

**Two-Day Textile Seminar with C&A Europe:
Topic Sustainability Well Received by Many Companies**

The seminar, held on 26 and 27 May, 2009 on the premises of C&A Europe (sponsor of the event) in Düsseldorf all-day about sustainable fashion for brand owners and retailers – organized by Organic Exchange and Made-by – ended with the conclusion that the subject sustainability has been well received by many companies. Now it is important to implement it step by step, as Dr. Ulrich van Gemmeren (ulrich.vangemmeren@made-by.org), general manager of Made-by Label Germany/Freiburg, who conducted a workshop himself on the event, told Textination in an interview. “We see that sustainable and credible brands can stand up well by comparison, despite the global recession, while many conventional brands have massive collapses to complain about. Clothing brands which have changed over (good examples are Jackpot and Claudia Sträter), are glad about their decision.”

Including the lecturers there were on both days of seminar more than 80 attendees present, among them representatives of leading retail chains and mail-order houses, big sporting goods manufacturers (adidas/ www.adidas.com) and well-known fashion brands like Jackpot/ www.jackpot.dk, Kuyichi / www.kuyichi.com, but also pioneers of sustainable fashion (Hess Natur/ www.hess-natur.de) and different interest organizations, which in part also lectured.

Made-by (www.made-by.org) and Organic Exchange (www.organicexchange.org) organize since beginning of 2008 with own speakers seminars about sustainable and therefore fit-

for-future fashion. So far there were some in Amsterdam, London, Copenhagen and last in Düsseldorf. The next meeting takes place on September 21st in Interlaken/Switzerland ahead of the Helvetas “Weltkongress zur Bio-Baumwolle“ (world congress for organic cotton).

As Brigitt Gebauer, European Executive Board of C&A (www.c&a.com), said in Düsseldorf, wants the enterprise to belong in future to the Top 5 of the sustainable enterprises in their branch. Important subjects are here: 20% share of organic cotton until 2012 (today: 8%), environmentally sound packaging, avoidance of waste and recycling, use of green energy, CO₂-neutral ECO-Stores as well as environmentally friendly transport and logistics. The compliance with the C&A-code for delivery of goods is being monitored since 1996 independently by SOCAM (Service Organisation for Compliance Audit Management).

As Lorenz Berzau of BSCI (Business Social Compliance Initiative/ www.bsci-eu.com) reported has the organization as interbranch initiative of retail enterprises and import-oriented producers developed for their members a code of conduct which is based on the UN-declaration to the human rights, the ILO (International Labour Organization) - conventions to basic rights of work and the UN-conventions - to the rights of children. Suppliers have to accept this code and first evaluate themselves. After trainings of the suppliers they are audited. The members of BSCI committed themselves to monitor two-thirds of

their suppliers in countries of risk. Unfortunately it is at this time still the case that even at Re-Audit (at the second time) only about 43% of the suppliers fulfill the criteria of the code of conduct.

In this time of crisis an innovation driven by Corporate Social Responsibility/CSR (www.csr-in-deutschland.de) is quite clearly a business chance, as Marco Wolters of GfK Benelux stated. Non-sustainable brands are more and more disapproved of by the consumers. An effective CSR is authentic and leads, since it is business-oriented, to product innovations, is consistent with other business initiatives and results in a competitive advantage, as Wolters stressed. It is important to know the target group very well. In the Netherlands around 40% of the consumers are interested in sustainable products.

Marieke Weerdesteijn of Solidaridad (www.solidaridad.nl) reported that a sustainability ranking was developed by their organisation on basis of the indicators energy use, greenhouse gases (CO₂, methane and others), water- and surface use as well as pollution burden for human and environment for 20 prevalent fibers in the clothing industry going from raw material to yarn. Very well did besides organic hemp and linen the recycled cotton, recycled Nylon6 and recycled polyester. According to their information Tencel is also good, as well as organic cotton and conventional hemp.

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