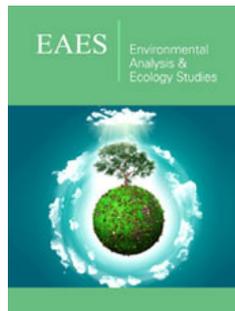


Sustainability 2.0: The Contribution of the Portuguese Textile Sector to Global Sustainability

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Opinion

The textile sector in Portugal has been going through unprecedented structural and generational changes. Along with the lack of manpower, the sector is faced with the difficulty created by the sector's global competition. This competition is marked by unbridled competition led by heartburn and more recently by Turkey. The fight for the low price of raw materials and labor, forced by the increase in fast fashion, has led the big chains, and not only, to look for scale markets, to maximize their profits. In this fight, the Portuguese textile sector is clearly without arguments that can fight or have a word to say in this context. Thus, the sector in recent years has been adapting to the changes that the current world has been generating and providing. To this end, Portuguese companies have been equipping their infrastructures with more efficient means of production, as well as increasing their response and offer regarding sustainable and innovative items.

About sustainability, most Portuguese companies already offer alternatives to fibers, whether synthetic or natural, more sustainable than those used on the market. Some companies even develop patented fibers to secure their space in the market. On the other hand, there is still a lot to be done in this regard, since some companies end up falling into the rhetoric of greenwashing, not adding anything new to the market or effectively contributing to a more sustainable sector. Regarding innovative products, Portugal has some companies that are already well-developed and well established in the global market in this context, whether in the fashion area or in the footwear and home textiles sector. Companies have been investing heavily in innovative, out-of-the-box items, thus filling gaps in the market and affirming the name of Portugal across borders, some of them being JF Almeida, Rio Pele, Valerius, among others.

By investing in innovation, sustainability, and continuous improvement of processes as well as the quality of the items supplied and developed, these companies end up taking a significant leap forward in what we call sustainability. Environmental, social, business, and corporate sustainability, which allows us to say that these companies are reaching a level of sustainability 2.0. By referring to the term Sustainability 2.0, we are identifying companies and dynamics that are not limited to just following market trends, closely following the term sustainability and its true foundation from afar. By creating sustainable, innovative, high-quality items, the life cycle of these products ends up being extended, thus avoiding the vicious and ephemeral circle that fast fashion items suffer from. Thus, we can easily understand that the true sustainability of products is not limited only in their supply and (way of) production chain, but also in their longevity.

This task has been an arduous one, as the final consumer, in the end, directs his decision to the price. Still, mindsets and consumer habits are gradually changing. In short, the Portuguese textile sector has become a very important transnational player in what is the fight for the right to sustainability and longevity of the world we live in for future generations.