

EuroWeb at the Festival of the New European Bauhaus: a short report

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1. What, where and when?

The [Festival of the New European Bauhaus](#) (1st edition) was a major outreach and networking event sponsored by the European Commission which took place in Brussels between the 9th and the 12th of June 2022. It aimed to serve as a showcase for the Commission's [New European Bauhaus Initiative](#), the cultural branch of the [European Green Deal](#) policy package being implemented by the European Union as a response to both the economic impact of the pandemic and the challenges posed by climate change.

The Festival was structured around the three tenets of the *New European Bauhaus* – Sustainability, Aesthetics and Community. An open call was launched earlier in the year for projects which were aligned with these core values and were interested in taking part in the event. Several options were available for participation, including the *Fair*, at the Gare Maritime in Brussels (Fig. 1), the *Mobile Fair*, which took place in different locations across the city, the *Forum*, a discussion space with high-level round tables and assembly discussions, and the *Fest*, which mostly showcased artistic performances.

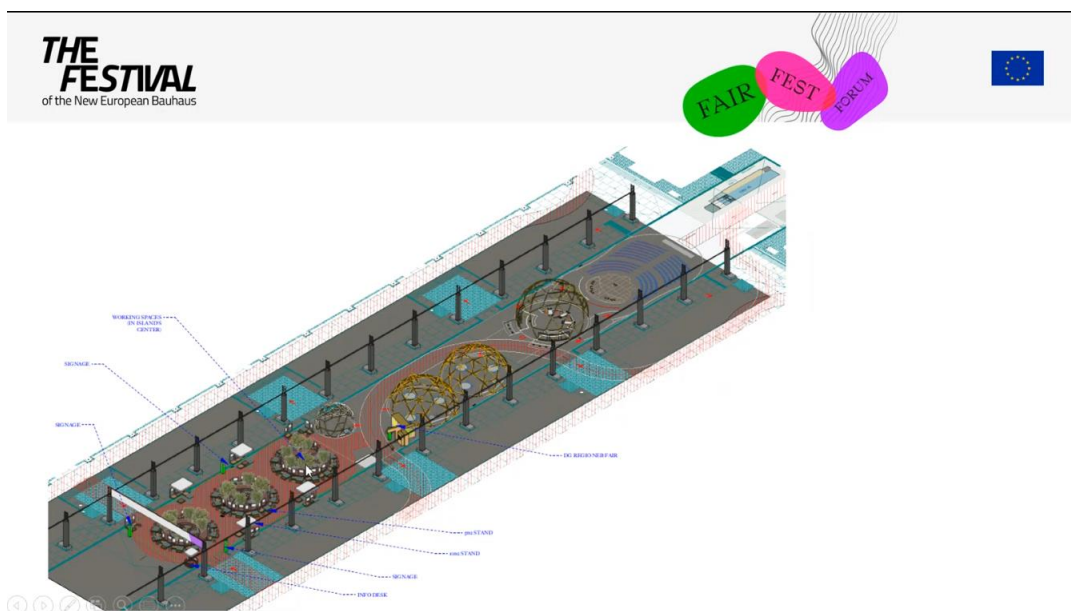


Figure 1 – Layout of the Fair space in the Gare Maritime, in Brussels.

The organization received more than 350 applications from projects across Europe, but only 100 were selected to be showcased in Brussels. EuroWeb was one of the selected projects and, as requested by us, was invited to take part in the Fair. For this event, we

proposed to focus on how the research the network does on historical and traditional textile production and crafts can be used to inspire more sustainable production and consumption patterns in the textile and fashion industries.

With this goal in mind, and taking into consideration the design of the stands and the logistic possibilities offered by the organizations, we prepared different materials to showcase at the Fair (Fig. 2):

- a poster featuring a short text presentation of the Action and a series of visual materials (at the last moment, the organization chose not to print and display the latter for any of the stands, but they were featured on the website – see below);
- a physical display of natural fibres and dyestuffs (interactive and accessible for visually impaired visitors) (Fig. 3);
- a series of short videos presenting the Action, the different Working Groups and some research projects by members to be showcased at a screen on the stand.¹

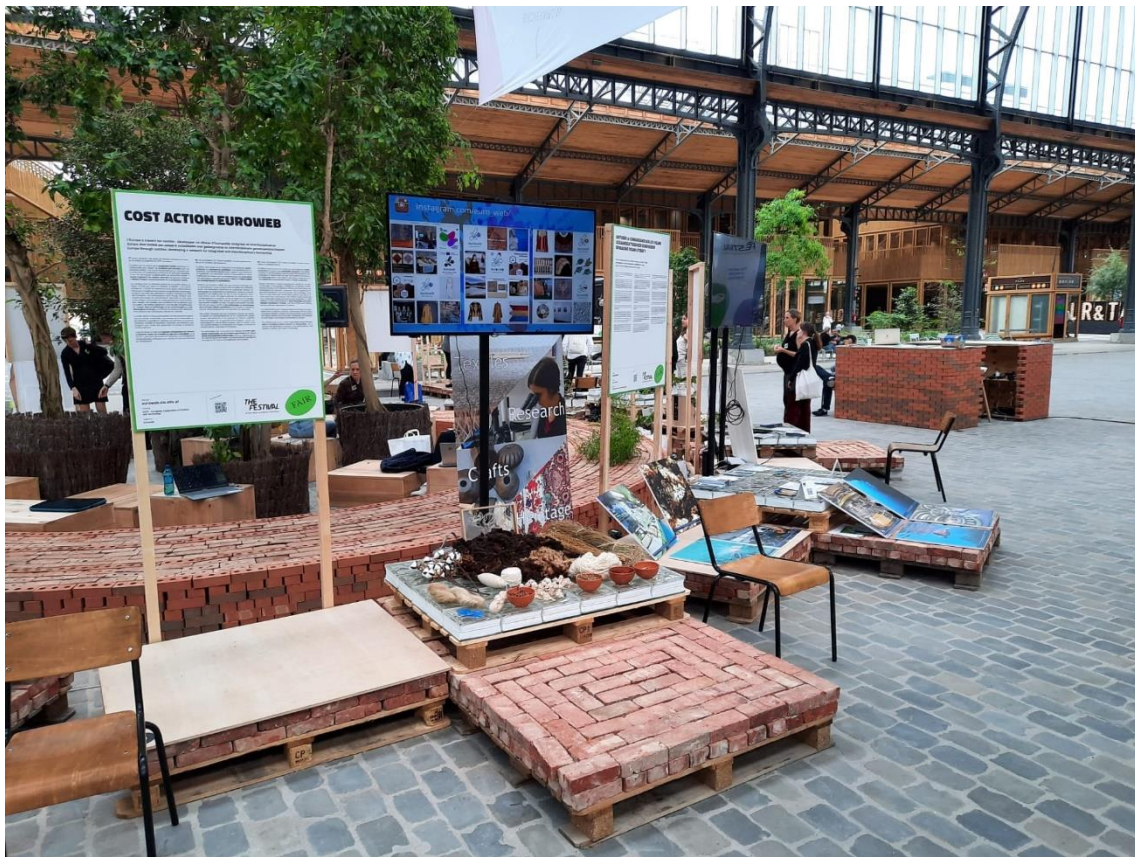


Figure 2 – The EuroWeb stand at the Fair.

¹ The videos presented at the Fair can be seen in EuroWeb's YouTube Channel in [this playlist](#).



Figure 3 – Close-up of the interactive display of the EuroWeb stand at the Fair.

The Festival also had a digital platform where all exhibitors were represented. EuroWeb had its own [dedicated page](#), in which visitors could read a description of the Action and the network, check the visual materials mentioned above and visit our website and Social Media.

This platform also theoretically offered the possibility to message and schedule meetings with the exhibitors, but due to technical issues this feature seems to not have been available throughout the duration of the event.

2. Visitors and Networking during the Festival

During the three days of the Fair (9 to 11/06) the EuroWeb stand received a little more than 200 visitors, covering a wide range of ages, nationalities and backgrounds. Significantly, nearly half of those visitors chose to engage, posing questions about the

Action, the display, and sharing their own experiences, thoughts and insights on the topic of textiles, fashion and sustainability.

These engaged visitors can be broken down into six broad groups:

- 1) General visitors, curious about the Action and the display but with no specific involvement with textile/ fashion topics or research in general;
- 2) Concerned visitors, which despite not working with textiles and/ or on research have become aware of the environmental impact of textile production and ‘fast fashion’ and were keen to share their own insights and the steps they had taken to reduce their clothing consumption;
- 3) Researchers working in other scientific and technological fields which shared their experiences and thoughts on how their areas of research could connect to the type of work EuroWeb is doing;
- 4) Policy makers and members of research funding agencies and schemes;
- 5) Textile craftspeople and textile artists, as well as some entrepreneurs running creative and crafts projects/ small businesses with some type of textile connection;
- 6) Researchers working on new materials and smart textiles.

Interactions with the latter three groups were particularly interesting, and an effort was made to establish connections with those visitors. It is worth noting that visitors from groups 5 and 6 were particularly numerous, and in every case we invited them to check out EuroWeb in more detail and, if interested, to either join the Action or reach out to establish collaborations.

While we were encouraged by the organization not to give out any handouts (e.g., leaflets) during the Festival due to sustainability concerns, we did distribute a significant number of personal business cards in order to facilitate future contacts with EuroWeb, and received several others. The latter contacts will be followed-up to seek possible points of convergence and collaboration.

3. After the Festival: Some Conceptual and Practical Ideas

- 1) Promote a more structured initiative for craftspeople and artists (within and beyond the Action) – maybe this could be a transversal focus for the 3rd Grant Period?;
- 2) Expand contacts with researchers and teams working with new materials, smart textiles and new production processes;
- 3) Plan and set up a major networking event during the last year of the Action including to tie in our research about past textiles and visions for the future of the textile and fashion industries.
 - 3.1. The event could take the form of a forum (or perhaps a COST Connect Event?);

3.2. Participants would include all relevant stakeholders (Social Scientists, Material Scientists, representatives of the Textile and Fashion Industries, policymakers, etc.);

3.3. The event could have a very specific goal – to produce a joint policy paper on the potential of natural textile materials and the promotion of R&D activities in this field to be submitted to the European Commission.

Annex 1:

Some contacts gathered during the Festival:

- FabLab Frosinone (<https://www.fablabfrosinone.org/>) – Contact: Nader al Khatib (Vice President);
- Future Everyday cluster of the Department of Industrial Design, University of Eindhoven – Contact: Professor Kristina Andersen;
- Guda (design workshop) – Contact: Sofia Martins (Designer & Creative Explorer);
- Laboratório de Desenvolvimento Têxtil (Textile Development Lab) @ Faculty of Architecture of the University of Lisbon (through Susana Oliveira, former Professor of the Faculty);
- Many others expressed interest in the Action and will hopefully contact us in the future.