

Communication on NEXT GENERATION funds for Spanish fashion companies

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Next Generation funds aim to recover from the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. The largest Next Generation instrument is the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism (RRM).

It should be noted that the 4 cross-cutting axes through which European funds are distributed in Spain are: ecological transition, digital transformation, social and territorial cohesion and gender equality. Within these four axes, social and environmental sustainability in the business sphere is starting to become a priority on the political and business agendas. Thus, companies that do not seriously address the management of human rights and environmental risks and impacts will be at a disadvantage among their peers and in the eyes of society.

With this as a starting point, companies in the fashion sector are currently among the most challenged because of the high level of pollution they generate to the environment. Every year we throw away more than 16,000 tonnes of clothing, which is 816% more than approximately 50 years ago. At the same time, in the last 20 years, clothing consumption has increased by 400% globally. In fact, this industry is often considered the second most polluting industry on the planet (Battu, 2021).

Since the official signing of the SDGs in 2015, many companies have included these goals, or at least some of those related to the environment, among their business objectives, becoming an important part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plans. But many other companies have not yet incorporated these objectives or are not communicating them. And many others, faced with the evidence that everything "sustainable" is fashionable and sells, have incorporated this concept into their communication, often using misleading advertising to increase their sales (López, 2022).

In this context, the aim of this paper is to build/establish an analysis protocol to determine:

- 1) Which Spanish fashion companies are making use of the Next Generation Funds; focusing on the companies that are making use of these Funds:
- 2) to observe whether they are communicating it following the mandatory communication guidelines;

3) and to analyse whether they are taking advantage of the concept of sustainability in their communication actions with the aim of reinforcing their corporate reputation.

The methodology used was a bibliographical review of studies on the subject over the last 5 years, which allowed us to observe the analysis approaches carried out. Finally, the main result to be achieved is to reach a consensus on an analysis template that can be used as a methodological protocol in itself to approach studies aimed at observing whether and what use is made of the companies that benefit from Next Generation funds, as well as to describe how they implement CSR in their communication plans.