



European Apparel and Textile Confederation
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European Commission Vice-President Tajani outlines the future EU industrial policy and his specific priorities for the textile and clothing sector at the General Assembly of Euratex

“I will support industry as without industry, without companies and without SMEs, at the end of this crisis, we will not have the jobs and the growth that the EU needs in future. Therefore I will work to improve the functioning of the Internal Market as an instrument to provide jobs.” It is in those terms that EC Vice-President and Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship Antonio Tajani opened the 2010 Euratex, the European Apparel and Textile Confederation held its Annual General Assembly in Brussels on June 10th, 2010. More than 160 participants from industry across Europe as well as many representatives of the European institutions attended the public session under the title *“Sustainability in the European Apparel and Textile Industry”*.

In his opening keynote speech to the event Vice-President Tajani outlined his priorities for the future EU industrial policy in general and the textile and clothing industry in particular. He highlighted six distinct areas that he expects to tackle with concrete policy measures in the coming years in favour of the industry and of the textile and clothing sector. These include:

- Stimulate more innovation as important driving force for industrial competitiveness with suitable EU support policies and programmes;
- Promote a more efficient use of natural resources especially raw materials, water and energy;
- Reinforce framework policies and programmes to create an environment conducive to SMEs activities (transaction costs reduction, clustering, access to finance, etc.);
- Implement policies to accompany the necessary on-going industrial restructuring and modernisation processes;
- Preserve and promote an EU qualified work force, key for the maintenance of a European industrial capabilities;
- Work toward global fair trade for EU companies to preserve EU competitiveness (regulatory convergence; reciprocity in FTAs, etc.)

Summarising his thoughts he admitted that it will be a challenge to reconcile climate change policies and industrial policies but that needs to be achieved that he is optimistic that it can be done successfully. In concluding Vice-President Tajani undertake to *“work in the next five years of my mandate for the competitiveness and guardianship of your industry (ndr: textile and clothing).”*

“I would like to show gratitude to Vice-President Tajani for all the excellent work he has carried out recently in the defence of our textile and clothing industry interests supporting the idea of a better coordination between the industrial and the trade policies. Both policies must be complementary and mutually supportive; must be at the service of our exporters and must work in intelligence for the maintenance and the strengthening of a strong competitive manufacturing basis in Europe and a vivid European textile and clothing industry” concluded Dr Peter Pfneisl Euratex President in his comments.

He cited also several successful past and current projects which Euratex jointly implemented with the European Commission's Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry, such as the Lead Market Initiative on Protective Textiles or the eBIZ project. Euratex's President said *"Vice-President Tajani, we are looking forward to continue working very closely with you and your services to ensure that the European industrial policy provides a framework contributing to the sustainable competitiveness of our textile and clothing industry in Europe."*

Speaking after Mr. Tajani, the Chair of the Alliance for a Competitive European Industry (ACEI), Ms. Teresa Presas, conveyed the key priorities contained in the recently published Manifesto "Shifting Gears for a New Industrial Policy" calling for a new partnership between the EU and its major industries. Referring to certain recent political initiatives which seem overambitious, unrealistic or even contradictory she underlined that *"More realism is needed to reconcile climate change policies and industrial policies and Europe can only succeed in this process with a spirit of partnership and with coordinated action."*

The rest of the public part of the Euratex General Assembly was devoted to the sustainability in the textile and clothing industry with examples from companies aimed at providing food for thoughts on: how the textile and clothing sector is sustainable in the wider sense of the term and what could be done to improve its performance in these areas.

More information about this event, key speeches, photo of the event and the activities of Euratex is available at www.euratex.eu

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