



European Commission - Speech [Check Against Delivery]



Speech by President von der Leyen at the New European Bauhaus – Werkstatt der Zukunft at the Frankfurt Fashion Week

Brussels, 6 July 2021

Good morning Frankfurt.

It is a pleasure to be with you this morning, from the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Frankfurt has a long tradition as an important place for innovation and for creative thinking. This is even more true during the fashion week.

Thank you very much, Mrs. Bienek, for your warm welcome.

And special thanks to you, Christian Ehler, for having invited me to this conference.

Over the last few months, I have given quite a few speeches on the New European Bauhaus. But this is the first time that my speech will be about fashion. How refreshing! And how important!

Because the European Green Deal is not about just one sector or one profession. And the New European Bauhaus is not only about how we build tomorrow. It is about how we want to live together – while protecting our planet. The New European Bauhaus is about a new lifestyle. A lifestyle that is at the same time sustainable and beautiful.

That's why we are very grateful to the German Fashion Council. For this conference, but also for your overall engagement in the New European Bauhaus. We need your perspective and your ideas. It's a project that stimulates creativity and provides a vision beyond the pandemic. We have deliberately chosen to make the New European Bauhaus as interdisciplinary as possible. Just as the historical Bauhaus.

We want to bring together architects, designers, scientists, students, creatives, you name it. The New European Bauhaus wants to bridge culture, crafts and technology. It aims to match innovation with art.

The new alliance you just created – K3D – is the perfect example of this approach. Only if we all work and create together, we will be able to achieve the overall goal of the New European Bauhaus: The transformation of the built environment and of our lifestyle. As you know: Our aim is to make Europe the first climate neutral continent by 2050. To achieve this, all Member States have agreed to reduce our CO2 emissions by at least 55%, by 2030. We can only get there, if all sectors contribute.

Therefore I am counting on the fashion industry as well. But how can this work? Fashion must always set the trend. It has to be attracting and up to date. Ecological precision is not necessarily the top and only priority for consumers. So I am especially delighted that you are taking up this challenge. That you are taking on the task of translating the new attitude of an entire generation into sustainable quality and good design.

In fact, a lot of good examples of beautiful and sustainable fashion already exist. I am impressed by the work of Natasha von Hirschhausen, for example. She is aiming towards Zero-Waste-Design. She manages to reduce fabric waste in the design process from 20% to less than 1%. Or take the impressive work of the German-Italian brand "working title". Or Julia Leifert. They all create clothes with a minimal impact on the environment. This shows the way forward for an entire industry.

I want to encourage all of you to explore further how we can match sustainability with style. The New European Bauhaus will create a framework to facilitate this transformation. It creates networks and also supports innovation financially.

But that's not enough. We also need to cater for consumers. Sustainable products need to become affordable for all. And we have to convince people that, sometimes, the solution is simply: to buy less – but better.

Fast fashion is poison for our planet. It should be replaced by slow fashion that is circular. In other words: by well-designed products, that create less waste, and last longer. I am aware that we have a

long way to go. But I am very happy to know that you are at my side.

Let me conclude with one last important aspect: The European dimension. The historical Bauhaus started in Germany and very quickly became a global movement. The New European Bauhaus has a clear European spirit. Therefore, I am very glad to see that for the first time ever, you have invited the Fashion Councils from other European countries to join you today. And I hope that you will intensify your collaboration in the future.

If we want to succeed, we need to work together – beyond disciplines and beyond borders. In Europe – but also globally.

From the very beginning of our project, we wanted to keep a spirit of openness towards the New European Bauhaus community. We want to continue to work with all of you. The New European Bauhaus allows us to experiment with how politics, industry and society can work together. How cultural actors and creative industries can play a driving role in moving towards a more sustainable economy. We are delighted to have the German Fashion Council as an official partner of the New European Bauhaus.

You are the experts.

We need your input and feedback.

I am sure that your discussions today will be inspiring.

Thank you!

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