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Pollution

Marevivo launches campaign to eliminate plastic from fabrics

From the washing machine to the ocean: stop microfibre

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The spotlight is on the invisible threat polluting our oceans: microfibre. In Rome, Marevivo, a long-standing protector of the ocean and its resources for over thirty years, has launched an appeal for, “an alliance for a competitive and sustainable textiles industry”. The huge quantities of plastic microfibres released by our weekly laundry cycles are becoming a problem for the oceans, plagued with the pollution caused by our waste. To bring the point home, the #stopmicrofibre event was hosted by Accademia Costume & Moda (which has banned single-use plastics in its institution), sponsored by the Italian Ministry of the Environment and the Protection of the Land and Sea and the Ministry of Economic Development. The debate featured contributions from various business leaders, professors, researchers and experts from different fields.

“It is a way of raising awareness among companies operating in the textiles industry of the need to invest in research and innovation for more sustainable fabrics that release fewer microfibres and to encourage washing machine manufacturers to develop more effective filtering systems”, explained Raffaella Giugni, Business Relations Manager at Marevivo. “We’re talking about something that needs intervention at industry level, and that requires all of us to get involved”. A single washing machine load of synthetic garments produces millions of microfibres measuring less than 5 mm that flow into the sea, where they are ingested by marine organisms and enter into the food chain. Forty per cent of microfibres are not captured by water treatment plants and end up in the environment.

And according to “A New Textiles Economy”, a study by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, each year our clothes deposit half a million tonnes of microfibre into the oceans. That’s the equivalent of 50 billion plastic bottles.

“We are facing a new, real industrial revolution that operates on the basis of the circular economy”, commented Lupo Lanzara, Vice-Chairman of the Accademia Costume & Moda.

“This evolution will force us to change the way we produce and consume.

It is an exciting challenge that we are confronting with enthusiasm, because working in education we must always aim to look to the future, and we are charged with the ambitious task and duty to train new creatives”.

“The ocean is a source of life, and we have to respect it, even with our simplest everyday actions”, added Marta Ferri, a Marevivo Knight of the Sea and a well-known global fashion designer. “Fighting an enemy like microfibre, which is as invisible as it is dangerous, is a full-on commitment”. The broad-ranging discussion focused on an array of topics aimed at framing the multi-faceted problem from different perspectives.

The event began with how to innovate responsibly in the world of fashion, a topic picked up by Giusy Bettoni, CEO and Founder of C.L.A.S.S. (Creativity Lifestyle and Sustainable Synergy), before moving on to new sustainable fibres for the textiles industry and contributions and tips for sustainable investment, highlighting—as stated by Giorgio De Montis of Banor Capital—that, “the market rewards responsible businesses”. The discussion then turned to the environmental emergency of microplastics in the oceans, illustrated by Francesco Regoli, Deputy Head of the Department of Life Sciences and the Environment at Università Politecnica delle Marche.

Finally, the attention of the audience was captured by the experiments into green solutions in the field of fashion expanded upon by Stefania Ricci, Director of the Ferragamo Museum and Foundation, and the presentation of the Sustainable Thinking Exhibition.