

Europe designs a sustainable future

WITH EUROPEAN COTTON

Press Release - European Cotton Alliance (ECA)

The cotton industries meet at the 5th Mediterranean Cotton Roads conference, sponsored by EUCOTTON

- One of the main sectoral events for the European cotton industry took place in Thessaloniki, Greece on November 24th
- Representatives of the cotton supply chain from the Mediterranean & major European retail brands participated in this celebratory cotton event
- After the success of the 36th International Cotton Conference Bremen (September 29th-30th), this new event was also co-sponsored by EUCOTTON, the campaign promoted by the European Cotton Alliance (ECA).

December 1st 2022 One of the most esteemed materials in the world, European cotton is valued for its quality characteristics such as its high spinnability, its excellent uniformity or the fact that it is virtually contamination-free. Also, **it derives from non-GMO seeds** and its production techniques are implemented according to EU Regulations and Directives of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), with a special focus on sustainability. All these have turned European cotton into a fibre with enormous prestige in the textile sector. On November 24th, representatives of various levels of the European cotton chain have had the opportunity to share their success story with colleagues from participant countries, at the **5th Mediterranean Cotton Roads**, a top-level conference linking the industries in the Mediterranean Basin that took place in Thessaloniki, Greece. The celebratory industry event was co-sponsored by EUCOTTON, the promotional campaign implemented by the European Cotton Alliance (ECA) and co-financed by the European Union.

In his initial remarks, **Antonios Siarkos, President of ECA and of the Hellenic Cotton Association (HCA)**, pointed out that “substantial work has been done in National Level towards the improvement of product quality and its technological characteristics as well as, the increase in the quantity of certified product in accordance with the standards of National Quality schemes in the producing countries. EUCOTTON initiative embodies the identity features and the peculiarities of the cotton produced in Europe focusing on its high environmental and social value”. Other authorities that participated in the opening of the conference **included Manolo Cano, President of the Spanish Centro Algodonero**

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Nacional (CAN); Baris Kocagoz, Member of the Assembly of the Izmir Commodity Exchange (ICE); and Tim North, First Vice-President of the International Cotton Association (ICA).

A welcome comment was delivered by the Minister of Macedonia-Thrace of the Greek Government mr Stavros Kalafatis, who stressed the importance of the cotton sector.

The program included a presentation of country reports of Greece, Spain, Turkey and Egypt, and discussions on different issues that directly impact the sector, like the Mediterranean trade balances, logistics in the covid-19 era and digital agriculture. But, above all, there was a space devoted to the presentation of EUCOTTON: **“EUCOTTON: European production with a label”**, given by Ioulia Drossinou from European Cotton Alliance. In the presentation she highlighted that *“EUCOTTON is a systematic approach to communicate the identity values of a sector that works efficiently and looks for improving its performance constantly. Our vision is to work closely with the textile chain to build values for the textile industry that looks for better serving the special needs of the demanded European and International consumers. The benefit for the brands and the retailers for using EUCOTTON will be the critical assurances that the cotton used at their products is certified, of high quality, sustainably grown with high environmental and social values”*.

Earlier on the morning of the 24th, over 50 representatives of the European cotton sector as well as the textile industries participated at the EUCOTTON Working Group held at the Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki where they had the opportunity to further be informed about the EUCOTTON initiative and engage in a round table discussion with valuable contributions and insights.

The events come right after the very successful 36th International Bremen Cotton Conference, sponsored as well by EUCOTTON and held on September 29th and 30th in Bremen, alongside the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the Bremen Cotton Exchange. In that context, Mr. Siarkos delivered a presentation of the EUCOTTON initiative, in which he pointed out that the protocol behind it “provides the framework for the implementation of a ‘from farm to fashion’ comprehensive management system in the cotton supply chain”.

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The protocol integrates EU Regulations and Directives dealing with product safety and quality, sustainability, transparency and traceability, ethical trade and social responsibility, as well as good agricultural and manufacturing practices. This way it is ensured that fibres labelled as EUCOTTON meet all the values that the European Union is known for.

EUROPE DESIGNS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE WITH COTTON

The EUCOTTON is an ambitious promotion campaign launched by ECA that aims to increase the recognition of European cotton, **focusing particularly on its quality and sustainability**. With these actions, it aspires to educate consumers and professionals throughout the industry about the properties of this material as well as its methods of production in the EU, with the goal of adding value to the products that use European cotton.

This, in its turn, can have a positive reflection on various European sectors, such as the fashion and hygiene products industries, as the campaign provides a new narrative for the textile industry and for retailers.

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN COTTON ALLIANCE

The European Cotton Alliance (ECA) is a European-level association formed by the active collaboration of cotton producers and industry associations in the European producing countries. Founding members of the Alliance are the Inter-professional Organizations, the Industry and the Manufacturers' Associations in Greece and Spain, accumulating 100% of the cotton sector in Europe. Its Associate Member is EUROCOTON, the European federation of cotton and allied textile industries in Brussels.

For more information: www.europeancotton.eu

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