

Threadbare ethics? Labour abuses in the textiles sector



WEBINAR

24 September 2025 | 11:00-12:30 CEST / 10:00-11:30 BST

This is the fifth of seven webinars and workshops in Electronics Watch's 2025 Knowledge Building Series for public buyers. It is part of an Innovation Pilot to strengthen and expand our impact model.

Why the textiles sector?

Public bodies buy vast quantities of uniforms, bedding, and towels for government agencies, military, hospitals, and other public services around the world. The global textile industry is a massive market, valued at approximately \$1 trillion, with projections to reach \$1.5 trillion by 2027. It employs approximately 60 million workers (excluding those working in the fashion industry).

Labour exploitation in the textile industry is rife. Most production takes place in Asia, but is also significant in Africa, Asia, Central and Latin America and Europe. It is a fiercely competitive market where labour costs are squeezed in a race to the bottom on prices, with high demand for increased choice, quality and production speed. The industry is characterised by low wages, health and safety hazards and poor working conditions, especially in the case of mass-produced standard textiles (e.g. PPE, bedsheets, towels, aprons).



About the webinar

In this webinar, you will hear from suppliers and public buyers that are actively engaged in ethical sourcing and monitoring of textile supply chains, as well as civil society organisations that will share their research and strategies to improve working conditions in textile supply chains, especially in the global south.

The webinar will be interactive, combining insights from the panellists with discussions among participants.

Presentations

- **Marie Carlson, Turtle Hub**, expert in textile sector, consultant with experience as a supplier to the public sector
- **Zia Rehman & Mariam Amjad**, AWAZ Pakistan
- **Henning Sens**, Karlsruhe City Council & **Rosa Grabe**, FEMNET
- **Ann Moreels**, Ghent City Council
- **Clean Clothes Campaign**, (speaker TBC), Spain
- **Transparentem**: Taiwan & India investigation into textiles supplied to public buyers

Expert panellists will address:

- Supplier sourcing strategies and due diligence practices for public procurement
- Public buyer action to prevent exploitation in their supply chains, including criteria and contract clauses
- Labour rights risks facing textile workers in key sourcing countries, with an example from Pakistan
- Civil society advocacy campaigns directed at businesses supplying to the public sector and their demands