

Carl, this year Swiss Textiles celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. What can the next generation of textile entrepreneurs expect from us?

Carl Illi (Chairman of Swiss Textiles)

That Swiss Textiles will permanently support its members thanks to its professionalism and its international networking activities. That our members will constantly remain interconnected, thanks to our support.

You speak of an industry that is future-proof. Where in particular does our strength lie?

Thanks to even more innovation and further development, we will continue to present our clients with creative textile solutions.

In your view, what is most frequently underestimated about the textiles and clothing industry?

The (ultimate) sensuality of the function of a textile.

Within the industry, various efforts are being made to render products more readily recyclable. Where do we still need to make progress?

In the field of education and preparing consumers for the later decision to buy more ecological textiles.

Which textile still needs to be invented?

A textile that is found by consumers, and not the other way round.

Is international cooperation a curse or a blessing?

Cooperation is always a good thing: it merely has to be carefully planned and implemented.

Is producing textiles in Switzerland still viable?

It is not Switzerland itself that is the problem, but rather the need to develop a market that is prepared to pay the price for textiles produced here.

If politicians were to fulfil three of your wishes, what would these be?

1. An understanding that solutions can only be conceived jointly.
2. That politicians would have to work in a textile company in a third-world country for a year before assuming office.
3. Securing the energy supply and abolishing the rules of origin throughout the world.

What do you still want to achieve during your term of office?

That politicians come to understand and support Swiss Textiles as a mirror image of international business activity.



Carl Illi  
Chairman of Swiss Textiles

# Our members

Our members are our clients and their interests are at the heart of all our activities. The composition and the nature of the added value have changed substantially: whereas ten years ago around half our member companies produced textiles in Switzerland, only around 36 percent do so today. Traditional textile factories are becoming a thing of the past. The majority of companies now focus on research, development, design and trade.

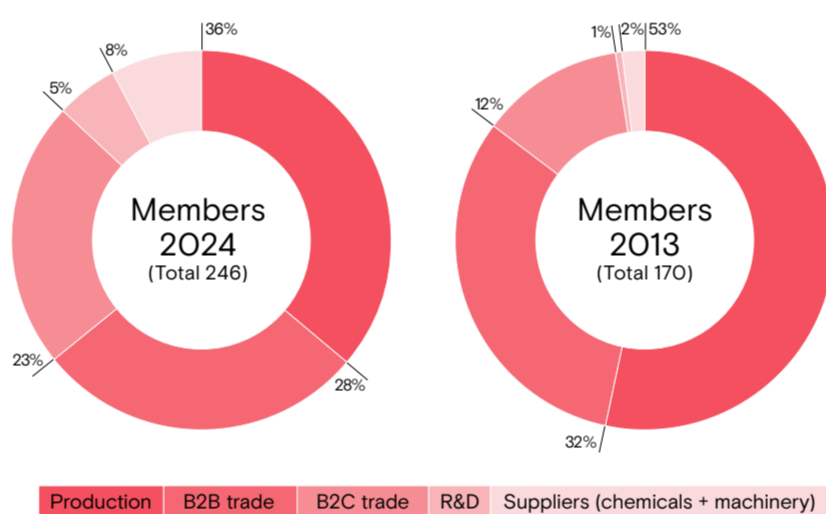
“The composition of our membership clearly reflects the changes within the industry. This means we have to constantly adapt our services to meet the changing requirements. It is not our task to preserve or defend the past – we have to move forward and provide our members with support for future-oriented issues and projects.”



Peter Flückiger  
Chairman of the management board

## Substantial increase in membership in 2023

Despite the difficult environment, the membership of Swiss Textiles increased by 10 percent last year – the highest ever growth rate. The 25 new members include companies specialising in developing new fibres or methods for recycling, plus brands and retailers who manage design and logistics from Switzerland. Traditional textile factories are becoming a thing of the past. Switzerland has evolved into a global competence centre for textile solutions.



# REPORT

## 2023/24

WHAT WILL THE FUTURE BRING US?

“FAST FASHION IS OUT OF FASHION.”

“SWITZERLAND BECOMES A MEMBER STATE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION.”

“THERE IS FULL TRANSPARENCY FOR EVERYONE ALONG THE ENTIRE SUPPLY CHAIN.”

“CLOTHING PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION ARE MANDATORY SUBJECTS IN SWISS PRIMARY SCHOOLS.”

“EVERYONE DESIGNS AND PRODUCES THEIR CLOTHING ON A 3D KNITTER.”

“THERE ARE MORE WOMEN THAN MEN AT THE EXECUTIVE LEVEL IN TEXTILE COMPANIES.”

“ALL TEXTILES CAN BE RECYCLED WITHOUT DIFFICULTY AND IN AN ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY MANNER.”

“ROBOTS SEW OUR UNDERWEAR.”

“THE MAJORITY OF TEXTILE PRODUCTION TAKES PLACE IN EUROPE AGAIN.”

These notions are undoubtedly thought-provoking, and may have also prompted a shake of the head or a smile. If in 2024 (our anniversary year) we want to talk about everything that awaits us in the future, we only know one thing for sure, and that is that nothing is certain. However, we do know that what we do today will influence our future. In our 2023/24 annual report, we offer an insight into our activities, the topics that concern our members, and the campaigns we conduct on their behalf.



Be a part of our anniversary year!

TEXTILES  
SUSTAINABLE  
TEXTILES  
UNIQUE  
TEXTILES  
CREATIVE  
TEXTILES  
DESIGN  
TEXTILES  
PIONEERING  
TEXTILES  
FUTURE-  
ORIENTED  
TEXTILES  
INNOVATIVE  
TEXTILES  
SMART  
TEXTILES  
FUTURE-  
ORIENTED  
TEXTILES  
GLOBAL  
TEXTILES  
SWISS  
TEXTILES



# We're here to support our members

In 2023, we once again organised a wide range of activities for our members. In 2024, we will continue to focus on topics that are important for the future of our members.

All of our services – from consulting to events – are aligned with our Strategy 2025. We focus on the topics of design, professionals, sustainability, technology and economic policy.

More about our work:

[swisstextiles.ch/en/verband/we-provide-material-for-our-members](https://swisstextiles.ch/en/verband/we-provide-material-for-our-members)



**In order to maintain a clear view in the complex jungle of sustainability standards, our members can attend a series of online seminars to find out everything they need to know about the most important textile labels.**

**During 2023 we provided advice to around 700 individuals in our member companies, on issues ranging from labour law to customs tariffs.**

**The USA has gained importance as a sales market, and Turkey is now a significant procurement market. With S-GE (Switzerland Global Enterprise), we have formulated practice-related guidelines for both countries, so that our members can expand their international activities.**

**The EU is producing a wave of new regulations governing the textiles industry. During 2023 we represented the interests of Swiss companies at more than 30 Euratex workgroup meetings on the EU's textiles strategy, and provided our members with progress reports. We were able to persuade the EU textiles industry to represent its stance towards the EU Commission that third countries (including Switzerland) should not be unduly disadvantaged by the new regulations.**



**We are accompanying new circular economy projects and networking technology firms with our members – for example, the Swiss Recycling Ecosystem project involving Worn Again of Winterthur and several of our member companies.**

**At the Circular Economy forum, which we organised on 29 March 2023, three collaboration projects were initiated among member companies.**

## SUPPORT ADVICE LOBBYING



**In the framework of free trade agreements with India and the Mercosur countries we are lobbying for the reduction of high customs tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers.**



**State of play consulting: we offer small and medium-sized companies easy access to an expert for free advice on implementing sustainability and prioritising the next steps.**

**28 members have already entered into a commitment to meeting the objectives of Sustainable Textiles Switzerland (STS 2030) in order to facilitate a sustainable textiles industry. We are actively pursuing our goal to increase this number to at least 50 by 2025.**



**Our members receive our periodical bulletins providing information about changes in legislation, ongoing projects, special events, etc. And our weekly newsletter keeps them up to date with what's happening in the industry.**

**With the support of Swiss Textiles, companies are to be encouraged to address new target groups, including refugees (who need to be integrated into the labour market), as well as older employees and career changers.**

**The manufacturing industry is currently facing a dilemma. On the one hand, companies are cutting jobs, but on the other it is precisely these companies that require highly qualified personnel. Unfortunately, demand has constantly fallen in the past few years throughout the training and further education sector, more than half the available apprenticeship positions remain unoccupied and companies now find it extremely difficult to hire new well-qualified personnel.**



## NEED FOR QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

**As the sponsor of basic training courses for qualification as EFZ textile technologists and EBA textile practitioners, we are deliberating on the future orientation of these professions, and asking ourselves which skills will be required in the future in the field of textile production in Switzerland. What will companies need in order to ensure that practical training can be provided?**

**Drawing attention to career opportunities: with a social media campaign on TikTok and Instagram, we are drawing the attention of young people to existing career opportunities and describing how everyday life in a textile company looks.**



**«You have successfully brought together relevant players who share a commitment towards a circular economy in the textiles sector. And it has also become absolutely clear that we can only accomplish this paradigm shift through collaboration.»**

Karen Rauschenbach  
(The Blue Suit)

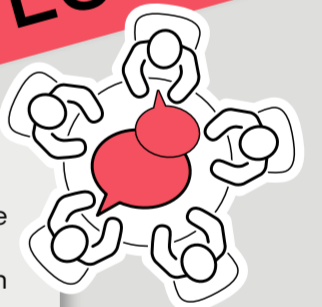
**In 2024 we will be initiating a collaboration with the W.I.R.E. (Web for Interdisciplinary Research & Expertise) think tank with the aim of illustrating relevant key trends in the socio-cultural, economic and technological areas, and thus to provide impulses for our members to create new products and business models.**



**Four times a year, our members receive a newsletter produced by the World Textile Innovation Network containing articles on global technology and industry trends.**

## GENERATING IMPULSES

**On 1 and 2 June, our members attended our annual summit that was held in the Enea Tree Museum in Rapperswil. The topic, "Be creative", prompted proposals concerning possible ways to respond with creative ideas to the changing situation and increasing uncertainty.**



**“Congratulations, you clearly understand the industry, the current situation and the spirit of the time.”**

Feedback from a participant at the summit



**We organise special events at which we demonstrate best practices and innovative solutions for making companies more attractive to prospective employees.**

## BRIDGES BUILDING

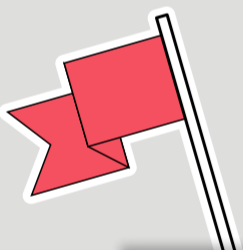
**We are organising a joint stand at the 2024 Techtexil trade fair in Frankfurt for 21 member companies and research institutions, so that they can present their expertise and pioneering work to international specialists, in particular in the areas of sustainability and functionality.**

**We network our members with educational institutions at home and abroad so that they can establish contacts with potential qualified personnel, in particular in the fields of mathematics, information technology, science and engineering.**



**We provide information about best practices so that small and medium-sized companies can reduce the level of administration required for participating in public procurement bidding processes.**

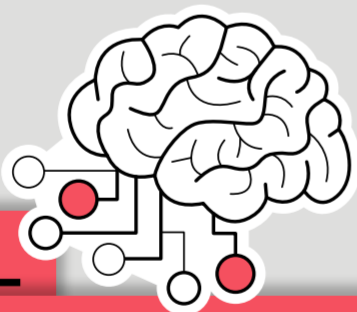
**The EU is our most important trade partner. With respect to reciprocal recognition of technical regulations and cooperation in the field of research, relations have meanwhile deteriorated. We are pointing out the necessity of Bilateral Agreements III to Parliament, the federal administration and the general public so that Swiss companies and researchers will be able to participate in EU projects again and the electricity supply can be stabilised.**



## BILATERAL AGREEMENTS III



## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



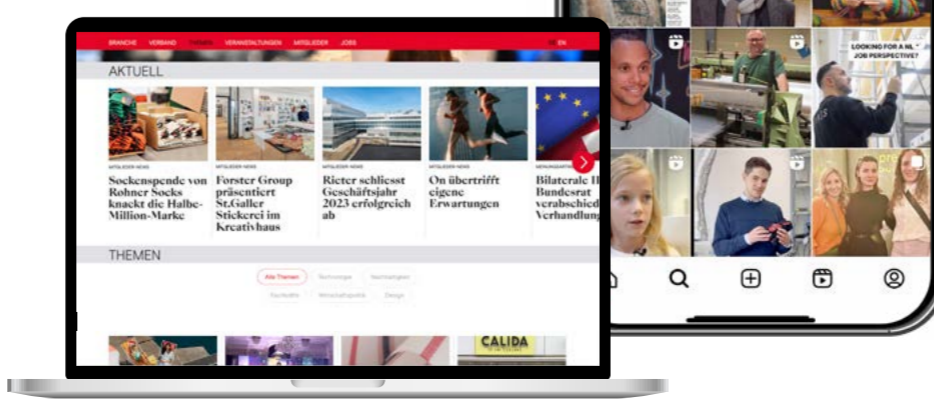
**Is AI a risk or an opportunity? We plan to delve more deeply into this issue in 2024, and intend to organise a conference for our members at which we want to examine the impacts of AI on their activities.**

## Follow us

What's happening in our industry? We keep our members and others up to date via our website and our new newsletters, as well as on @ and in. Since the inception of our series, "Swiss Textiles looks behind the scenes", in January 2023, we have already visited 30 companies and presented them in almost 100 posts on social media sites. In various other articles we publish information about special events and report news about our members and their activities. Our newsletters contain comprehensive information in the form of editorial articles, news about our member companies and reports from the media. Members can comment on and rate articles we post on our website. In this way we want to foster exchanges between ourselves and our members, as well as directly between our members. Share your views with us and visit our website and social media channels.



[instagram.com/swisstextiles](https://www.instagram.com/swisstextiles) [ch.linkedin.com/company/swiss-textiles](https://www.linkedin.com/company/swiss-textiles)



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[swisstextiles.ch](https://www.swisstextiles.ch)