



DECLARATION of SABADELL

Sabadell, 6 July 2004

Meeting in Sabadell, at its XII General Assembly, ACTE, the European Textile Collectivities Association, solemnly approves the following declaration.

Background:

Noting that, on 29 October 2003, the European Commission presented its Communication on the future of the textile and clothing industry in an enlarged Europe after 2005 to the Council of Europe and the European Parliament.

And further noting that the European Commission has decided to establish a High Level Group (HLG) to identify specific measures that should be implemented, and whose work will be carried out between 2004 and 2006, with a first package of measures to be presented in July 2004.

Given that the members of this Group include the Commissioners for Enterprise, for Trade, Employment and Social Affairs and for Research, the French, Italian, German and Portuguese industry ministers, the president of the European Parliament's Forum for Textiles, Clothing and Leather and representatives from numerous international associations concerned with the textile and clothing industry.

Bearing in mind that ACTE was invited to take part in the High Level Group through its president, Jean-Pierre Perdieu, and its Executive Secretary, Francesc Castellana.

And given that, in order to facilitate the HLG's work and to formulate a first package of proposals as soon as possible, a total of six specialised working groups were established to focus on the following topics:

- Trade issues
- Intellectual property rights
- Research and development
- Social and employment issues
- Competitiveness
- Regional issues

And, finally, in view of the fact that ACTE was appointed as the rapporteur for the working group on regional issues, formulating a series of proposals that were discussed and approved by the High Level Group on June 30 and which form the chapter on regional policy measures submitted to the European Commission on behalf of the textile industry.

The European Textile Collectivities Association, having studied the important challenges and potential opportunities before the industry: the recent European Union enlargement to 25 member states, textile trade liberalisation after 1 January 2005 and certain structural deficiencies in some regions,

wishes to **PROPOSE** that the HLG working group on regional policy should undertake the following action:

REGARDING STRATEGIC PLANNING:

- 1- That Local Strategic Plans should be established or consolidated to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness in the use of available resources and to provide strategic guidance for short-, medium- and long-term action in all areas of action. These plans should follow the model behind such successful plans as that implemented in Tuscany.
- 2- That proposals for Structural Fund financing should be preceded by an agreement amongst local/regional players in the form of a Strategic Plan.

REGARDING EUROPEAN FUNDS:

A) Support for reprogramming possibilities

- 3- That, within the frame of the current structural fund provisions (2000-2006), the European Commission should give greater consideration to all calls for reprogramming from regions particularly affected by textile and clothing industry restructuring.
- 4- That regional and national authorities should consult textile industry players when considering programming and any reprogramming for the territory as a whole.

B) Innovative Actions by the ESF and the ERDF

- 5- That, under the framework of innovative action by the ESF and the ERDF for the 2000-06 period (articles 6 and 4 respectively), the European Commission should promote calls for proposals relating to business and regional restructuring in industrial regions undergoing transformation.

C) Priorities for the new Structural Funds

- 6- That, under the framework of the future structural funds (2007-2013) and in line with European Parliament Resolution 21, of 21 January 2004, a specific regional initiative for the sector should be launched to enable it to meet the challenges of 2005 and palliate the negative effects that will be caused amongst the 2.5 million European citizens currently employed by the textile and clothing industry.
- 7- ACTE whole-heartedly supports the possibility announced by the European Commission Directorate-General for Regional Policy of reserving 1% of all Structural Funds distributed amongst countries for use in cases of emergencies caused by industrial restructuring processes.

D) A Community programme for the industry

- 8- That a specific programme for the sector should be launched, one capable of implementing the measures proposed by textile and clothing industry players in the different working groups established by the HLG. Such a programme would enable support to be given to innovation, research and worker training, amongst many other measures.

E) Regional awareness-raising campaigns

- 9- That information campaigns should be established at regional and local level to publicise developments in technology and innovation, and to inform about financing opportunities offered by Community RDTI instruments and programmes, and to raise awareness about intellectual property rights.

And, in consequence, the European Textile Collectivities Association **undertakes**, through this Declaration, to continue taking all necessary steps to ensure that the proposals contained in it are taken particularly into account by the Community authorities and by all the Member States.