

EUCTL General Assembly 2026: Key Players of the Textile and Leather Supply Chain exchange with the Joint Research Centre (European Commission)

EUCTL looks back on a successful General Assembly held on May 7th, 2026, in Barcelona, kindly hosted by its newest EUCTL member, AEPSAT (Asociación Española de Productores, Formuladores y Comercializadores de Especialidades Químicas).

The event brought together key stakeholders from the textile, leather, and chemical industries to exchange views on current regulatory challenges and to strengthen dialogue with the European Commission.

From 10.45 to 13.15 – Public Section – for EUCTL Members and Guests: “The future of Textiles and Leather in Europe: market and legislation”

- 10.45 “Opening and introduction”
Henricus Vugs - EUCTL President
- 10.55 “From the Green Deal to the Clean Industrial Deal: the EU legislation impacting chemicals, textiles and leather” - EUCTL Secretariat
- 11.05 “Addressing chemicals under the new Ecodesign Regulation - methodology, current developments and future outlook” - Enrique Garcia John and Maria Natividad Perez Camacho , Joint Research Center (European Commission)
- 11.50 “Textiles in the EU: present and future of the Sector, and expected impacts of Ecodesign Regulation” - Zena Klaps, Euratex
- 12.10 “Key findings from CEFIC Cross Sectorial Workshops on Circularity in textiles” – Zhiruo Anita Chou, CEFIC
- 12.30 “Leather: the future of a valuable byproduct, under market and regulatory constraints” - Manuel Rios, President Cotance, European Confederation of the Leather Industry
- 12.50 Q&A
- 13.10 “Closing Remarks”
Henricus Vugs - EUCTL President

Focus: Ecodesign for Sustainable Product Regulation

A central topic of the Assembly was the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) and the related Delegated Act on textiles currently under development and announced for 2027. Representatives from the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission shared valuable insights into ongoing activities in this area.

Their presentation triggered an engaged discussion, particularly around the implementation of ESPR and the ongoing debate on “Substances of Concern” (SoC). The high level of interest and the numerous questions highlighted the importance of this regulatory framework for the entire textile industry and its network, including chemical suppliers.

Additional key topics and discussions

In their presentations, representatives from COTANCE, EURATEX, and CEFIC addressed the most pressing and complex challenges facing the European value chain. While companies are making significant efforts to ensure high production standards and full compliance with legislative requirements – often going beyond them – they are simultaneously confronted with an increasing number of regulatory obligations.

In addition to EU legislation, market demands and voluntary certification schemes requested by customers are adding further pressure. The discussions made one point very clear: the industry is fully committed to continuously improving chemical safety and sustainability – but requires a supportive and realistic regulatory framework.



Key demands included:

- better aligned and practical EU legislation
- realistic and manageable timelines
- policy decisions that take into account the current economic and geopolitical situation
- an improvement of the enforcement regarding imported articles

Competitiveness and Global Challenges

Another major concern raised during the Assembly was the competitive disadvantage faced by European industry. While EU-based companies operate under strict regulatory requirements, imported products often do not face equivalent levels of market surveillance.

This imbalance creates significant pressure on European businesses. Participants therefore strongly urged the European Commission to take the current economic challenges and geopolitical uncertainties into greater consideration.

Perspective of the Leather Industry

The President of COTANCE illustrated how the leather industry, which is also facing substantial market and regulatory pressure, is striving to adapt to these challenging conditions. At the same time, he emphasized the sector's strong commitment to innovation, sustainability, and its continued importance to the European economy.

Conclusion

Chemicals used in the textile and leather industries are essential throughout the entire manufacturing process, enabling functionality, protection, and durability of final products. However, the sector is under considerable pressure due to volatile markets, strong competition – particularly from Asia – high production costs, and ongoing geopolitical uncertainties.

EUCTL therefore calls for structural improvements to safeguard the competitiveness of European industry and to strengthen textile and leather value chains in the long term.



Outlook

In his closing remarks, EUCTL President Hein Vugs expressed his hope for an improved economic and political environment in 2027, alongside continued constructive dialogue between industry stakeholders and policymakers.

