

INVESTMENT PLAN FOR EUROPE TO SUPPORT EUROPEAN SILK SECTOR?

Textile and fashion industry in the Investment Plan for Europe

In March 2016, the European Commission's DG GROW invited the representatives of the textile, fashion and creative industries to a workshop on the EU funding opportunities for our sector. More than a hundred participants attended this event with the aim to get a better understanding of practical ways to participate in the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) which drives the Investment Plan for Europe.

In his opening speech, the Director for Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing from DG GROW **Stawomir Tokarski** stated that the EFSI, operational since one year, have already landed about €50 billion in the European business. The EFSI supports investments in real economy – infrastructure, education, research and innovation, as well as risk finance for small businesses.

'Towards European Sericulture' – could the EU boost this project?

Industry representatives were invited to present projects to be submitted for the EU funding. The European silk industry, approached by EURATEX, unveiled its project 'Towards European Sericulture'.



Philippe de Montgrand, President of AIUFFASS Silk Section, emphasised that silk industry in Europe has a long tradition combined with a strong capacity to innovate. About 200 silk producing SMEs are concentrated in Lombardy (Italy) and Rhône-Alpes (France) providing 20,000 direct jobs. Currently, raw silk supplies mainly depend on China and the EU fashion brands and silk manufacturers are concerned by the long term access to high quality raw silk and the risk of supply shortage.

This set agenda for the new industry-driven European sericulture project. The preliminary study conducted with the participation of Marzotto S.p.A., Ratti S.p.A, HTH and silk research centres, concluded that there is an evident need for a project which will use advanced research and disruptive technologies to develop an innovative and sustainable sericulture and reeling sector in Europe.



‘Towards European Sericulture’ is a long term project which will combine research and investments aimed to re-appropriate the knowledge of sericulture, continuously improve the quality of raw material and secure its supply. At this stage the European silk industry is seeking the EU support in research and skills development, as well as financial backing for the industrial investment.

During this workshop, the experts presenting the EU funding schemes for the companies, proved that the projects of a kind – comprising broader economic benefits for the society – may find practical support from the EU.

EURATEX - the European Apparel and Textile Confederation, is the political voice of the textile and clothing industry in Europe. Our mission is to create a favourable environment within the European Union for manufacturing of textile and fashion products. The EU textile and clothing industry, including manmade fibres, remains an essential pillar of the local economy across the EU regions. EURATEX member federations represent in the EU some 173,000 companies of an industry with a turnover of €165 billion, employing 1.66 million workers.

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