



2. RETRAKT EU Conference

„Join the Circle“: Turning Challenges of the Textile Sector into Chances

Press Release, 10 August 2026

On 19 November 2026, the second RETRAKT EU Conference – “Join the Circle” will take place in Brussels. The event, which focuses on the transformation of the textile sector towards a circular economy, will be held under the motto: “Turning Challenges in the Textile Sector into Chances.” The conference language is English, and participation is free of charge. Registration is open until 20 September 2026 at www.retrakt.de, where the event agenda is also available. RETRAKT is a joint project involving research and industry partners, led by FOM University of Applied Sciences and RWTH Aachen University.

New EU textile-related legislation, such as the Ecodesign Directive, is currently challenging the textile sector. The RETRAKT project aims to turn these “challenges” into “chances”. The second RETRAKT EU Conference brings together stakeholders from different areas to discuss and analyze current activities and insights with dedicated experts.

The conference will showcase, among other topics, new textile recycling technologies and significant investments. Discussions will cover the Digital Product Passport for Textiles, new skills for the textile and apparel sector, and job creation. Moreover, a successful business model for circular workwear from the Netherlands will be presented. Besides a focus on Europe, the conference in Brussels will look beyond and explore global developments in textile circularity, using California – the world’s fourth-largest economy – as an example.

Another important aspect of the conference is the opportunity to make new connections, to jointly shape the future of the circular economy in the textile and apparel sector, and to discuss recent questions in person.

The research project RETRAKT

The research project RETRAKT, led by FOM University of Applied Sciences at iaim Institute of Automation & Industrial Management and ITA – Institut für Textiltechnik of RWTH Aachen University, stands for “Resilient Transformation Management for Circular Economy in the Textile Sector”. The project investigates how the textile industry can shape

its transformation from a linear towards a circular economy in a sustainable and resilient way. RETRAKT assumes a human-centred approach: it focuses on employees and their new tasks in the textile and apparel companies. The transformation towards a circular production is not only a technical and economic issue, but it is always up to people to implement new processes – even under today’s uncertain conditions. RETRAKT, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space as well as the European Social Fund Plus, brings together researchers from the textile, work, and social sciences with textile companies and IT specialists to explore solution pathways for the policy-driven transformation process, show practical approaches to implementation, and support the industry with a data platform.

Find more information on the RETRAKT EU Conference and the agenda here:

<https://retrakt.de/en/2026/02/24/save-the-date-retrakt-eu-conference-2/>

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