

## A watershed moment for social enterprises in the textiles sector

RREUSE welcomes the proposed text of the revision of the Waste Framework Directive as a major milestone in recognising the pivotal role of social enterprises active in re-use. The text published by the European Commission on 5<sup>th</sup> July rightfully acknowledges these social enterprises as key actors for the circular transition of the textile sector.

The Waste Framework Directive has been a key file for the RREUSE network. Finding 15 references to the role of social enterprises is highly encouraging and reflects RREUSE's concerted advocacy effort in linking circular and social policies at European Union level.

We are especially pleased that the proposed Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for textile takes into account the role of social economy actors. It mandates producers to financially support re-use activities of social enterprises, from textile collection to the treatment of residual waste. It also encourages collaboration with the social economy, including on the separate collection of textiles.

On the other hand, a point of concern is that the text lacks guidance on how social enterprises will be involved in the governance of the EPR schemes. Provisions on the use of social clauses or market reserves in public procurement of waste management services for social economy actors – already [in place in Spain](#) – are also missing, despite this being one of the most effective measures in unlocking the potential of social economy.

A positive development is that increasing the availability of second-hand clothing is identified as a key aim of the legislation. This is a major step toward ensuring that the separate collection of textiles takes place in line with the waste hierarchy. However, the lack of separate quantitative targets for prevention, re-use and preparation for re-use is a major missed opportunity. Including those targets would provide the necessary regulatory incentives for Member States to accelerate the growth of the second-hand textiles market.

The introduction of mandatory sorting to prevent the export of textile waste disguised as re-useable clothes outside of the EU is another welcome step as it will help counter illegal shipments and dumping in the Global South. It will be important to ensure that the implementation of these obligations does not create excessive administrative burden for social enterprises.

Lastly, allowing re-use operators to determine when collected textile waste legally ceases to be waste – after undergoing preparation for re-use such as cleaning and repairs – will provide much-needed legal certainty for social enterprises active in this area.

Edoardo Bodo, Environment Policy Officer, RREUSE: “The proposed revision of the Waste Framework Directive reflects both the historic role of social enterprises and their potential to create a more sustainable and inclusive future for textiles in Europe. This could be a watershed moment for the sector RREUSE represents. We call on the co-legislators to maintain the positive developments outlined in the proposal and to further strengthen the text to unlock the full potential of social economy.”

**For more information, please contact:**

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