

LIFE-FLAREX

Mitigation of environmental impact caused by Flame Retardant textile finishing chemicals studying their non-toxic alternatives

PRESS RELEASE

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First LIFE-FLAREX workshop in Catalonia gathered 40 stakeholders to promote innovation and sustainability in the textile sector

LIFE-FLAREX is a LIFE Programme project that aims to reduce the impact on the environment, human health and workers' safety, of current harmful Flame Retardants used in the textile finishing industry and their alternatives, by analyzing their environmental impact and technical functionalities and promoting the best practices for the sector

On February 20th, the Catalan partners of LIFE-FLAREX consortium (AEI Tèxtils as project coordinator, LEITAT and CSIC-IQAC) organized the first regional workshop in Barcelona along with ACCIÓ, the Catalan Agency for Business Competitiveness.

The workshop gathered around 40 stakeholders from the textile, chemical, research, education and furniture sectors, making a diverse group representing the whole value chain. The workshop started with a brief presentation of AEI Tèxtils, the Catalan Technical Textiles' cluster and the motivation of the session by Josep Casamada, Project Manager at the cluster.

Next, representatives from [S3CHEM](#) project, M^a Dolors Nuñez, and [CIRCE](#) project, Ingrid Vives, presented the different strategies that the public administration is taking, related to sustainability in the industrial sectors. The first, S3CHEM, in relation to chemicals and its implication in the regional innovative smart specialization strategy, whereas the CIRCE in terms of circular economy applied in the textile sector among others. Both projects are co-funded by Interreg Europe programme.

Thereafter, Núria Boix from the LEITAT Technological Center made an introductory presentation about the main concepts and regulations that drive the need for chemical substitution processes, both from a legal perspective and from an anticipatory point of view using available resources from ECHA and other institutions.



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Then, Meritxell Martí, researcher at CSIC-IQAC, presented the [MIDWOR-LIFE](#) project as the first case study of substitution in the workshop. The project, which was also led by AEI Tèxtils, concluded last summer with positive results for water repellency chemicals substitution in the finishing textile industry, in terms of both technical performance as well as cost efficient. Participation of companies from the clusters was crucial in order to validate the different alternatives at industrial level. Here, Jordi Mota, R&D manager of E. CIMA, presented his experience and learnings from his involvement in the MIDWOR-LIFE project from the industrial point of view. He highlighted the access to pre-screened products and the technical and economic reports as key for their incorporation of alternative water repellents in their portfolio of finishing services.

The presentations concluded with an introduction to the LIFE-FLAREX project by Nora Boisserée from LEITAT. She reviewed the different flame retardant technologies available in the market, their issues and the needs for substitution. Then, she presented the firsts technical results from the pre-screening at lab scale of the different alternative flame retardant products that will be soon tested at industrial scale.

After the presentations, the workshop followed with group sessions to address the different needs the textile sector faces in terms of sustainability and potential innovative solutions that could be introduced into the market for improving the eco-friendliness of the sector. The feedback gathered will be compiled in the coming months into a report summarizing the key points.



Presentations of case studies on substitution of hazardous chemicals in the textile sector



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Discussion about sustainability and innovation during the working groups



Wrap up and summarizing the discussions and findings at each of the groups

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The project coordinator is AEI TÈXTILS, the Catalan cluster of technical textiles. Six additional partners complete the consortium: two Spanish technological centers/research institutes: LEITAT and the Institute of Advanced Chemistry of Catalonia (CSIC), both members of AEI TÈXTILS, the Belgian textile research center CENTEXBEL and three technical textile clusters: ATEVAL from Spain, POINTEX from Italy and CLUTEX from the Czech Republic.

LIFE-FLAREX's objective is to reduce the impact on the environment, human health and workers' safety, of the current flame retardants used in the textile sector, and their future alternatives, by identifying which are the best technologies available, both from the performance and from the sustainability point of view. This will be achieved with the development of the analysis of their environmental impact and functionalities in order to promote the substitution amongst the manufacturers.

For more information: www.life-flarex.eu

