



REIMAGINE FASHION

European
Social Innovation
Competition 2020



PRESS RELEASE

20 January 2020

European Commission launches the 2020 European Social Innovation Competition with €150,000 for three innovations in sustainable fashion

The European Commission is today announcing the launch of the 2020 edition of the European Social Innovation Competition. Under the theme *Reimagine Fashion: Changing behaviours for sustainable fashion*, this year's competition is looking for early stage projects that will change the ways we produce, buy, use and recycle fashion and encourage a more sustainable change in consumer behaviour. The competition is open to entrants from across the EU Member States and Horizon 2020 associated countries until the application deadline on Wednesday 4 March. A jury will select three winning ideas in November, each of which will receive an award of €50,000.

“European consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the environmental impacts of their consumer habits. Building on Europe’s position at the forefront of global fashion, this year’s social innovation competition is looking for innovations that change the ways we produce, use and wear fashion and encourage more sustainability across the fashion industry,” says Slawomir Tokarski, Director of Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing, DG GROW

The aim of the 2020 European Social Innovation Competition is to improve the environmental and social impact of fashion. EU citizens on average buy more than 12kgs of clothing yearly, the production of which contributes 195 million tonnes of CO₂ to the atmosphere and uses 46 billion cubic meters of water. Clothing accounts for between 2% and 10% of the environmental impact of overall EU consumption. At the same time, more than 30% of clothes in Europeans' wardrobes have not been used for at least a year. Once discarded, over half the garments are not recycled, but end up in mixed household waste and are subsequently sent to incinerators or landfill.

To address these issues, this year's competition is looking for ideas that contribute to improving the sustainable production, use and consumption of fashion as well as the end of life stage of fashion products. These ideas should aim to reduce the overall environmental footprint of fashion, improve its societal impact, and help change



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behaviours in a sustainable way by helping to develop new products, services, processes and innovative business models. Solutions presented at the competition should also be scalable at the local, national or European levels. The competition is open to all with innovative and creative ideas on making the fashion industry more sustainable, including social innovators, entrepreneurs, students, designers, businesses and other doers, makers and change creators.

The competition will complement several measures the Commission has already implemented to address the problem of sustainability in fashion. The [circular economy package](#), adopted in 2018, will for the first time, require Member States to ensure that textiles are collected separately. The new [Waste Directive](#) requires Member States to set up such schemes at the latest by 2025. The [Packaging Waste Directive](#) introduces targets for the recycling 60% of all packaging by 2025 and 70% by 2030. The currently binding [Textile Regulation](#) of 2011 lays down rules for labelling and marking of all textile products, including an obligation to state the full fibre composition of textile products at all stages of industrial processing and commercial distribution, and rules on textile fibre names.

End notes:

Applications are open until Wednesday 4th March noon CET. For full details visit: <https://eusic.challenges.org/> or go to https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/innovation/policy/social/competition_en

More information about European Social Innovation Competition:

Launched in memory of social innovation pioneer Diogo Vasconcelos, the European Social Innovation Competition is a challenge prize run by the European Commission across all EU Member States and Horizon 2020 associated countries. Now in its 8th year, the Competition acts as a beacon for social innovators in Europe, employing a proven methodology for supporting early-stage ideas and facilitating a network of radical innovators shaping society for the better. Each year the Competition addresses a different issue facing Europe.

This year, the focus is: **Reimagine Fashion: Changing behaviours for sustainable fashion.** Today's launch of the competition online will be followed by a formal launch event in Valencia, Spain on 12 February, as well as a series of post-launch webinars. Thirty semi-finalists will be invited to the European Social Innovation Academy in July

