

The Scenario

Since 1971, the Environmental Actions Programmes are addressing the EC in the environmental field, identifying priority areas and integrating environmental objectives into other policies for tackling environmental issues. In 2013, the EU agreed its 7th Environmental Action Programme, calling for measures to further improve the environmental performance of EU goods and services over their whole life-cycle including measures to increase the supply of environmentally sustainable products.

The Environmental Indicator Report 2014, was set up by the European Environment Agency (EEA) to evaluate such measures, focusing on Food, Clothing and Electric and Electronic Goods.

This report appoints Eco-innovation and Eco-design as crucial transition factors that hit at how sustainable production and consumption patterns might look in the future, as more than 80% of the environmental impact of a product is defined at the design stage.

Furthermore the Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020 says that '...the transition to a green economy is a mega trend which affects skill needs across many different jobs and sectors'.

The EEA Report 2014 indicates some opportunities in education for the change to a sustainable production-consumption systems like educating designers on their choices implications across the product life-cycle. This could include raising awareness on the pressures associated with different raw materials. It could also include training on how selecting materials and increasing the reuse potential and eventual recycling.

The 3rd report of EEA (Environmental Impacts of Production-Consumption Systems in Europe) indicates that the EU economy is highly dependent on trading with the rest of the world. Electrical and electronic goods, clothing and food are production-consumption systems with globalized supply chains and large shares of imports to the EU economy. Production of these goods in Europe still contributes considerably (but decreasingly) to gross domestic products (GDP) and jobs, while these sectors continue growing in many less developed countries.

If the production stage is more often being carried out abroad, the design phase is mainly undertaken by European designers. The overall objective is to highlight ways that production-consumption systems can be adjusted to augment societal benefits and minimize societal costs.

ECOSIGN Project

Knowledge and Eco-design capacity for European Designers



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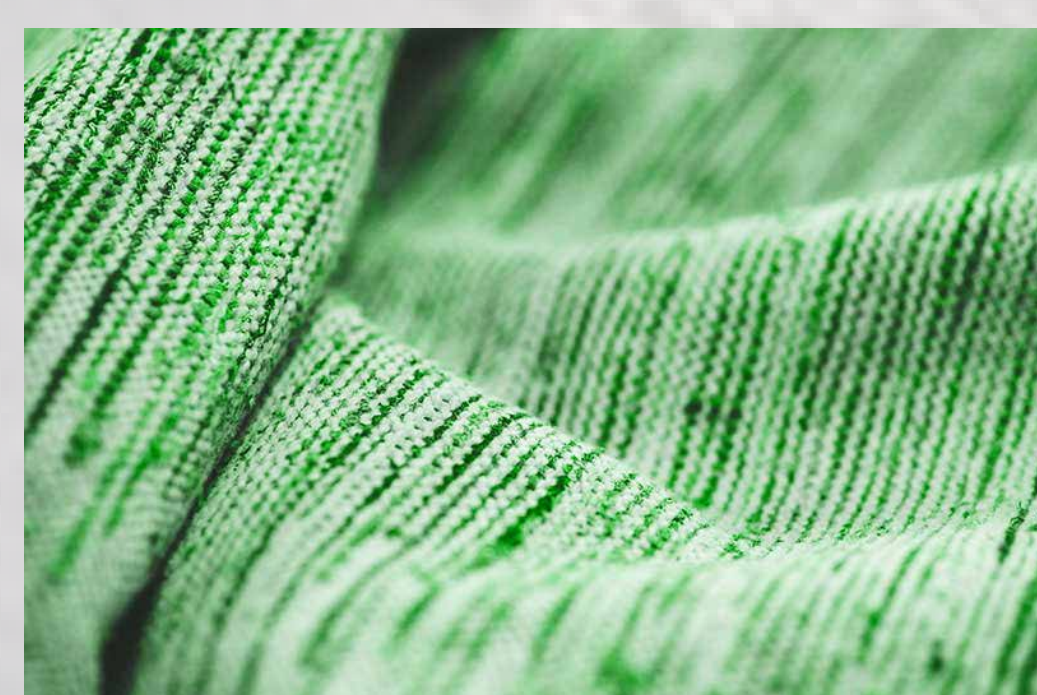
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The Project



ECOSIGN Project will help designers in reducing the environmental impact of food packaging, electrical & electronic goods and textile & clothing products during their life-cycle, including the use of raw materials and natural resources, manufacturing, packaging, transport, disposal and recycling.

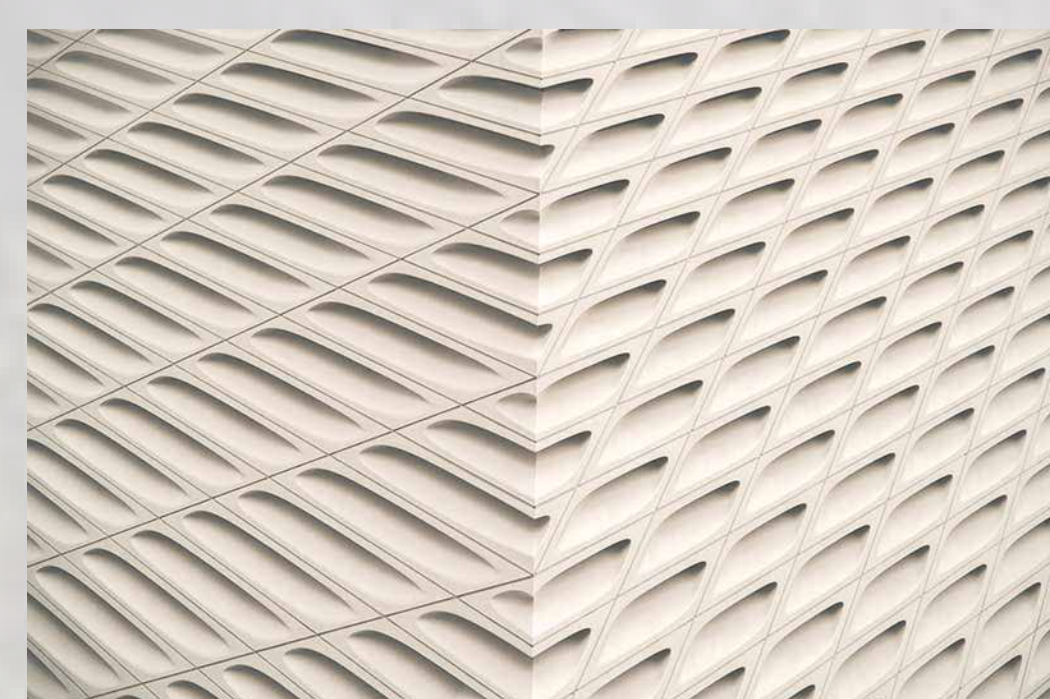
ECOSIGN is a Sector Skills Alliance co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, aiming at creating an Eco-Innovation Skills partnership in four European countries (Slovenia, Spain, Romania and Italy) addressing the lack of knowledge of designers coming from the three economic sectors on which the Environmental Indicator Report 2014 focuses:



TEXTILE AND CLOTHING



ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRIC DEVICES



FOOD PACKAGING

ECOSIGN will allow industrial designers from those sectors to reduce environmental impact during the product life-cycle from the earliest stage of design, including the use of raw materials and natural resources, manufacturing, packaging, transport, disposal and recycling, avoiding the risk of uncoordinated product planning that could lead to a negative impact for the environment (for example, eliminating a toxic substance should not lead to higher energy consumption).

The main results of this alliance will be a new joint curriculum and a training course for European eco-designers that will add skills and competences to the designers regarding environmental technologies. Also, it will allow designers, from one specific sector, to change their industrial activity to other sector.

Target groups are:

- Vocational Students
- Food packaging Designers
- Fashion and industrial textile designers
- Designers of electronic/electrical goods

ECOSIGN aims and objectives will contribute to the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, an EC initiative for reaching the employment target for 2020 by equipping people with the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow and improving the conditions for job creation.

As the theme is very wide and it's needed a multi-sectorial perspective, the partners of the project are from different countries specialized in eco-innovation in different sectors, as research centres and associations, educational providers or authorities like VET centres or independent certification bodies.

The Consortium

