

## SHORT TAKES France's First Move Against Ultra-fast Fashion; New Stretch Textiles

France moves to penalize Shein, while Lenzing and Asahi Kasei partner, and Thermore introduces Freedom in the workout wear space.

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In October 2022, the Or Foundation hosted a group of Vestiaire Collective employees in Kantamanto, the largest reuse and upcycling economy in the world. This inspired the ban.



### NOT SO FAST

France has put ultra-fast fashion players like Shein and Temu in its sights with new legislation.

The country's parliament unanimously passed a bill Thursday that would ban advertising and impose penalties on low-cost imports to the country. It's the first step before the bill will head to a final vote in the country's Senate, though a date has not been set.

A fee starting at 5 euros per item would be implemented in 2025, incrementally rising to 10 euros by 2030, with a maximum charge of up to 50 percent of the item's purchase price.

That money would go toward a fund to promote public awareness campaigns, the country's newly implemented garment and shoe repair program and to support sustainable clothing brands.

The bill also proposes a ban on fast-fashion advertising, which could put an end to influencers' famous "hauls" of their purchases.

The bill and much of the legislators' debate focused on Chinese-Singaporean ultra-fast-fashion behemoth Shein, citing statistics that the company offers 7,200 new styles per day, with more than 470,000 products available at any given time.

The law would assess volumes and speed of production in defining "fast fashion."

Shein countered that the legislation would hurt consumer purchasing

power and should not single out specific companies.

The company said that the definition of "fast fashion remains very vague" and should impact all fashion brands.

"We have consistently highlighted that the number of references offered by a retailer is in no way a relevant indicator of the company's environmental impact, whereas the number of unsold items would be a much better indicator. This betrays a profound lack of understanding of the fashion industry," the company said in a statement to WWD.

The company said that it should be based on sell-through rates, not production volumes, and added that its unsold garment rate is "consistently in the low-single digits."

The legislation is focused on internet players, and notably excludes brands like Zara and H&M which have physical stores in the country.

"France is taking the lead on, on the question of fast fashion at large. I think the momentum for change in this industry is here," Vestiaire Collective chief impact officer Dounia Wone told WWD. "It means our voice and the voice of lots of activists or brands has raised awareness on the topic."

Vestiaire Collective has worked to define fast fashion for its platform, first banning players including Asos, Boohoo, Nasty Gal, Pretty Little Thing, Fashion Nova, and the now-targeted Shein, among others in its

first round, expanding to high street brands including H&M, Mango, Uniqlo and Zara last November.

The company launched that initiative alongside a campaign showing major monuments such as the Eiffel Tower buried under textile waste.

Wone drew parallels between Vestiaire Collective's process to define the category, which takes into account price, the number of new items a brand puts to market each year, plus the speed of the product cycle, among their criteria.

"I'm not saying that our definition is the definition. I think it's the starting point that we can rethink the industry, and have a lot of people around the table," she said, adding that just taking this initial step was likely to raise awareness about the environmental costs of overconsumption.

Wone added that next on the agenda is a push to decrease the value added tax on commissions, which increases prices for buyers of second-hand fashion. Such a move would create an additional incentive for buyers and sellers to promote circular fashion. "The linear business model needs to be questioned – the way people are doing fashion: producing [then] wasting," she said.

The Circular Fashion Federation, which participated in hearings with Member of Parliament Anne-Cécile Violland before the bill was presented, also called the legislative vote "a step in the right direction."

"However, this is just the beginning of our

collective work, as we must now collaborate with all stakeholders to clarify the definition of fast fashion and the operational application of penalties and incentives to accelerate the circular and environmental transition of the sector," FMC president Maxime Delavallée told WWD.

The group intends to monitor the mechanisms that are put in place, including promised incentives for businesses and consumers transitioning in their production and consumption models.

"That France is an influencer, especially in textiles, I never thought I would say that," added Wone.

### STRETCH IT OUT

With workout wear being one of the most challenging categories in the sustainable textiles space, Italian knitwear company Brugnoli has introduced the first collection made with yarns from the new partnership of fiber firm Lenzing and stretch yarn pioneer Asahi

Thermore's Freedom stretch padding.



Kasei's Roica to create a new portfolio of textiles.

The two companies partnered to develop blends of Lenzing's cellulose-based Tencel Lyocell or Modal fibers and Asahi Kasei's Roica fibers on new sustainable and circular textiles. The two yarns are made for the needs of yoga and workout garments, and are Oeko-Tex Standard.

Brugnoli's line, called YogaTime, uses these two ingredients from Lenzing's cellulose-based Tencel Lyocell or Modal fibers and Asahi Kasei's Roica fibers. The two companies are joining forces to make fabrics that have a clear life cycle to create a circular model for clothes.

"By joining forces with Lenzing AG and integrating Tencel fibers with our Roica V550, we are not just creating textiles; we are crafting an additional choice for the future of sustainable fashion. Our combined efforts will lead to the development of fabrics that not only excel in performance and aesthetics but also significantly contribute to a more sustainable planet," said Roica chief marketing officer Shinohe Hiroaki.

"This partnership embodies our shared vision of a more sustainable textile industry. Tencel fibers' recycling potential,

combined with Roica's innovative stretch degradable technology, will set a new standard for responsible textiles, offering brands and consumers alike a more close to circular approach solution," said Lenzing business development Italy & Switzerland's Carlo Covini.

### THERMORE THE MERRIER

As fashion customers have become increasingly spoiled by comfort provided by stretch materials, especially in the sportswear arena, Thermore, the Milan-based premium thermal insulation company for apparel and outerwear, is introducing Freedom, a new hyper-stretch padding.

Crafted from 50 percent post-consumer, GRS-certified, recycled polyester, the product provides warmth and stretchability and is best suited for alpine sports, running, golf, fishing, and other open-air activities.

The company said that dynamometer testing showed that Freedom – which is available in four warmth tiers, from 60 to 150 grams per square meter – fully recovers to its pre-stretch size after every use. It is machine washable and can be dry cleaned, easy-care features that contribute to its versatility.

A Brugnoli stretch textile.

