

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001709/25
to the Commission
Emmanouil Kefalogiannis (PPE)
(29 April 2025)**

Subject: Protecting Greek cotton and ensuring transparency and impartiality in the assessment of environmental claims

Greek cotton is a strategic product for Greece. The sector comprises more than 47 000 farmers and provides a total of 100 000 jobs. Greece is the largest cotton producer in the EU, accounting for 80% of its production, and the sixth largest in the world. In this context, there are concerns about the proposal for the mandatory substantiation of 'green claims' through the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF).

Greek cotton producers claim that the textile evaluation committee is mainly composed of members of organisations representing large multinational fast fashion companies, with interests in synthetic, oil-based materials. Greek cotton production is based on natural, recyclable raw materials with a lower environmental footprint.

In light of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. How does it ensure that the PEF tool does not leverage the interests of the lobby of multinational companies dealing in synthetic fabrics and that the evaluation criteria are based on real environmental and cyclical data?
2. What measures will it take to ensure policy coherence between the green targets and the means used to achieve them?
3. Does it intend to ensure measures are put in place to protect Greek cotton producers so that they are not unfairly excluded from the new regulatory framework?

Submitted: 29.4.2025

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(30 July 2025)**

The Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) for Apparel and Footwear ⁽¹⁾ were developed through an inclusive process led by a group of representatives from the industry, including natural fibre producers, a cotton association, non-governmental organisations and national bodies, being supported by experts in the life cycle assessment.

The process was transparent and in line with the Commission Recommendation 2021/2279 ⁽²⁾ on environmental footprint (EF) methods which are recognised as the most robust and reliable scientific methods.

The PEFCR covers the full product lifecycle, is material neutral and provides a standardised methodology for measuring the environmental footprint of garments and footwear.

The Commission acknowledges these rules as balanced and objective. Nevertheless, looking ahead, the EF methods will be updated, and as a result the PEFCR in question, with the possibility of integrating considerations such as microplastics and biodiversity into the single score to enhance its comprehensiveness.

The PEFCR is therefore a voluntary set of rules ⁽³⁾. It also helps companies, regardless the type of fibres they are working with, to reduce the environmental impact of the products by indicating in which segment there is a need for intervention and a potential for improvement.

To be noted that, at present, uncarded or uncombed cotton can already be classified as 'organic' under the rules of the Organic Production Regulation (EU) 2018/848 ⁽⁴⁾.

In the context of the review of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy ⁽⁵⁾, the Commission is working to enhance the use of natural fibres and reduce dependency from fossil fuels.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eeb.org/library/understanding-the-pefcr-for-apparel-and-footwear/>.

⁽²⁾ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2021/2279 of 15 December 2021 on the use of the Environmental Footprint methods to measure and communicate the life cycle environmental performance of products and organisations, C/2021/9332, OJ L 471, 30.12.2021, p. 1-396.

⁽³⁾ As made clear by Recital 32 of the Commission proposal (COM(2023) 166 final) on substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims (Green Claims Directive), which also refers to the importance of updating PEFCR for textiles, including on microplastics release.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, OJ L 150, 14.06.2018, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ Expected by the end of 2025: https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-launches-consultation-eu-bioeconomy-strategy-2025-03-31_en.