

GftZ (Future of Textiles Association) for an Extended Producer Responsibility for Textiles

Textile recycling – an inevitable challenge

The sales volumes of textiles increase at a rapid pace and have doubled between 2000 and 2015. Simultaneously, the quality of many goods decreases. Thus, many textiles are worn for a shorter period of time than in the past and new textiles are purchased at shorter intervals. The proportion of used textiles unfit for reuse will increase.

The volumes of used textiles will increase, especially through the implementation of the Waste Framework Directive, according to which used textiles must be collected separately nationwide from 2025 onwards. The volumes of used textiles unfit for reuse will increase. Therefore, textile recycling is an inevitable challenge.

At present, the collection of used textiles is financed by the sale of used textiles which are still intact and marketable. It is to be expected that this financing model will not be viable in the future. Furthermore, in order to utilize the resources from used textiles in the production of new products, a change is necessary. Thus, the GftZ recommends an extended producer responsibility (EPR) for textiles.

Within the scope of the competition it must be guaranteed that all companies must fulfill the same requirements. Political decisions and regulations with a precise description free of interpretation concerning the tasks and obligations are necessary. This challenge can only be overcome together. Producers and disposal companies need to work closely together.

Through this, an operative system can be established to fund the costs for infrastructure, communication, advanced training, research and development. In particular, the fees should close the funding gaps for the additional effort of a high-quality recycling.

Through the principle of EPR, regulations for the design for recyclable products or the use of recycled fibers can be determined. This way only, recycling technologies with the goal of fiber recovery from used textiles on an industrial scale can be established.

In Germany, there is a large area coverage in regards to the collection of used textiles. However, there are no regulations or incentives for producers to make their products recyclable or to use recycled fibers from used textiles. Thus, appropriate framework regulations for the implementation in individual or collective solutions are in high demand.

In a discussion paper, the GftZ (Future of Textiles Association) has addressed the subject of “Backgrounds and strategies for the development of a system for an extended producer responsibility”, available at www.textile-zukunft.de.

About Gemeinschaft für textile Zukunft (GftZ - Future of Textiles Association)

A sustainable use of textiles and a high-quality collection, sorting and recycling of used textiles are the goals pursued by the GftZ since its foundation in 2014. Partners of the GftZ, with its headquarters based in Berlin, are companies with daily business in collection, sorting, recycling and marketing of used textiles.

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