Fashion Pact: 30 fashion giants step up for the environment

By Matthieu Guinebault - 23 August 2019

Thirty fashion and luxury companies representing some 150 labels are uniting for the "Fashion Pact" that will be presented in Biarritz on August 26 to the G7 summit by Kering CEO François-Henri Pinault. The pact will aim to limit the industry’s impact on the climate, biodiversity and the oceans with goals set for 2030 and 2050.

Amongst the various climate targets set is the cap of zero net emissions of carbon by 2050, with verifiable programmes such as REDD+ complementing the reduction measures. Also with a 2030 projection horizon is the goal of 100% renewable energy use by the groups, which simultaneously may encourage supply chains to follow suite.

With regards to biodiversity, the groups plan to reject provisions originating from intensive farming systems and to prioritise agricultural usages respecting the natural ecosystem; species protection and soil rehabilitation. The pact aims to protect oceans by eliminating the use of single-use plastics by 2030 and supporting material innovation in order to reduce pollution generated by plastic microfibers.

Besides Kering, the first signatories of the pact are Burberry, Chanel, Ferragamo, Armani, Hermès, Moncler, Prada, Ralph Lauren, Stella McCartney and Zegna. Joining them are distribution giants H&M, Gap and Zara owner Inditex, sports apparel makers Adidas, Nike and Puma, Chinese titans Fung Group (owner of Juicy Couture and Kenneth Cole amongst others), SMCP owner Ruyi; groups Bestseller (owner of brands including Vero Moda), PVH (Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Speed), Kate Spade New York owner Tapestry and Capri (Versace, Jimmy Choo, Michael Kors), in addition to the Mulliez group’s Fashion 3. Last but not least, MatchesFashion, Karl Lagerfeld, Carrefour, Galeries Lafayette, La Redoute, Nordstrom and Selfridges are also on the list.
“The tipping point”

“The French Prime Minister’s goal for Pinault is to organise the sector’s various environmental initiatives,” said Baptiste Perrission-Fabert, chief of staff to the Secretary of State to the Minister for Ecology, Brune Poirson. “And also to mobilise at least 20% of the sector on the issue: this would constitute a tipping point that would mean that the remaining businesses no longer had any excuses not to act.”

Nevertheless, it is not a question of sanctions or regulatory measures. “In fashion, the best policeman is not a state, it’s the consumer,” said Marie-Claire Daveu, Kering’s chief sustainability and international institutional relations officer. “What matters to us is not the means but the results. From the moment that CEOs sign their names, they’re committed to action, since we are quickly held accountable, especially on social media, knowing the possible damage to a brand’s reputation.”

No NGO was consulted for the creation of the Fashion Pact but they may have a role in evaluating its progress. “When we talk about the idea of regrouping initiatives, ranging from chemical products to regenerative agriculture, or when we mention the Copenhagen Fashion Summit, we must bear in mind that all of these initiatives have affiliated NGOs specific to the field,” said Daveu. “Above all, they are international-scale NGOs like the WWF which tackles issues of biodiversity.”

In October, Pinault will bring together the signatories of the Fashion Pact who will thereafter be obliged to report annually on progress made towards the various initiatives. LVMH, France’s other luxury giant, stated in May that it would not take part in the initiative.

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