VENICE SUSTAINABLE FASHION FORUM

SHAPING TOMORROW
5th EDITION
NOVEMBER 5th, 6th
FONDAZIONE GIORGIO CINI
VENICE

PRESS RELEASE

VENICE SUSTAINABLE FASHION FORUM 2026
FASHION: FROM VENICE, A CHALLENGE TO 2035 – INNOVATING TO KEEP MANUFACTURING IN ITALY

The fifth edition of the Forum concludes with an agenda for businesses and institutions: artificial intelligence, new materials and an Italy–France alliance to strengthen supply chains. A call to policymakers for stable investment, regulatory certainty and support for skills development.

Venice, november 6th 2026 – Giving the Italian and European fashion supply chain a long-term industrial outlook, creating the conditions for businesses to invest, innovate and continue manufacturing in Italy in a sustainable and competitive way. This is the message that the Venice Sustainable Fashion Forum is addressing to policymakers and industry stakeholders at the close of its fifth edition, held on 5th and 6th November at the Giorgio Cini Foundation, on the Island of San Giorgio in Venice.

Promoted by Confindustria Moda and Confindustria Veneto Est under the title "Shaping Tomorrow", the Forum links the protection of Italy's manufacturing heritage with the ability to transform it. The concluding "Road to 2035" agenda combines calls for institutional action with commitments from businesses: collaboration between brands and suppliers, applied innovation, economically viable circularity, appropriate financial instruments, business integrity and skills development.

Road to 2035: policy priorities and practical proposals

Confindustria Moda and Confindustria Veneto Est are putting forward **five proposals** to national and European institutions, developed with the contribution of TEHA, the Forum's Scientific Advisor, and built around three pillars: innovation, circularity and resilience. The proposals originate from the districts and supply chains where fashion is manufactured. They identify the stakeholders responsible, the actions to be taken and the relevant timelines, from 2026 to 2035. Businesses and associations each have a role to play; policymakers are called upon to establish the public policy framework needed to support investment and operational decision-making. The proposals are aligned with the vision of the **National Strategic Plan for Fashion** (developed by Confindustria Moda and Confindustria Accessori Moda), which brings together innovation and AI, circularity, business integrity and human capital.

Stable investment and innovation for SMEs: Policymakers are called upon to ensure continuity in support measures for research, AI and the transition, while simplifying access to national and European funding. The TEHA study complements this objective with three practical actions: shared innovation managers across SME networks to support access to funding programmes; the integration of climate-related signals into collection, delivery and purchasing planning; and a permanent Lifestyle Ecosystem Forum bringing together fashion, home, beauty, hospitality and culture.

Supply chain agreements and shared investment: Institutions and the banking sector are called upon to facilitate access to financial resources, enabling suppliers to plan investment and growth, while businesses are encouraged to strengthen collaborative networks in order to share costs, risks and benefits. The study identifies several practical measures, including multi-year agreements between brands and strategic suppliers, based on long-term or volume commitments, co-financing or guarantees, and measurable outcomes. It also proposes pilot projects in two or three industrial districts, involving banks in financing the supply chain.

Circularity, infrastructure and market demand: Policymakers are urged to establish a clear operational framework for textile Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) as a matter of urgency, remove barriers that disadvantage circular solutions and support the development of the necessary infrastructure. The supply chain, in turn, must ensure product quality and continuity of demand. Concrete steps include creating demand for recycled fibres through progressive targets, traceability, public procurement and brand purchasing commitments, as well as developing district-level sorting and pre-processing hubs, supported by a shared cost-monitoring observatory.
Legality and a level playing field: Institutions are called upon to complement the monitoring of working conditions with effective import controls, including on small consignments, and to apply the same European rules to imported products in order to protect workers, responsible businesses and the value of manufacturing. At an operational level, TEHA proposes the development of a shared, independently verified social and labour assessment that can be used by multiple clients, reducing duplicated audits, alongside the publication of an annual industry report based on verifiable indicators.

Skills and continuity of manufacturing heritage: Policies are needed to anticipate workforce requirements and strengthen Higher Technical Institutes (ITS), apprenticeships and lifelong learning, making fashion-related professions more attractive to younger generations. Practical measures should include workforce planning by professional profile and industrial district, continuous training, and regular, traceable recruitment channels.

The message to institutions is clear: these priorities must be brought together through consistent policies, reliable measures and verifiable results. Italy–France cooperation can help build common positions at European level, while industrial districts can become testing grounds for experimentation and implementation. Businesses, in turn, must translate these commitments into projects and investment. Sustainability and competitiveness require a shared effort among those who set the rules, those who provide financing and those who manufacture.

STATEMENTS

Luca Sburlati, President of Confindustria Moda

"We are calling on policymakers to recognise the Textile and Fashion industry as one of the country's industrial priorities and to provide it with a long-term outlook. We have the businesses, skills and technologies needed to address this transformation, but we need continuity in support measures, access to investment and clear, predictable rules that enable responsible manufacturers to compete in the global market: this is what sustainability means. The National Strategic Plan for Fashion 2035 has been developed to bring together innovation, circularity, business integrity and human capital: four areas that must become part of a single industrial agenda, independent of political affiliation. Businesses also have a responsibility to play their part by strengthening relationships between brands and the supply chain and sharing investment risks. Protecting Made in Italy means creating the conditions for its manufacturing industry to evolve and remain in Italy, offering opportunities to younger generations and ensuring that talent does not have to seek them elsewhere."

Andrea Favaretto Rubelli, Vice President of the Fashion System Group at Confindustria Veneto Est

"Shaping Tomorrow invites us to imagine the industry of tomorrow and create the conditions today for it to continue growing and competing. We have discussed the protection of fashion supply chains, a cornerstone of Made in Italy, where legality and integrity are values that admit no compromise.

The transition towards sustainability must be actively promoted, with investment supported by clear and predictable regulations. We must invest in skills and technologies, above all AI, to make innovation effective and drive the development of new products. We have also examined changing consumer behaviour, including the impact of climate change. Proposals must start from local territories, and Veneto is ready to become a national testing ground for synergies between industrial districts, brands and suppliers. However, solutions require a strong alliance at national and European level, as well as a long-term industrial policy. Shaping Tomorrow means taking responsibility for clear decisions, so that by 2035 we can have a stronger, more sustainable industry, capable of generating new value and maintaining our country's leadership in the fashion system."

A recap of the second day: from strategies to industrial applications

The second day, opened by contributions from Lara Ponti, Vice President for Sustainability at Confindustria, and Stefano Festa Marzotto, President of IAF, explored how strategies can be translated into operational decisions. During the session "Driving Transformation", Andrea Rosso of OTB focused on the role of senior management and the integration of creative direction, CEOs, CFOs and sustainability functions in decisions concerning orders, production, inventory and suppliers. Davide Triacca of Salvatore Ferragamo addressed implementation pathways across the supply chain. Michele Gasparini, ANFAO Vice President for Sustainability and Plant Director at Trenti Industria Occhiali, linked production efficiency, waste reduction and performance measurement, also highlighting the Certified Sustainable Eyewear environmental certification.

With Federica Marchionni, CEO of Global Fashion Agenda, the discussion addressed water-related risks and collective industry responses, focusing on the role of CFOs in assessing sustainability risks and directing investment. Erika Andreetta, Partner at PwC Italy and EMEA Fashion & Luxury Leader, also took part in the panel. On the innovation front, the session "AI Wear the Change" featured Eugenio Puddu and Gianluca Loparco of Deloitte, who explored the contribution of artificial intelligence to competitiveness and sustainability. They highlighted how reliable data can support product discovery, customer experience, procurement and production planning, as well as more efficient and traceable supply chain decisions. Virtual prototyping and material optimisation can also help reduce waste and development times.

In a conversation with Andrea Cabrini, Sandro Veronesi, President of Oniverse, shared his vision of the future and explored the three dimensions of sustainability – environmental, social and economic – through the experience of the group.

The textile industry also looked beyond fashion towards technology-intensive markets, from space to marine ecosystems. In "Innovation That Matters", Marcello Azzoni of Spacewear presented the experience of developing clothing for astronauts in intravehicular environments, where design, ergonomics and advanced materials come together with smart textiles. Cristina Leone, President of the National Aerospace Technology Cluster (CTNA), examined the contribution of technical textiles to the aerospace supply chain, where reliability, qualification and collaboration between major industry players and SMEs are essential. This topic is also addressed in the White Paper "Technical Textiles for Space", developed within the CTNA by a working group coordinated by Confindustria Moda. Fabrizio Picariello, CEO of Tex Tech, described the company's evolution from traditional manufacturing to deployable satellite antennas and textile structures designed to support the regeneration of marine habitats. From a different perspective, Roberto Bardini, CEO of RRD, explored the transfer of technologies from sportswear and technical textiles to outerwear.

Turning to materials, Marinella Levi of Politecnico di Milano presented an approach based on function, performance and responsibility throughout the product life cycle. The choice between natural fibres, synthetic fibres and new solutions must start with the intended application. Simon Whitmarsh-Knight of Hyosung addressed the development of bio-based elastane and the conditions required to bring it to industrial scale. Marco Bardelle of MagnoLab presented a collaborative initiative within the Biella supply chain to develop a worsted yarn containing 50% recycled pre-consumer wool.

At European level, the session "Shaping Together" brought together Carlo Capasa, President of the Italian National Chamber of Fashion, Pascal Morand, Executive President of the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode, and Luca Sburlati, President of Confindustria Moda, to focus on Italy–France cooperation. The complementarity between creativity, brands and manufacturing provides a foundation for shared priorities and engagement with European institutions on the competitiveness of the industry.

WORKING TOGETHER TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF FASHION

Innovation, sustainability and skills: the future of fashion requires a shared vision and tangible investment.
The partners of the Venice Sustainable Fashion Forum 2026 contributed to the discussion with complementary experiences and perspectives. From materials to technology, from finance to human capital, their contributions support the transformation of the supply chain.
Their voices reflect the priorities and commitments needed to build a more competitive and responsible industry.

Eugenio Puddu, Consumer Product Leader at Deloitte Central Mediterranean *"Fashion is one of the finest expressions of Italian craftsmanship: a supply chain that turns beauty and quality into economic value and employment, thanks to manufacturing excellence, design culture and strong ties with local territories. Protecting this leadership, however, requires profound transformation, which our Deloitte team dedicated to the sector summarises in three priorities. The first is to strengthen industrial districts, where skills are developed and passed down from one generation to the next. The second is to direct investment towards clear industrial objectives and measurable results. The third is to promote consolidation and partnerships that give businesses the scale they need to compete while preserving their identity. Artificial intelligence and sustainability can only become lasting competitive advantages if supported by strong skills, reliable data and measurable results."*

Simon Whitmarsh-Knight, Marketing and Sustainability Director – Textiles, Hyosung *"We were proud to support the fifth edition of the Venice Sustainable Fashion Forum, promoted by Confindustria Moda and Confindustria Veneto Est. Under the theme 'Shaping Tomorrow', we joined the discussion with leading representatives of the Italian fashion industry to explore how to protect and strengthen the supply chain through innovation, technological progress and the transformations needed to shape its future. The discussion reaffirmed how essential collaboration among all industry stakeholders, across the entire value chain, is to achieving systemic change."*

Ercole Botto Poala, Vice President of Ideabiella *"Ideabiella, an international meeting point for textiles serving the luxury fashion industry, has always promoted dialogue between manufacturing tradition and innovation, enhancing the value of fine natural fibres. In line with this commitment, Ideabiella*

supports the Venice Sustainable Fashion Forum with the aim of promoting an increasingly sustainable and future-oriented fashion system."

Annalisa Areni, Head of Client Strategies at UniCredit *"The Venice Sustainable Fashion Forum is one of the leading platforms for discussion on the future of the fashion supply chain, a strategic sector for Made in Italy and the country's competitiveness. Through this partnership, UniCredit reaffirms its commitment to supporting businesses in their innovation and sustainable transition journeys, fostering dialogue and collaboration among all stakeholders across the ecosystem."*

The programme for the two-day event is available at: https://venicesustainablefashionforum.it

The Venice Sustainable Fashion Forum is organised with the contribution of the Venice and Rovigo Chamber of Commerce and numerous companies and organisations connected to the sector: Anfao, Assocalzaturifici, Assopellettieri, Chargeurs PCC Italy, Confindustria Accessori Moda, Confindustria Moda – Linen Section, Confindustria Moda – Texclubtec Section, Deloitte, Fondazione del Tessile Italiano, Holding Moda, Hyosung Europe, Ideabiella, Kering, Lyria, M.C.G. – Management Consultance Group, Nctm Studio Legale, Nice Footwear, Pattern, RIR Face Design, Umana, UniCredit and UniSalute.

Confindustria Moda is one of the world's largest representative organisations for textile and fashion manufacturers in the Western world. The Federation represents an industry that, with just under 400,000 employees and more than 38,500 companies, is a fundamental component of Italy's and Europe's economic and manufacturing fabric. The Federation aims to protect and promote the interests of the sector and its members, representing the entire supply chain at national and international level in dealings with institutions, public administrations, economic, political, trade union and social organisations. It is the national industry federation, a multi-stakeholder organisation with a strong focus on integration with local territories. It is a member of Confindustria and the leading founding member of Euratex, the European Apparel and Textile Confederation.

Confindustria Veneto Est (CVE) is the association representing industrial companies and innovative service providers operating across the metropolitan areas of Venice, Padua, Rovigo and Treviso. In terms of size and representativeness, it is the second-largest association within the entire Confindustria system, bringing together 5,155 companies operating in 21 product and service sectors and employing approximately 280,000 people. It operates in a region that plays a key role in Italian business culture and the national economy, with a strong focus on advanced manufacturing and international markets, technological innovation and tourism. The region has an aggregate GDP of €104.4 billion, 1.115 million employed people, including 420,000 in industry, and exports worth €37 billion. Confindustria Veneto Est represents and protects the interests of its member companies in dealings with local, national and international institutions, public administrations, economic and social organisations, schools, universities and research institutions, and financial institutions, promoting industrial policies at regional, national and European level to strengthen competitiveness. Through a team of 150 professionals and its specialised business units, the association provides integrated services and expert consultancy across all areas of business. It supports small, medium-sized and large companies, as well as supply chains, in addressing the challenges of the green and digital transitions and ESG matters, contributing to the development and attractiveness of the region. Since 2022, it has organised the annual "Sustainability Week" event. The association is certified for gender equality.

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