

ENVIRONMENTAL AMBASSADORS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
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Textile and fashion within circular economy concept

Delivering on Circular Economy globally, in EU and Serbia

Practicing environment is key for the quality of life of current and future generations.

Transition to circular economy includes:

Maintaining the **value** of products, materials and resources in the economy for as long as possible

Minimizing **waste generation**

Boosting our **competitiveness** with new business opportunities and innovative products and services

Bringing economic, social and environmental **gains**

Circular economy action areas include production, consumption, and waste management, secondary raw materials with innovations, investigation and monitoring.

The World Economic Forum hosts and facilitates the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy.

As part of its continuous effort to transform Europe's economy into a more sustainable one and to implement the ambitious Circular Economy Action Plan, in January 2018 the European Commission adopted a new set of measures, including:

- A Europe-wide EU Strategy for Plastics in the Circular Economy and annex to transform the way plastics and plastics products are designed produced, used and recycled. By 2030, all plastics packaging should be recyclable.
- A Communication on options to address the interface between chemical, product and waste legislation that assesses how the rules on waste, products and chemicals relate to each other.
- A Monitoring Framework on progress towards a circular economy at EU and national level. It is composed of a set of ten key indicators which cover each phase – i.e. production, consumption, waste management and secondary raw materials – as well as economic aspects – investments and jobs - and innovation.

Circular Economy is accommodated in Sustainable Development Goals:

GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
GOAL 13: Climate Action
GOAL 14: Life below Water
GOAL 15: Life on Land

- A Report on Critical Raw Materials and the circular economy that highlights the potential to make the use of the 27 critical materials in our economy more circular.

The proposed actions will contribute to "closing the loop" of product lifecycles through greater recycling and re-use, and bring benefits for both the environment and the economy.

The compilation on circular activity activities in Serbia is presented in "Serbian National Profile 2018" prepared for EEA 2018 *edition of the More from Less report* (EASD also contributed). Transition to circular economy will help Serbia (and region) to meet its international (and EU) commitments.

53 million tons of clothing is produced each year

87% of this ends up in landfill or is incinerated

Circular economy case study: textile and fashion within circular economy concept

The fashion and textile industry is one of the world's most polluting and resource-intensive industries (high consumption of energy, water, chemicals, pesticides, etc.)

Textile value chains are:

- global and very complex,
- represent a diversity of chemicals.

In average we wear on regular basis about 20% of cloths we bought.

Circular economy in fashion and textile area means:

- refuse (do not buy unsustainable produced clothes, it is your responsibility to know where the clothes come from),
- think how you wash and take care about cloths you have,
- share (clothes),
- reuse (textile as textile)/ circulate;
- sort (final rest overs),
- recycle and return (possible within take-back system).

Textile recycling is better than throwing away.

Textile-to-textile recycling is more circular economy than general textile recycling (now day's textile recycling in practice means that 90% textile is mechanical chopping/cutting for isolation and similar uses).

In Serbia, total of about 1550 companies operating in this sector; most relevant manufacturers of textile products are in Belgrade, Arilje, Pozarevac, Subotica, Cacak; we export to Russia, Italy, Germany; we import textiles from Italy, Turkey, China, Germany.

The power of consumers

Each of us, as consumers, have to think (and right to know and ask if not labeled) where fabric come from (even cotton grow from seed to crop, gets picked, processed, spun, dyed, woven, cut and sewn).

Each of us, have to rethink do we buy only cloths we need.

Rethink your choices and values. Choose wisely when you shop. Choose very carefully where you spend your money.

We have to rethink education curricula for fashion designers! They have to be educated on SDGs, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable production throughout the supply chain.

Prof dr Andjelka Mihajlov ,
Environmental Ambassador for Sustainable Development

The power of designers

By designing in style, designers are giving us option to find identity. It is challenge for designers to design sustainable fashion.

To do list for **product sustainability** for fashion designers:

Encourage life cycle thinking

Engage with customers and suppliers

Understand exactly where your product or service adds value

Know where your environmental hot spots are

Measure, monitor and manage

Turn waste into resources

Keep up to date with policy and regulation requirements

Use sound science in your decisions

Ensure transparency

The power of social acceptability

It is always risk of slavery somewhere along the supply chain and/or unacceptable working conditions are accompanying process of clothes production.

You have to refuse these products!

Rethink clothing, fashion and style-actions in the selected Eco-schools in Serbia: upcycling vs down-cycling

Steps towards textile to textile recycling:

Use of readily available recycling material (like polyester from PET bottles, pre-consumer textile waste) in single NEW product

Trials using more difficult waste products (like fishing nets, **post-consumer textile waste**) **Circulate and upcycle used textile**

Application to more products in the brand's collection (or make your own style)

Design for ease of disassembly and recycling

Establish take-back system

.....full closed loop

What we did: textile rest overs and unused cloths we collect and use to make other textile products (we practice upcycle – not down cycle of textile) with enthusiastic help of pupils and teachers in Schools for elementary and medium education with pupil housing in Sombor and Umka, and Home for persons with disabilities “Hearth in Jabuka” in Jabuka. Products made by hearth are “silent books”, bags, decorative items, aprons, covers, etc. And – finally we are having the fair as the fiesta of idea and action.

Our action is also important and **fully inclusive of persons with disabilities** (by inclusion schools for the pupils with special needs from Eco-schools network in Serbia).

Your action is also important

You could “walk” circular economy concept by refuse, share, reuse, sort, recycle and return. Start with checking clothing label.

Promote and replicate action, and be ambassador in rethinking clothing, fashion and style.

Your identity should not be this year fashion and “new arrivals” , but - this could be very unique dress you make from old one, and for sure – you will avoid stereotypes. To be part of re-sale market is fine too.

What also you can do? Promote and replicate action, and **be ambassador in rethinking clothing, fashion and style**. Celebrate the elements of fashion that you don’t see everywhere, that don’t cost the earth.

YOU can transform your life with education: move from today’s stereotypes in fashion and be innovative.

Aleksandra Mladenovic,
Environmental Ambassadors for
Sustainable Development
President