards clothing can put a question to those preparing the rules and have it answered on record. Five further Agoras follow in 2027, each on a different question of the transition, and every participant of this session is invited to the next.

## Programme

**13:45** **Broadcast opens**

Connection details are sent to registrants on Monday 2 November.

**14:00** **Welcome**

**Anders Ladefoged**

Member of the European Economic and Social Committee,
Member of the Steering Group of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

**Topic:** why the Committee, the Union's house of organised civil society, hosts this question.

**14:10** **Opening**

**Saskia Bricmont**

Member of the European Parliament, co-host

**Topic:** what the Parliament expects from the national schemes due in April 2028.

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**14:20** **Youth voice**

**Olivia Yakunina**

Project Lead on Textiles, Generation Climate Europe

**Topic:** what a generation that buys, swaps and discards asks of the fee.

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**14:30** **Panel 1. Where the value chain breaks: who bears the cost today**

**Mariana Silva**

UCD College of Business, Dublin: social impacts at the end of life of our clothes, in Europe and beyond

**Martin Boeschen**

CEO, TEXAID Schweiz AG, member of the TRUSTex Advisory Board: which product attributes change sorting yield and export share today, and which of them a fee could reward

**Charles Graft**

CEO, Sympany, Utrecht, collector and sorter under the Dutch scheme: what a collector sees under a working scheme, three years in

**Moderator: Milena Amaral**

NEOVILI, TRUSTex

**Guiding questions:** where do Europe's used clothes go; who pays for sorting what cannot be worn again; what does a trader in Nairobi or Accra receive when a bale is opened.

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**15:20** **Break**

**15:30** **Panel 2. What should the fee reward?**

Introduction: where the TRUSTex work on eco modulation stands (5 min).

**Vincenzo Gente**
European Commission, Directorate-General for Environment

**Gerrard Fisher**
Co-founder, WEFT Limited, United Kingdom: what data a scheme needs before it can reward durability

**Anaïs De Bergeyck**
Euratex, the European Apparel and Textile Confederation

**Moderator: Milena Amaral**
NEOVILI, TRUSTex

**Guiding questions:** which design criteria can a scheme measure today; how large must the fee differential be to change a design decision; how do 27 schemes avoid 27 sets of rules.

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**16:20** **Civil society voice, from Kantamanto market, Accra**

**Liz Ricketts**
Executive Director, The Or Foundation

**A retailer of Kantamanto market**
name to be announced

**Topic:** opened by a one minute film by The Or Foundation; the question Kantamanto puts to the people writing the criteria for the fee.

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**16:35** **Agora** THE FLOOR TO THE PARTICIPANTS

A live poll, then an open microphone: one minute per voice, hands raised on Zoom, the chat collected by a co-moderator from Generation Climate Europe.

**Questions put to the assembly:** should the fee reward how long a garment lasts, how easily it is repaired, or how easily it is recycled; would you pay more for a garment with a lower fee; what should the fee money pay for first.

**17:05** **Synthesis**

**Milena Amaral**

NEOVILI, TRUSTex

**Topic:** what the afternoon says to the people writing the criteria, and where the Agora meets next.

**17:10** **Closing remarks**

**Delara Burkhardt**

Member of the European Parliament, co-host

**17:20** **End of broadcast**

# How to take part

### Registration

Free, at luma.com/u2pcb7im.
Zoom link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89180986559?pwd=jQM7lXKhoPaY1wqNzvflewotKq8W8n.1

### Questions

In writing through the Zoom chat at any time, or by raising a hand during the Agora at 16:35.

### Language and recording

The session is in English and is recorded. The recording, the glossary and the written conclusions are published on trustexproject.eu after the event.

### Where the Agora continues

The conclusions are transmitted to the European Economic and Social Committee. The next Agora sessions take place in 2027; dates and cities are announced on trustexproject.eu.

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# TRUSTex Agora: Glossary

Who pays for the clothes we discard, and what should the fee reward? Twenty five terms for citizens, drawn from the first eighteen months of the Horizon Europe project TRUSTex (January 2025 to June 2026) and from public European sources. For the founding Agora of 5 November 2026.

By 17 April 2028 every EU country must run a scheme in which the companies that sell clothing, footwear and household textiles pay a fee for each product they place on the market, and the fee must vary with the environmental performance of the product. The rules are being written now, in 27 capitals. This glossary gives the words needed to follow and join that debate, in three layers kept apart on purpose: what the law requires, what public agencies have measured, and what TRUSTex and the stakeholders it consulted have observed.

TRUSTex tests eco design, digital product passports, collection and sorting technologies and the design of eco modulated fees, and consults producers, collectors, recyclers, public authorities, civil society and citizens. Its public deliverables are published in the TRUSTex community on Zenodo and on trustexproject.eu.

## 1. The law and the fee

*What the Directive of 10 September 2025 requires of every Member State.*

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Extended producer responsibility (EPR)** | The principle that the company which puts a product on the market pays for what happens to it after use. For textiles it is now law: Directive (EU) 2025/1892 obliges every Member State to have a scheme covering clothing, accessories, footwear and household textiles by 17 April 2028, with producers covering the costs of collection, sorting and recycling. Hotspot named by stakeholders: existing schemes remain focused on waste handling and give little incentive to design better products (TRUSTex D5.1, 2026).<br>Source: European Parliament, 2025. |

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Producer, and "placed on the market"** | The producer is the company that first sells a product in a country, whether a brand, an importer or a distance seller; the fee is due at that first sale. Who counts as a producer, and what counts as a textile, decides who pays, and the project's policy brief on governance (TRUSTex D4.3, 2026) treats these definitions as a core design choice. For scale: in France, which has run a textile scheme since 2008, 14,120 producers paid EUR 139.1 million in 2024 for 3.5 billion pieces, an average of EUR 0.04 per piece (Refashion, 2025).<br>Source: Directive (EU) 2025/1892. |
| **Producer responsibility organisation (PRO)** | The body producers set up collectively to collect the fees and pay for collection, sorting, recycling, reporting and public information. A PRO cannot see a garment once it leaves the shop and cannot verify a design claim without a test or a product passport. Project finding (TRUSTex D3.2, 2026): paying only for tonnes collected rewards volume; funding sorting, quality control and auditable reporting, and building reporting on real handovers, is what makes a fee credible.<br>Source: Directive (EU) 2025/1892; TRUSTex D3.2, 2026. |
| **Eco modulation** | The rule that the fee goes down for a product with better environmental performance and up for one that is harder to repair, reuse or recycle. The Directive requires modulation; the criteria (durability, repairability, recyclability, substances of concern, recycled content and others) are set at national level until the Commission adopts harmonised criteria. TRUSTex (Task 4.2, led by Neovili, method due end 2026) works on one harmonised method that rewards durability at the design stage, so that 27 schemes do not produce 27 rule books.<br>Source: Directive (EU) 2025/1892; TRUSTex Task 4.2 (Neovili), work in progress. |

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Fast fashion practices** | The Directive instructs Member States to take quick turnaround and single use clothing practices into account when setting producers' contributions. The EEA notes that many online platforms operate mostly in fast or ultra fast fashion; stakeholders report that the falling quality of garments entering collection reduces second hand revenues and recyclers' ability to cover costs.<br>Source: European Parliament, 2025; EEA, 2025; TRUSTex D4.1, 2025; TRUSTex D5.1, 2026. |
| **Free rider** | A seller who places products on the market without registering with a scheme or paying the fee, so that the others pay for its waste. Stakeholders name online marketplaces operating outside European jurisdiction as the main gap, since they can bypass both the fee and circularity standards.<br>Source: TRUSTex D5.1, 2026. |
| **Transposition and review** | Member States must write the Directive into national law by 17 June 2027 and have the scheme running by 17 April 2028; micro enterprises get one extra year. By 31 December 2029 the Commission will evaluate whether to set targets for prevention, collection, reuse and recycling, and whether commercial reuse operators should contribute. These are the dates at which citizen input still changes the outcome.<br>Source: European Parliament, 2025. |

## 2. What Europe buys and throws away

*Figures measured by the European Environment Agency and the Joint Research Centre.*

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Consumption per person** | In 2022 each person in the EU consumed on average 19 kg of textiles (8 kg clothing, 7 kg household textiles, 4 kg footwear), up from 17 kg in 2019. An estimated 4 to 9% of textile products put on the market are destroyed before use, and 22 to 44% of returned items never reach a new customer.<br>Source: EEA, 2025. |
| **Capture rate** | The share of textile waste that reaches a textile bin or collection point instead of the household bin. In 2022 it was just under 15%, so 85% of household textile waste was not collected separately. In 2020 the EU generated about 16 kg of textile waste per person: 4.4 kg collected separately, 11.6 kg in mixed waste. Separate collection of textiles has been compulsory in every Member State since 1 January 2025 (Directive (EU) 2018/851).<br>Source: EEA, 2025; EEA, 2024. |
| **Waste hierarchy** | The legal order of preference: prevent, reuse, recycle, recover energy, dispose (Directive 2008/98/EC, article 4). The JRC found that reuse and preparing for reuse are the most cost effective options with the best environmental performance, and that over 8 million tonnes of used and waste textiles are incinerated or landfilled in the EU each year.<br>Source: Huygens et al., 2023. |

## 3. How a garment is made, and what that means at the end of its life

*Design choices that a fee could reward, and the trade offs stakeholders ask to keep in view.*

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Durability, physical and emotional** | Physical durability is the ability of a garment to keep its function and appearance over time, use, washing and care; emotional durability is the attachment that keeps a garment in use. Project finding (TRUSTex D1.1, 2026): price is an unreliable signal of durability; material, construction, repairability and information are better guides. Stakeholders report low trust in brand claims and a demand for simple visual product information.<br>Source: TRUSTex D1.1, 2026; TRUSTex D5.1, 2026. |
| **Mono material and blends** | A mono material garment is made of one fibre, which makes it easier to recycle; blends of cotton, polyester and elastane, coatings and multilayer constructions are the practical barrier to recycling. Stakeholders cite as positive examples the replacement of three layer synthetic constructions by two layers of recycled wool and recycled polyester, the exclusion of elastane, and buttons instead of zips. Eco design principles can conflict with each other and need explicit prioritisation.<br>Source: TRUSTex D5.1, 2026. |
| **Design for repair and disassembly** | Designing a garment so that parts can be replaced and non textile elements (zips, trims) removed before recycling. Stakeholders warn that design compromises which hurt usability or appearance raise the risk of early disposal, and ask for a clear allocation of who removes zips and trims before sorting.<br>Source: TRUSTex D5.1, 2026. |

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Substances of concern** | Chemicals restricted or watched under EU law that may be present in older garments and that hinder recycling, such as certain dyes. The ecodesign framework asks for their disclosure in the product passport; within TRUSTex Task 1.2 (led by HDA), LIST analyses which legacy substances to expect in waste textiles depending on their age.<br>Source: Regulation (EU) 2024/1781; TRUSTex D1.2, 2026; TRUSTex Task 1.2 (HDA, analysis by LIST), work in progress. |
| **Digital Product Passport (DPP)** | A digital record, reached through a code on the product, giving its materials, durability, substances of concern, recyclability, recycled content, footprint and care and repair information, with different access for consumers, operators and authorities. The textile rules are still to be adopted by the Commission (expected around 2027). Project findings: codes must be embedded in the garment, since labels get cut off (Task 2.5, led by Scantrust); stakeholders observe that a code alone has little influence on behaviour, which is driven by looks and convenience.<br>Source: Regulation (EU) 2024/1781; TRUSTex D5.1, 2026; TRUSTex Task 2.5 (Scantrust), work in progress. |
| **Destruction of unsold goods** | From 19 July 2026 large companies may no longer destroy unsold clothing, accessories and footwear in the EU, and must disclose what they discard; medium sized companies follow in 2030.<br>Source: Regulation (EU) 2024/1781; CMS, 2026. |

## 4. Collection, sorting, recycling

*The stage stakeholders call both the biggest bottleneck and the biggest opportunity.*

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Sorting** | Separating collected textiles into what can be worn again, what can be recycled and what is waste. Sorting is labour intensive and mostly manual, and cheaper where wages are lower, which is one reason much of it happens outside the EU. Stakeholders ask for human led sorting at collection hubs, clean and dry collection conditions, and clear information to donors on where their clothes go.<br>Source: EEA, 2024; TRUSTex D5.1, 2026. |
| **Downcycling and fibre to fibre recycling** | Downcycling turns a garment into a lower value product, such as cleaning rags or insulation; fibre to fibre recycling turns it back into yarn for new textiles. Today most textile recycling is downcycling, and most recycled fibre is downcycled. Stakeholders ask that the two be clearly distinguished in any claim.<br>Source: Huygens et al., 2023; EEA, 2024; TRUSTex D5.1, 2026. |
| **Mechanical and chemical recycling** | Mechanical recycling shreds fabric into fibres, which shortens them, so recycled cotton is blended with new fibre; chemical recycling dissolves the fibre and rebuilds it, and for blended fabrics is still being developed. Recycling costs more than incineration or landfill but usually brings additional environmental savings; weak demand for recycled fibre, high energy costs and uncertain legal status of recovered textiles hold investment back.<br>Source: Huygens et al., 2023; TRUSTex D1.2, 2026; TRUSTex D5.1, 2026. |

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Reuse sector and social economy** | The organisations, many of them social enterprises and charities, that collect, sort and resell used clothing. Project observation (Task 3.3, led by HUMANA with IRIS, preliminary): the sector has limited investment capacity, legal uncertainty keeps investments on hold, and the share of unusable items entering sorting is expected to rise. Consumers trust textile containers and charity collection most.<br>Source: TRUSTex Task 3.3 (HUMANA), work in progress; TRUSTex D5.1, 2026. |

## 5. Beyond Europe's borders

*Where Europe's used clothes go, and who lives from them.*

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Export of used textiles** | EU exports of used textiles rose from just over 550,000 tonnes in 2000 to almost 1.7 million tonnes in 2019, 46% to Africa and 41% to Asia; 1.4 million tonnes were exported in 2023. The fate of exported textiles is described by the EEA as highly uncertain; in Africa items unfit for reuse mostly end up in open landfills and informal waste streams. The Directive now requires used textiles to be sorted before export, and treats textiles fit for reuse as products, not waste.<br>Source: EEA, 2023; EEA, 2025; European Parliament, 2025. |

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Second hand trade and informal workers** | The trade in used clothing is also an economy. As reported in the TRUSTex infographic, the Ghana Used Clothing Dealers Association puts Ghana's second hand sector at about 2.5 million livelihoods and USD 29.5 million in import tax revenue, with less than 5% of imports considered waste; a 2025 study of Mozambique counts 7.8 jobs per tonne; Oxford Economics estimates 110,000 jobs in the EU27+ and 43,000, 66,000 and 15,000 informal workers in Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique. Stakeholders ask that African and Asian actors sit in EU policy discussions and that informal sellers, repairers and recyclers be recognised.<br>Source: TRUSTex D5.1, 2026, citing GUCDA, a 2025 study of Mozambique and Oxford Economics. |
| **Cost displacement** | The project's ethics analysis notes that a fee collected where garments are sold leaves the production stage untouched, while the burden falls where garments are made and discarded. Fieldwork of 179 interviews in Cambodia, Bangladesh, Italy, Kenya and online (Task 1.3, led by University College Dublin with HUMANA) adds that EPR needs to consider job quality, worker voice and livelihoods, and that brands' purchasing practices must share the cost of improvements in supplier factories.<br>Source: TRUSTex Task 1.3 (University College Dublin), work in progress. |

## 6. The citizen's toolkit

*Rights that already exist, and incentives under discussion.*

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Two year legal guarantee** | Every consumer in the EU has a legal guarantee of at least two years on goods, clothing included, against defects present at delivery. Project finding (TRUSTex D1.1, 2026): this right is underused for garments.<br>Source: Directive (EU) 2019/771; TRUSTex D1.1, 2026. |

| TERM | WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHY IT MATTERS |
|---|---|
| **Greenwashing** | An environmental claim that cannot be substantiated. From 27 September 2026 generic claims such as "eco friendly" and sustainability labels without a recognised certification are banned in the EU. Stakeholders report that low trust in claims and labels reduces consumers' confidence in choosing.<br>Source: Directive (EU) 2024/825; TRUSTex D5.1, 2026. |
| **Visible fee** | The question whether the producer fee should appear on the price tag. A UK survey (Fisher et al., 2026) found that a fee of GBP 0.50 on a GBP 10 item and GBP 1 on items of GBP 20 or more would be largely unnoticeable, and that fees above GBP 2 on a GBP 20 item would begin to influence behaviour.<br>Source: Fisher et al., 2026. |
| **Intention to action gap** | The distance between what people say they want (durable, repairable, second hand) and what they buy. Project findings (TRUSTex D1.1, 2026; TRUSTex D1.5, 2026, a survey of 629 respondents, mostly women and nearly half in Greece, to be read as indicative): the barriers are price, information, knowledge, stereotypes and availability. Stakeholders propose repair vouchers, reduced VAT on repair, reward systems and EPR funds for consumer education; these are options under discussion.<br>Source: TRUSTex D1.1, 2026; TRUSTex D1.5, 2026; TRUSTex D5.1, 2026. |

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