



Interreg

France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen



UNION EUROPÉENNE
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GoToS3

RETEX

May 2019

PRESS RELEASE

Retex: No Textile To Waste

First specific results towards a circular economy

*Faced with international competition, textile companies must focus in particular on innovation and the search for new opportunities. From this point of view, innovation in eco-design and the structuring of the sector to integrate the ever-increasing textile waste stream is essential. This is a strong trend that responds to a much greater awareness of our environmental responsibility, whether it be for consumers, public authorities or companies. To face this challenge, the European project named RETEX, involving the whole textile value chain, is generating its **first results in collaboration with the technical textile company Utebel**.*

Important textile sector in the Euroregion, facing different challenges

In Hauts-de-France region, Wallonia and Flanders, the textile sector (clothing, upholstery fabrics, technical textiles, etc.) is composed mainly of small and medium-sized enterprises. These still represent 1,130 establishments, employing no less than 33,200 people. As for textile recycling, this particularly well-equipped sector employs 1,800 people in more than 75 companies. Within a radius of 150 km, the Euroregion thus has the sorting capacity required to process 50% of the deposits.

However, our SMEs have great difficulty in conducting a coherent and industrial eco-design approach for their products. The difficulties are both in the identification of materials from recycling suitable for the markets and their availability, as well as in the technological, economic and regulatory approach to stimulate the deployment of the circular economy in the sector.

These difficulties prevent them from participating in sustainable development initiatives and thus gaining access to the corresponding new markets (public procurement, B2B markets, etc.) or from offering innovative services and products in the circular economy that would enable them to stand out in their markets.

Time for action: Rethinking the textile sector - Reinventing our production methods - Reuse our waste

Our textile waste is a very interesting resource for a whole sector of recovery, sorting, reuse and recycling. However, a significant proportion of this waste, in particular cotton/polyester waste, is still poorly recovered. These real deposits, which are only waiting to be reused, are also expected to increase further with improvements in collection.

Whether in the textile industry or in the plastics industry, this material that constitutes our waste can be valorized.

RETEX is an ambitious Euroregional partnership funded by Interreg France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen. It aims to recycle waste from the textile industry, but also end-of-life (post-consumer) textile products. The ambition is to integrate these materials as much as possible into the manufacturing loop of new eco-designed textile products, or even to use them in different applications (open loop), for example in the plastics industry. Creating value while saving resources is the objective of this virtuous circle.

The project strives to integrate the textile sector into the circular economy as a path for new, non-relocatable and employment-generating activities through the analysis of the offer of economic actors in the textile sector, the management of "End of Life" textile products and market demands in terms of products containing materials from recycling. The objective is to develop new collaborations, other economic models, as well as the sharing of knowledge to generate added value.

The challenge is ambitious, the supply of primary processing products from textile recycling must to meet demand, in quantity and quality. It is essential to know the available deposits, their characteristics and the expectations of the users of these recycled materials. The objective is to identify profitable value chains and bring together stakeholders, from waste/resource to eco-designed textile products. The end-result must be: creating value while saving resources.

Utexbel: a clear desire to close the loop

Techtextil is the ideal opportunity to present the garments made of recycled yarns produced by Utexbel, a company that participates in the RETEX project.

Utexbel is a family owned company, headquartered in Ronse, Belgium, and involved, with Retex, in the development of an industrial sector for the recycling of end-of-life clothing.

A vertically integrated company from fibre to finished fabric, Utexbel is specialized in technical and professional textiles. Public procurement and work cloths represent 40 % and 45 % of its turnover respectively, the rest divided between fashion markets and non-clothing technical fabrics. Every year, 8,000 tons of yarns and 13 million meters of fabrics leave its manufacturing units in Belgium, France and Morocco, which employ 900 people.

Utexbel is currently participating in a project set up by Retex, with the textiles innovation centre Centexbel, Laroche, manufacturer of recycling machines for the textile industry, Minot/Le Relais, specialized in the unraveling of textile material, a sheltered workshop and Dickies/Van Moer, a Dutch garment manufacturer. Purpose of the project being the recycling of end-of-life clothing. *"This is a key project because it should make it possible to validate the process from an industrial point of view,"* emphasizes Jean-Luc Derycke, Sustainable Development Director at Utexbel.

Utexbel succeeded in closing the loop by producing a fabric suitable for nurse clothing, based on end-of-life garments coming from Dutch hospitals collected by Van Moer. The sheltered workshop removed the hard parts and coloured pieces from the received garments, resulting in almost 100% white textile material. This was unraveled to fibre material by Minot/Le Relais and fed to the Utexbel spinning mill.

Utexbel succeeded in making a sliver with blend of 50% unraveled fibres together with 50% of industrial fibre waste, consisting of more than 90% Polyester fibres. The remaining part being cotton fibres coming from the end-of-life garments. This sliver was further blended with R-PET and virgin organic cotton slivers in order to get an end-composition of 67% Polyester/33% Cotton blend, which

was the initial blend of the garments. New yarns were spun and woven into a 210 g/m² fabric and delivered to Dickies/Van Moer for making up of new garments, which means that the loop is closed.

Utexbel is present at TECHTEXTIL - stand Hall 4.2 Belgian pavilion.

The value chains

RETEX has identified two other value chains under study:

1/ From cotton production waste: to make yarn again - the working group brings together French knitters including PETIT BATEAU and the spinner ESG present at TECHTEXTIL - stand Hall 4.2 Belgian pavilion - results available by July 2019.

2/ From polyester production waste to be transformed by plastics processing - recycling preparation tests are in progress at CENTEXBEL / VKC.

RETEX – Some Key Figures

INTERREG FRWVL

Project period: October 2016 to September 2020

The project responds to axis 1 of the INTERREG program -
Research, Innovation and Technology Transfer

Partnership:

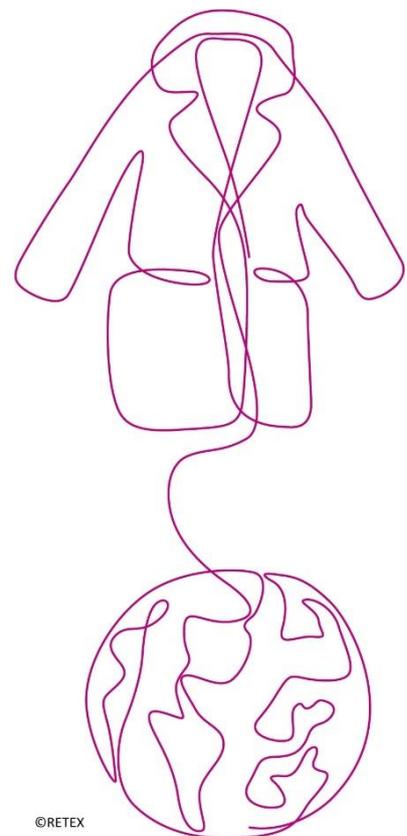
France: UP-tex (leader) / CD2E

Belgium: CENTEXBEL / FEDUSTRIA

Budget RETEX: 1 610 779 € - FEDER 885 928 €

RETEX is already

- More than 250 companies sensitized;
- 3 committed industrial value chains;
- More than 30 textile materials involved;
- More than 55,000 tons of purchase flows of identified textile raw materials;
- More than 6,600 tons of production waste



END OF PRESS RELEASE

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THE PARTNERS OF THE RETEX PROJECT

<p>UP-tex (project leader) <i>Textile competitiveness cluster - Hauts de France</i> The UP-tex competitiveness cluster brings together companies and researchers on innovation projects to address changes in textile markets and to anticipate new uses. UP-tex's objective is to boost the economic growth of the activity by developing new high value-added textile sectors. Contact: Jeanne MEILLIER / jeanne.meillier@up-tex.fr – Amandine SOUPLY / amandine.souply@clubtex.com</p>	
<p>Cd2e (partner operator) <i>Support to creation and development of Eco Enterprises - Hauts de France</i> CD2E is an association based in Haut-de-France whose mission is to facilitate the energy and ecological transitions of the regional economy and beyond. Within the RETEX project, the CD2E exchanges with all the actors involved in recycling value chains and studies their processes as precisely as possible. On the basis of these exchanges, a complete balance of incoming flows (energy resources, raw materials, etc.) and outgoing flows (emissions, waste, etc.) is established for the various processes in the value chain in order to create a data set, known as the Life Cycle Inventory (LCI). Ultimately, this inventory should make it possible to evaluate, using the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) method, the environmental impacts of the production of polyester/cotton yarn using recycled fibres. Comparing these results with those of textile manufacturing from virgin materials will make it possible to determine the environmental benefit of recycling. Contact: Romain BREUIL / r.breuil@cd2e.com</p>	
<p>CENTEXBEL / VKC (partner operator) <i>Research Centre - Flanders</i> CENTEXBEL, with the takeover of VKC, is one of the main European research centres for the textile and plastics industry; it represents 600 companies. The centre has equipment for characterization (quality analysis, certification, material conformity) and transformation of plastics and textiles. It is involved in various research projects to develop new products or processes. Contact: Daniël VERSTRAETE / daniel.verstraete@centexbel.be – Pierre VAN TRIMPONT / Pierre.Vantrimpont@tio3.be</p>	
<p>FEDUSTRIA (partner operator) <i>Federation - Wallonia</i> FEDUSTRIA is the Belgian federation of the textile, wood and furniture industry. FEDUSTRIA's mission is to help companies in the textile, wood and furniture industry to succeed in their development by protecting and</p>	

<p>strengthening their competitiveness. What goes through interventions as a representative of these sectors, an active advocacy of the common interests of the member companies, a broad range of specialized services, the development of a common training and meeting space for members and an accurate and rapid flow of information.</p> <p>Contact: Guy DE MUELENAERE / gdem@fedustria.be - Katja DE VOS / katja.devos@fedustria.be</p>	
<p>UIT NORD, (associate partner) <i>Professional union of textile industries - Hauts de France</i> UIT NORD supports textile companies in the economic, legal, social and environmental fields. It provides its members with a documentary database on the life of the markets, administrative documentation, etc. It carries out awareness-raising actions, identifies needs in terms of quality approaches, legal information and training. Contact: Eric MEZIN / eric.mezin@uitnord.fr</p>	
<p>TEAM2, (associate partner) Recycling competitiveness cluster - Hauts de France The team2 competitiveness cluster develops research and industrial applications in the field of eco-technologies, eco-materials, recycling and depollution in France. TEAM2 implements techniques specific to the circular economy, recycling and the life cycle of materials and materials. Contact: Eric STANIEK / e.staniel@team2.fr</p>	
<p>ECO TLC, (associate partner) Eco-organisation - France (at national level) ECO TLC (FR) collects the eco-contributions of TLC marketers (textile clothing, household linen, shoes), accredits sorting operators, allowing them to develop their activities, and supports local authorities in actions to raise citizens' awareness of TLC sorting. ECO TLC supports the development of new opportunities for sorted products by financing R&D projects Contact: Maud Hardy / m.hardy@ecotlc.fr</p>	
<p>RESOURCES, (associate partner) Federation of social and solidarity enterprises - Wallonia RESOURCES (W) is the federation of social economy enterprises active in waste reduction through the recovery, reuse and valorization of resources. The network has about sixty active members in Wallonia and the Brussels region, who receive, collect, sort, repair, recycle and resell products to which they give new life. RES-SOURCES acts to develop its network of members, by improving their visibility, representing them to the authorities, encouraging collaboration with the various actors in socio-economic life and involving them in innovative and federating projects. Contact: Audrey GODEFROID / a.godefroid@res-sources.be</p>	
<p>B.E.FIN - NEXT - (associate partner) Advisory and financial organism - Wallonia The programme to strengthen the Circular Economy applied to industrial policy in Wallonia, NEXT, is implemented by the "Société Régionale d'Investissement de Wallonie" via its subsidiary B.E. Fin. Its mission is to provide guidance to Circular Economy projects and to finance them. Contact: Francine TURCK / fturck@sriw.be</p>	

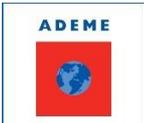
RETEX, PART OF THE GoToS3 PORTFOLIO

<p>GoToS3</p> <p>GoToS3 ("Let's move towards intelligent specialisation") is a portfolio of 16 projects from the Interreg V France-Wallonia-Vlaanderen cross-border cooperation programme. Within this portfolio, around the theme of intelligent specialisations, projects are asked to develop their complementarity and activities in order to optimise their results and achieve a much more significant impact on the territory.</p> <p>More info : H��l��ne CAILLE / hcaille@hautsdefrance-id.fr http://www.gotos3.eu/</p>	 <p>GoToS3</p> 
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