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New EU rules to stop the destruction of unsold clothes and shoes: How the STREP Project is Helping Fashion Brands Adapt

11 February 2025

The European Union has officially passed new laws to stop clothing companies from destroying unsold clothes and shoes. This is a major win for the environment, but it leaves many businesses asking the same question: **What do we do with the extra stock?**

The **STREP project** might have the answer. It provides the technology to turn that "waste" back into high-quality clothing. Every year, millions of tons of perfectly good clothes are burned or buried. Starting in July 2026, large companies in the EU will be banned from doing this. STREP is helping these brands move toward a "circular" system where nothing is wasted.



The new EU rules require companies to be transparent about what they do with unsold goods.

By using automation and smart data, STREP acts as the "missing link" between a warehouse full of unsold items and a new production line. The project's goal is to make sure that "unsold" no longer means "useless," helping brands meet legal targets without losing value.



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How STREP can help businesses comply:

- **Faster sorting:** Using AI and smart sensors, STREP can sort through piles of clothes and remove zippers and buttons automatically. This makes recycling much cheaper and faster.
- **Quality recycling:** Instead of just shredding old clothes into low-quality insulation, STREP uses advanced "chemical recycling" to create brand-new, high-quality yarn that can be used for new fashion collections.
- **Smart tracking:** STREP uses digital tags (like a "passport" for clothes) so companies can track exactly what their products are made of, making it easier to follow the new EU reporting rules.



STREP brings together 13 partners from 8 different countries, including top universities and tech companies. Together, they are running five pilot programs across Europe to prove that a world without textile waste is possible.

By turning unsold clothes into new materials, STREP is helping the fashion industry meet EU goals while staying competitive in a changing market.

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