



VERDEinMED

Interreg  
Euro-MED



Co-funded by  
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# VERDEinMED Final Conference

## Flash Report



Thessaloniki, Greece – 13 March 2026





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## VERDEinMED Final Conference Flash Report

### Executive Summary

The VERDEinMED Final Conference marked the culmination of the Interreg Euro-MED VERDEinMED project, bringing together policymakers, researchers, companies, innovation projects, and civil society organisations to discuss the future of **sustainable and circular textiles in the Mediterranean region**. The event provided a platform to present the project's key results while facilitating dialogue among European initiatives working on textile sustainability, circular economy solutions, digital innovation, and policy frameworks. The conference highlighted that the transformation of the textile sector requires **coordinated action across the entire value chain**, combining scientific knowledge, business support, policy instruments, technological innovation and consumer engagement.



### Target Groups and Participants

The conference was designed to engage a broad range of stakeholders involved in the **textile ecosystem and circular economy transition**. **61 participants** attended the conference, included representatives from:

- textile and fashion companies, including SMEs and manufacturers
- research institutions and universities
- public authorities and policymakers
- chambers of commerce, innovation clusters and platforms
- European cooperation projects
- civil society organizations and consumer groups.

This diverse participation enabled dialogue across the **entire textile value chain**, from research and policy development to industrial implementation and consumer behavior.

### Opening session - Strengthening Mediterranean Cooperation

**Speaker:** Haris Paliogiannis – MIO-ECSDE



The opening presentation focused on the **Innovative Sustainable Economy (ISE) Mission** under the Interreg Euro-MED Programme. Haris Paliogiannis highlighted the role of governance initiatives in connecting thematic projects and facilitating the **transfer and reuse of knowledge across Mediterranean territories**. The ISE Community of Practice currently brings together **231 partners from 18 countries**, representing public authorities, academia, private sector organizations and civil society. The initiative aims to ensure that project results translate into practical policy solutions and long-term cooperation across the region.



Please click [here](#) for the presentation.

## Workshop 1: From Evidence to Action: Knowledge Transfer for Sustainable Textiles

### Speakers:

- Viktor Kouloumpis – European Commission Joint Research Centre,
- Tilla Kross – Textile European Technology Platform,
- Iro Kofokotsiou – Fashion for Good

The opening workshop explored how scientific methodologies and collaborative innovation ecosystems can support the transition toward sustainable textiles.

Please click [here](#) for the presentations.

### Sustainability metrics and EU policy frameworks

Viktor Kouloumpis presented the role of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in developing **scientific tools supporting EU textile policy**. Methodologies such as Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) help evaluate environmental impacts across the entire life cycle of textile products. These tools are increasingly used to inform policy initiatives such as the **Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR)** and the upcoming **Digital Product Passport**, which aim to improve transparency and sustainability across supply chains.

### Collaboration across innovation ecosystems

Tilla Kross introduced the **ECOSYSTEX Community of Practice**, which connects EU-funded textile innovation projects. By facilitating collaboration between research institutions, industry actors and policymakers, the initiative helps accelerate the translation of research results into practical solutions.



## Scaling sustainable innovations

Iro Kofokotsiou presented the work of **Fashion for Good**, an innovation platform supporting the development and scaling of sustainable textile technologies. A key challenge identified during the session was the gap between **pilot-stage innovation and large-scale market adoption**. Scaling circular textile solutions requires infrastructure investment, policy support and stronger collaboration across the value chain.



### Key Insight:

While the green transition of the TCLF sector faces challenges—including data reliability, technological efficiency, stakeholder engagement, and funding—collaboration across research, industry, and policy is vital to scaling circular textile solutions.

## Workshop 2: Presentation of key insights from VERDEinMED business

### Speakers:

- Sofia Plakantonaki – CERTH,
- Diego Mattioli – Confindustria Umbria,
- Brigida Stanziola – Legambiente

The second workshop presented the main outcomes of the VERDEinMED project, focusing on business support services and stakeholder engagement initiatives.

Please click [here](#) for the presentations.

### Overview of the project



Sofia Plakantonaki introduced the project’s objectives and achievements. VERDEinMED aims to **reduce textile waste and promote circular economy practices across the Mediterranean region**. The project developed several tools supporting the textile ecosystem, including a [knowledge platform](#), regional VERDE hubs and a **Technical Assistance Service (TAS)** for companies.

### Mentoring SMEs for sustainability



Diego Mattioli presented the results of the Technical Assistance Service mentoring programme. The initiative provided **tailored support for textile SMEs**, helping companies measure environmental performance, develop circular business models and prepare for new regulatory requirements. Participating companies developed sustainability roadmaps and pilot initiatives, demonstrating the value of targeted mentoring in supporting SMEs during sustainability transitions.



### Consumer awareness and Living Labs



Brigida Stanziola presented VERDEinMED’s **consumer engagement activities**, including [communication campaigns](#) and Living Lab workshops. These initiatives highlighted the importance of improving consumer awareness regarding textile waste and promoting more sustainable consumption patterns.

### Roundtable 1: Highlighting Results and Impacts

#### Participants

**Clara Mallart Lacruz (Moethika)**, Mentor / Impact-Driven Business Models (vegetable dyes)

**Villy Charitopoulou (AXION COTTON)**, Beneficiary / Recycling and reuse of PPE

**Daniela Zavec (Titera innovative technologies)**, Mentor / Recycling and reuse of PPE

**Sara Garcia Rojas (Mayoral Group)**, Beneficiary / Decarbonization Strategy

**Marco Cardinalini (Cardinalini & C. Spa)**, Beneficiary / Data-Driven Environmental Sustainability

The roundtable demonstrated the significant impact of the VERDEinMED project’s business support and mentoring services. It facilitated a direct exchange between **textile enterprises**—all actively pursuing sustainability and circularity—and **international mentors**, who provided the technical and strategic expertise necessary to drive innovation.





The roundtable was divided into two core pillars. First, it addressed the **Challenges of the Textile System**, seeking to categorize the most critical technological and regulatory hurdles while documenting how these issues materialize in practice. Second, the focus shifted to **Barriers and Opportunities**, exploring how circular principles can be transformed into strategic advantages. Key areas of reflection included the impact of professional mentoring, required organizational changes, and the long-term benefits regarding innovation and reputation, with a specific lens on the scalability of these solutions.

**In addressing the first pillar**, stakeholders noted that the transition toward a circular textile system is currently hindered by the need for collaborative schemes that effectively bridge the gap between logistics and consumer behavior. A primary concern is the practical integration of available data to generate tangible added value, particularly in meeting the specific demands of suppliers. To support this, the research and innovation sector requires both flexibility and sustained financial investment. Furthermore, participants emphasized that supply chain traceability is paramount, noting that the transition's success depends heavily on optimizing delivery timelines and ensuring the consistent quality of recycled fibers.

**To transform these constraints into opportunities**, a robust legislative framework is required to guide industrial transformation. Key strategies identified include the promotion of "buying less" and the creation of redesigned supply chains that integrate cleaning and repair services. Specific protocols for the reuse of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes were highlighted as essential incentives for both companies and consumers.

## Roundtable 2: Synergies Across the Textile Value Chain

### Speakers:

- Amela Ikić Suljagić – SERDA
- Cumhuriçbirakmaz – Aegean Exporters' Associations
- Manolis Tsantakis – ena Development Consultants
- Valentina Oliviero – CUEIM
- Katarina Momčilović Matic – Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia
- Dora Paşçhali – Regional Association of Solid Waste Management Agencies of Central Macedonia

This session highlighted several European initiatives addressing different aspects of the textile sustainability transition.



**Circular innovation and waste management:** Amela Ilic Suljagic presented the [Green-Tex project](#), which promotes sustainable textile production and waste management through cross-border collaboration and pilot actions.

**Digital traceability and policy tools:** Manolis Tsantakis introduced the [TRUSTex project](#), which explores Extended Producer

Responsibility schemes and blockchain-based **Digital Product Passports** to improve supply chain transparency.

**Skills for the green transition:** Katarina Momcilovic Matic presented the [AEQUALIS4TCLF project](#), which develops vocational training programmes and micro-credentials for the textile, clothing, leather and footwear industries.

**AI and digital education for textiles:** Cumhur Isbirakmaz presented the [TechStyle project](#), which integrates artificial intelligence into textile education and training through digital learning platforms.

**Supporting SMEs and innovation ecosystems:** Valentina Oliviero presented the [MEDinCHAMBERS project](#), which strengthens the role of chambers of commerce in supporting textile SMEs through sustainability assessment, training activities and innovation hubs and living labs.

**Repair and circular communities:** Dora Paschali introduced the [REPPER project](#), which promotes repair networks and community initiatives aimed at extending product lifetimes and reducing textile waste.

Please click [here](#) for the presentations.

## Discussion

The operational transformation of the textile sector requires the deployment of real-time systems and market-ready technical solutions, particularly in circular design, advanced sorting, and high-efficiency recycling. However, this transition is currently stalled by a significant "skills gap" in both green competencies and AI proficiency, alongside a lack of dedicated vocational training and physical infrastructure for repair services. To bridge these gaps, chambers of commerce must be enhanced to facilitate a broader mindset change. Furthermore, navigating the fragmented landscape of European EPR schemes requires a unified approach to waste collection and reuse. By leveraging digital platforms and collaborative networks like ECOSYSTEX to disseminate project outcomes and foster material alliances, the industry can harmonize its efforts and ensure that circular innovations are effectively scaled and transferred across the entire value chain.

## Workshop 3: Public Procurement for Sustainable and Circular Textiles





**Speaker:** Edwin Maes – Centexbel

The final presentation explored how **public procurement can drive demand for sustainable textile products**. Public authorities purchase large volumes of textiles, including uniforms and workwear. By integrating sustainability criteria into procurement processes, public buyers can stimulate innovation and support circular business models. Edwin Maes emphasized the importance of clear procurement specifications, credible sustainability claims and the use of Total Cost of Ownership when evaluating bids.



Please click [here](#) for the presentation.

### Closing Remarks

**Chrysovalantis Ketikidis – CERTH**

In the final remarks of the conference, **Chrysovalantis Ketikidis**, Project Coordinator of VERDEinMED, provided a summary of the key messages emerging from the day's discussions.



Reflecting on the sessions and contributions from speakers and project partners, he highlighted that the VERDEinMED initiative has successfully created a **collaborative environment bringing together research, industry, policymakers and civil society** to address the challenges of textile sustainability in the Mediterranean region.

He emphasized that the discussions throughout the conference demonstrated the importance of **connecting innovation, policy frameworks, and practical implementation**. From sustainability metrics and technological solutions to mentoring services for SMEs and circular procurement strategies, the conference showcased how different actors are contributing to the transformation of the textile sector.

Concluding the event, he stressed that the progress achieved through VERDEinMED should serve as a foundation for **continued cooperation and knowledge exchange across Mediterranean regions**, ensuring that the project's results contribute to long-term impact and the broader transition toward a circular textile economy.

**Site visit to Colora S.A.**



The site visit to [Colora S.A.](#) in Thessaloniki provided participants with valuable insights into modern textile processing and innovation in the fashion industry. Founded in 1926, the company specializes in fabric dyeing, printing, and finishing, combining nearly a century of expertise with advanced technologies and sustainable production practices. During the visit, participants had the opportunity to learn about the company's production processes, its role in the textile value chain, and how innovation and skilled workforce contribute to high-quality fabric manufacturing for international fashion markets.

