NEWSLETTER 2

What's up?

Project Activities

After the kick-off meeting, held in February 2023 in Timisoara, the IG-Fashion partners began collaborating on the first-year project actions. In particular, they tackled **Activity 2.2** in March and April and **Activity 2.3** in May and June.

Activity 2.2 featured a *Desk Analysis of Good Sustainability Practices* in the fashion industry and green measures undertaken by the fashion businesses in the partner countries, within the general European framework.

Activity 2.3, on the other hand, was aimed at *Identifying Challenges and Benefits of Using AI Chatbots* in the partner countries' fashion industry, by interviewing a set number of professionals in the fashion industry.

Meanwhile, a **project official social media** as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts were set up and the **official website** is under development, to disseminate results and explore fashion industry sustainability and technology issues.

> Our research highlighted that sustainability can be achieved only at great efforts, high costs, conspicuous investments in knowledge, research and innovation, and close collaboration along the whole value chain.

Let's take a look at the Project Results!

A2.2 Results

The fashion industry is a relevant economic sector in all IG-Fashion partner countries (RO-BG-IT-EL-NL). Our desk research highlighted that in all five countries, more and more apparel and textile companies are choosing **a sustainable approach** to keep up high-quality standards and stand out in the global market.

For these companies operating in a sustainable way involves, on the one hand, limiting and controlling the use of pollutants, by keeping track of the entire supply chain, and accounting for product end-of-life, thus **reducing waste**. On the other hand, it involves adopting **circular economy practices**, that is, new ways of designing, manufacturing, and delivering fashion products. Pushed by the companies' values, the choice of sustainability meets both the demand from responsible consumers and the stringent European legal requirements.

A2.3 Results

The **interviews** with Fashion Professionals in the IG-partners countries pointed out that almost all respondents are familiar with or use **digital tools** in their business practices, but only very few of these tools are currently based on **AI.**

As for **AI chatbots**, there is a fair amount of curiosity towards them, even though balanced by a relevant dose of skepticism.

A positive outcome is that all respondents **recognize the potential of AI chatbots** both for companies and customers, as well as research and training tools. In addition, they are aware of the valuable support AI technology could provide to achieving sustainability.

The main drawback is costs. Actually, most of them think that AI chatbots are quite expensive, and companies, particularly small and medium sized ones, could hardly afford to integrate these tools in their processes. Another widespread fear concerns the potential loss of jobs for professionals in the fashion sector, particularly in the short term.

What's next?

The next couple of months, before a new partner's meeting to be held in the Netherlands in October 2023, will be devoted to finalizing project Activity 2.4, meant to *Identify the Challenges and Benefits of Using AI Chatbots* in the partner countries' **VET Education institutions**, by interviewing a set number of both educators and students.

The final product will be the elaboration of a **Compendium** featuring the results of all the Activities mentioned. These will be integrated into our online learning tool in the upcoming year.

" Towards an intelligent and Green approach in VET Fashion Design "