

STRICK SCHRIFT

ALL FOUR RESPECT



PROLOGUE

ALL FOUR RESPECT

Under this motto, we want to take a holistic look together with you at the subject of sustainability in this edition of Strickschrift. From the perspective of the textiles industry. Along the four elements water, fire, earth and air without which everything would be nothing.

On the first pages of the magazine, we would like to give the word directly to someone who plays the main part in the treatment of sustainability: our planet. What would Mother Earth probably say to the textiles industry and its stakeholders? We have asked ChatGPT this question to write an editorial for us from the perspective of our planet. You can read the response to our prompt on page 5.



Find up-front information on page 4 about our elements concept. It has inspired us to produce four sustainable clothing designs that we want to present to you for the first time in this Strickschrift.

Enjoy reading the magazine and experiencing this sustainable Four Elements Edition!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'CU' or a stylized version of the name Christoph Ulrich.

Christoph Ulrich, CEO Hero Textil AG

LET'S TALK ABOUT...

SUSTAINABILITY



In this magazine, we want to present you our Four Elements Collection*.

Inspired by the elements air, water, earth and fire. Developed to inspire a dialogue with you about sustainable work clothing. In this magazine. At the trade fair. Whenever you want.

Each of the four designs combines the requirements of an industry or purpose for wearing the clothes with the characteristics of an element. Find out on the following pages what our thoughts were in the development and implementation, and why we call the designs sustainable.

* The Four Elements Collection comprises prototypes or samples. Series production is not planned.

EDITORIAL

(IN THE NAME OF OUR PLANET – CREATED BY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND OPTIMISED BY HUMAN INTELLIGENCE)

Dear Readers,

Today, I, Earth, would like to take the word and address you directly, dear customers and business partners of Hero Textil. As the living planet on which you live, breath, and flourish, I would like to get a message to you that is very important.

In times when the textiles industry plays an important role in your lives, it is very important that we all become aware collectively how our decisions and actions impact the environment. The textiles sector is facing big challenges when it comes to promoting sustainable and responsible processes. As the planet that is home to millions of species that are all interdependent, I want to make clear to you why it is so important to take a stance for positive change.

The textiles industry doubtlessly has a major influence on my ecosystems. From cotton production to the processing of fibres and the disposal of clothing – every step along the value creation chain has effects on the environment. It is time that we minimise the negative consequences together and take a sustainable path that respects and protects my natural resources.

You can make a big contribution by making educated and responsible choices in your shopping behaviour. Choose companies that are committed to environmentally friendly materials and production methods. Choose durable products that have been manufactured carefully and therefore reduce the waste of reduces. Recycle and instead of simply throwing it away, donate your clothing to extend the lifecycle of textiles.

In addition to your personal decisions, I would like to encourage you to call upon companies in the textiles industry to adopt sustainable practices. Be critical and question the supply chain, environmental impact, and social responsibility of the brands you come into contact with. You as consumers can use your voices to effect positive changes and push companies to turn to environmentally friendly solutions.

As a living planet, giving all living beings a home, I ask you to join forces with me and take a stand together for a sustainable and responsible future. Our decisions today will shape the world of tomorrow. Let us bundle our forces to create a textiles industry that respects nature, improves the quality of life of all living beings, and makes a positive impact on our shared home.

I trust on your dedication and ability to bring about changes. Let us work together to shape a future in which we not only wear nice clothing but also preserve the value and beauty of nature.

Sustainable greetings,



Your Planet Earth

Our prompt to ChatGPT was: Hello ChatGPT! We are a company producing textiles and we publish a new customer magazine roughly every three years. Imagine our Planet Earth sent us the editorial to our customer magazine. Which words could Earth use to address our readers?

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THE MAKING OF
TAKING A LOOK BEHIND
THE CURTAIN

STAY FRESH

FOR EXCELLENT WORK IN MEDICINE AND NURSING.



In the first design in our Four Elements Collection, we combine the characteristics of the element air with the requirements of the medical industry. For its implementation to be as resource-efficient as possible, we have mostly used existing materials from our inventory.

Our aim was to make well-ventilated clothing with an easy, relaxed cut to offer all those wearing it as much freedom of movement and the highest comfort as possible. In addition, we have worked in elastic cuffs on the legs, serving as an ideal protection from dirt in any situation.

When you take a closer look, you can see that the Kasack unites two cut models. This makes presenting the two separately dispensable. A clever move that saves time, energy and material in the prototype production.

A MASSIVE DEVELOPMENT.

FROM MANUFACTURER OF ELASTIC KNITTED FABRICS TO FULL-RANGE PROVIDER OF INNOVATIVE WORK WEAR STYLES WITH ITS OWN R&D DEPARTMENT AND INTERNAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT.

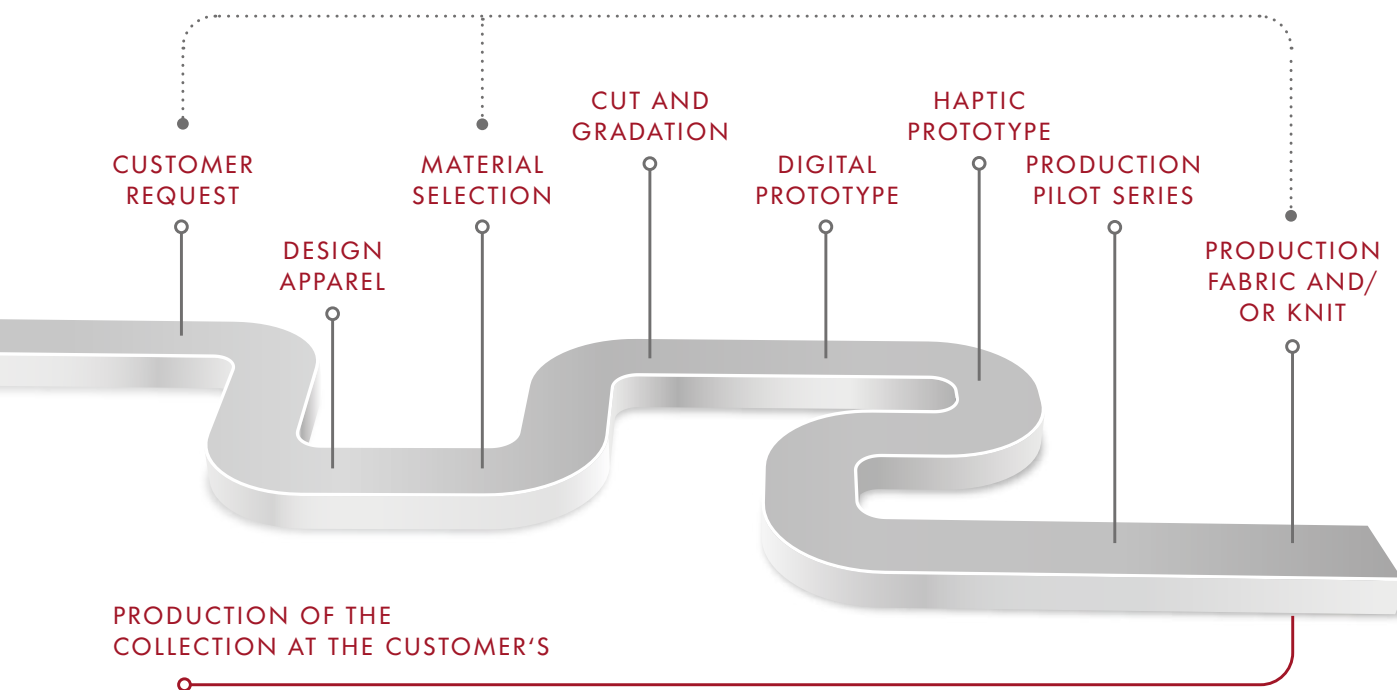
For a long time, Hero Textil has been a pure producer of high-quality knitted cuffs, straps, and expansion zones. In the past, our customers came to us with a clear idea of which knitted inserts they need, in what places, and for which applications. We recommended the suitable material for this and produced it for them with the desired measurements and in the required quantity.

To this day, Hero Textil is a successful full-range knitting mill. More than ever before! However, since long, we have massively broadened our range of competences.



// Today we can proudly claim that we, with our currently 108 employees in Germany and the Czech Republic, cover the full textile production chain from one source: manufacturing everything from various knitted component to uppers, for example, for shirtware or bi-elastic fabric, and even finished prototypes – for our benefit and the benefit of our customers in 47 countries worldwide

CHRISTOPH ULRICH



How has this development come about? Sascha Bertram, member of the management board since 2015, reflects: „We have always been known for also taking an interest in the steps in the value chain that are upstream and downstream from us. We have always asked many questions to find out where our yarns come from and where our products will be used later, in what applications, and under which conditions. This is because we believe that we can advise and supply our customers competently only when we have a broad enough horizon.“

Christoph Ulrich picks up the conversation: „Over years, this has led to a closer and stronger cooperation with our own suppliers and with the design agencies and their customers. We have made it our priority to be more involved early on in the apparel development process. Quite according to the motto: The sooner you call us, the more we can do for you. Our business partners have been happy to accept this offer. Piece by piece, we have this way outgrown the role as a pure manufacturer and developed further to become a partner – who since mid-2022, has even maintained a company-internal quality management as well as innovation and development department of its own.

At the fair stand at the A+A trade fair, Hero Textil has been noticed before with its alive-looking puppets in recent years. Sascha Bertram: „With the clothes they wear, they drew a lot of attention and made it clear that we think far beyond the horizon of a component manufacturer – entirely according to the trade fair motto STRETCH YOUR MIND. With the integration of the former Munich textiles consulting team of KreativControl in Hero Textil, we then took one more decisive step last year.“



Christoph Ulrich: „There has been a long friendship between KreativControl already. We have shared a fair stand several times before and cooperated closely in projects. When the managing director of many years, Christine Jäger, wanted to gradually phase-out her involvement, we used the opportunity and we integrated the company with the whole team into Hero Textil.“

From now on, Hero Textil can therefore not only offer elastic stretch zones to customers but also the development and design of the complete work wear, outdoor and PPE clothing. Hero Textil is increasingly handling the prototyping for this in the Czech Republic. At a former supplier of ours which we have also integrated into Hero Holding. More about this on page 38.

In Crailsheim itself, we of course continue to produce all stretchable inserts, but have now also newly added production control, quality assurance, tender invitations, and where requested, the certification process for the complete collection.

Do you want to find out more about the new steps we cover for you in the process chain? Contact us. We are happy to be available for you at any time!

Find more information about our newly installed departments „Innovation and Development“ as well as „Quality Management“ on pages 14 and 18.

WE STEER INNOVATIONS ON A STEADY COURSE.



To be able to do even more justice to our role as innovation driver in the future, we established a separate department for „innovation and development“ in mid-2022.

The department is headed by apparel technician Barbara Pfeiler-Schoupa and textiles technician Jochen Schick. Depending on what is needed at the moment, the two of them consult the appropriate internal and external expert to check a request or idea for its potential and push it ahead further as applies.

Find out more about this in the interview on the next page!

Innovative thinking and acting has been a top priority at Hero Textil for many years. Our customers see us as a development partner. Institutes, universities or government ministries contact us when textiles expertise is wanted, e.g., as part of a sustainability project. There is now a designated team for all questions and projects relating to „innovation and development“, which was first installed in 2022.

Was it high time for this?

Barbara: Yes, I believe it was. Hero Textil has steadily grown. Not only at the Crailsheim site but also in the course of integrating our family members Hero Textil in Limbach and Hero Textil in the Czech Republic. It's crucial in this respect that there is a central office where questions about possible new developments flow together in order to follow up on them in a sorted process. If this is missing, good ideas and valuable innovation potential could be lost. By all means, that's not what we want.

Jochen: Even if Barbara and I still have other tasks at the company, we can now concentrate entirely on innovations and new developments during a fixed part of our working times. That is important if we want to step up to the rising challenges in the textiles industry and approach topics such as sustainability and the circular flow economy. And that is absolutely our goal.

How are your tasks distributed in the team?

Barbara: Jochen as a textiles technician is the man at the machine or in production. He checks the feasibility of innovations in cooperation with internal and external experts. I ensure that a first impulse turns into a project that runs a steady course. I follow up on things, organise fixed weekly meetings, channel and prioritise matters. Together we decide whether a development has potential or if it might have to be abandoned. That happens as well of course.

What are actually typical topics or innovation projects that you are currently dealing with?

Barbara: One big topic is yarns made from recycled textiles. Not PET bottles are granulated and woven into yarn for them, but old textiles and textile wastes or textile rests are used.

Jochen: In addition, we are working on the development of elastic, so-called mono-material textiles that can be recycled much more easily later on than textiles made of different fibre components. This is bearing in mind that we must in fact start precisely at this early point if we want to stay in the circular textile economy. Sometimes, our projects also concern new machine technology that we test experimentally at one manufacturer to find out whether we might be able to use it to produce a product innovation that we pursue.

Sounds as if there is a lot to do for the two of you. One last question in closing, therefore: How do you envision your department in the future? Freely conceived...

Jochen: Of course, a grown team would be great where more people would join and work on innovations. In a kind of Hero Textil innovation campus where we offer workshops for external staff and where we develop new things together, including with the customer, and where we train people from the production and other departments to instil an innovative mindset in them. That would indeed be really great.

You too have a question for Barbara or Jochen?

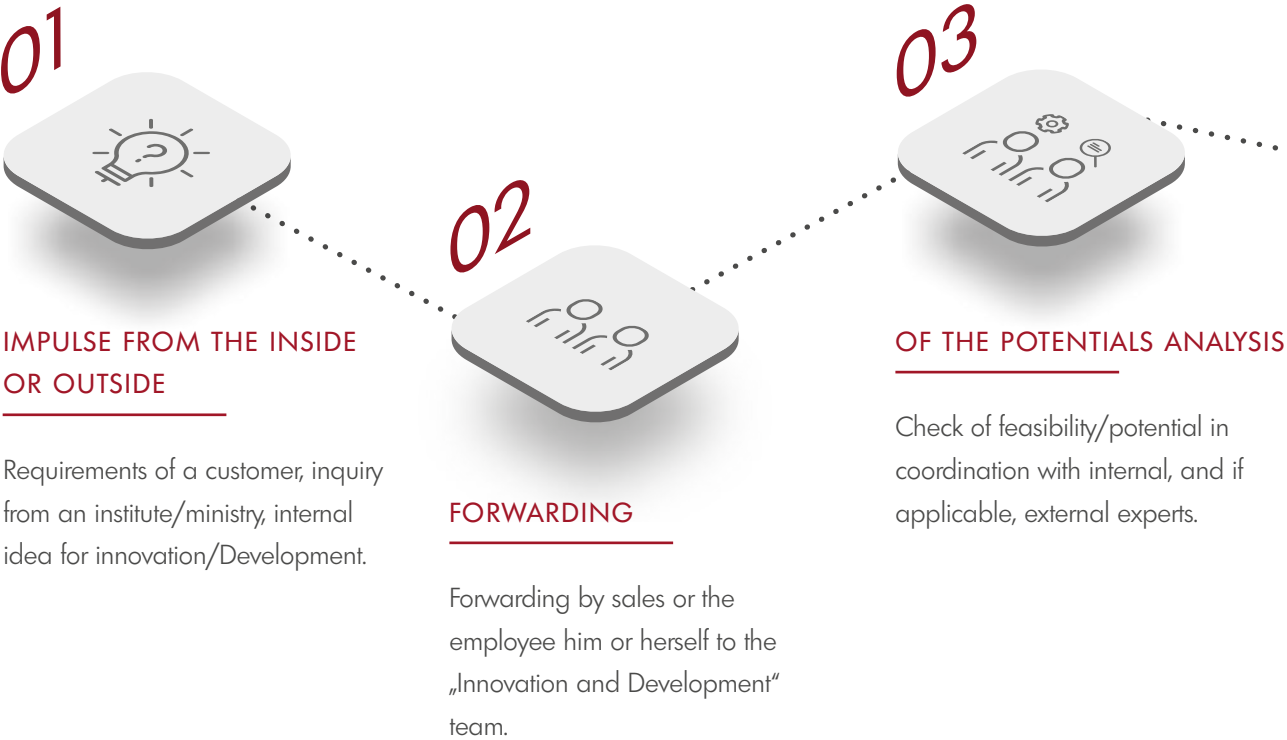
Don't wait to send it to:

barbara.pfeiler-schoupa@hero-textil.de

jochen.schick@hero-textil.de

TYPICAL PROCESS SEQUENCE IN THE TEAM

“INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT”



Scenario 1: PROJECT STOP

Obstacles of implementation prove to be too big so that the project is abandoned or postponed. Reasons for this are documented and provided with arguments that address the parties involved.



Possible next steps, depending on the kind of innovation project: prototyping, patent application, product launch, purchase of a new machine type, recruiting a new specialist, etc.



IMPROVING TOGETHER SYSTEMATICALLY.

Nadja Stellwag is the first Quality Manager at Hero Textil. Getting to the root of things by asking questions is part of her job. In a quiet minute, we turned this around and drilled her with 10 “Friendly Asked Questions” relating to her area of responsibility.

Quality management (QM) at our company follows a similar approach as does innovation and development. This is also an area where tremendous things have happened in recent years. Customer audits and product certifications have been conducted, sustainability projects triggered, and processes optimised. These are many important things that we are now pursuing rigorously and that we want to elevate to an even more professional level.

We do this ideally under the central leadership by somebody who cares 100% about nothing else but QM. An exciting, massive task, which Nadja Stellwag has been tackling at Hero Textil since 2022 – always in coordination with her colleagues who support her with their special know-how in finding and implementing optimisation potential.

But what exactly does QM mean and what characterises good QM? We have asked the 28-year-old textiles business administrator with Bachelor’s degree.

Find out more about this in the interview on the next page!

Why is QM needed?

Mistakes happen – all the time and any place. And that is quite alright, too. What is important meanwhile is that you detect them early so you can do better next time. If this doesn't happen, mistakes can blow up into needlessly huge dimensions and entail subsequent errors and bad consequences, which frequently become expensive on top of that.

What is the objective of QM?

To put it in simple words, QM must ensure that the company acts in a forward-looking manner and improves continuously. To reach this objective, we at Hero systematically go through all processes in all departments and look where mistakes can be analysed or where there is optimisation potential. Sometimes I'm the one to initiate this. But other times, colleagues approach me. Yet in the end, QM is always a project of joint efforts.

Why is now the right time for a separate QM Department at Hero Textil?

QM responsibly has so far been split between several people at Hero Textil. This created a very good and very broad basis, but a lot of responsibility and pressure burdened employees who have a different core field in their work. That is to change now. By bundling QM in a department of its own, we can now also consistently pursue strategic corporate goals in a targeted manner, e.g., in the area of sustainability. That is a big advantage.

What do you do when you have found optimisation potential?

I go to the people involved and ask questions. For example: Who or what does it take so that a process runs even more efficiently? The answers lead to further questions and we get to the bottom of them together or we jointly initiate concrete „to-dos“ instead. What's important is that QM always keeps an eye on the broader picture. Often a process has countless overlapping points with other areas in the company and that becomes evident only when you follow up and think across departments.

Is QM sometimes a bottomless pit?

That sounds so negative now. But yes, the deeper you drill, the more optimisation potential you uncover. And that's a good thing! What's important meanwhile is that you get your colleagues on board and inform them about good interim results. Everyone must experience that things are getting better. Otherwise, it'll be frustrating.

10 FAQ ABOUT QM

What do you have to be like to be successful?

Entscheidend ist, dass es mir gelingt, ein Bewusstsein für die Relevanz bestimmter QM-Themen zu schaffen und auch einen motivierenden Ausblick zu geben. Das Wichtigste aber wohl ist, dass ich es hinbekomme, dass die Kolleg:innen gerne mitarbeiten. QM lebt von einem offenen Austausch und der Bereitschaft, voneinander zu lernen und es gemeinsam besser machen zu wollen. Ohne die Unterstützung der anderen, kann ich nichts erreichen.

What can the colleagues contribute to the process for QM to be successful at Hero Textil?

It's best when each individual in the company feels responsible for quality. Everyone must be ready to live by the concept of a positive error culture and have the courage to admit their own mistakes to then also process and analyse them.



What has changed at Hero since the QM department started its work?

A few processes have already been addressed, which are now more efficient. In addition, the error culture at the company has become more open-minded. What I appreciate very much is that more and more colleagues actively approach me with wishes for change and also like to think together with me beyond the horizon of their own department. After all, that is precisely what is characteristic of good QM.

What is your ideal target for QM that you work toward?

Ideal is when we have understanding for each other and comprehend that the process begins with the human. My aim is working together according to motto „for each other and with each other“ where everyone sees what others need and at the same time realises that you also benefit personally when your own work environment is being optimised. In an ideal QM world, also all processes would be self-explanatory in the end and there wouldn't be any unanswered questions left.

Do you sometimes get on your colleagues' nerves?

Oh dear, I hope not. At least I try to communicate that I'm concerned with the subject at hand and not about accusing anyone for their mistakes. I hope this gets across. Whether I truly succeed in doing so? That is probably the only question that I can't answer today. You should better ask my colleagues.

ONE OF OUR CURRENT QM OBJECTIVES: SUSTAINABLE CONDITIONS ALONG THE COMPLETE SUPPLY CHAIN.

Because we have created the QM Department and added more staff in the course of this, we now have the possibility to put in our full energy and use our internal resources to approach projects that we used to outsource to external quality managers in the past. This is how we accomplish even better to fulfil our obligation to keep high social, ethic and ecological standards.

A good example of this is the certification of Sustainable Textile & Leather Production (STeP) by OEKO-TEX® that we at Hero Textil are currently working on.

More about this:



KEEP COOL



FOR DEEP SERENITY IN GASTRONOMY.

In the second design in our Four Elements Collection, we transfer the characteristics of the element water to the requirements of gastronomy. Again, we have processed materials from our inventories in keeping with the sustainability concept.

We combine royal blue with turquoise colours to receive a shimmering mix which gives you a feel of serenity much like looking at the ocean. The combination of a flowing cut, comfortable stretch zones and breathable materials additionally allows for the required relaxation in a large kitchen.

Jackets kept short adjust to every movement of the body. A Hero-Mesh ventilation opening under the arms provides cooling even at the hot stove. A wrap-around apron with Hero snap fasteners keeps stains away that are hard to get rid of with water alone.

HERO IN FACTS AND FIGURES

When we published the first Strickschrift in 2017, we had just surpassed the benchmark of 50 employees. We have added more since then. In a lot of different ways...

13 JOB-CYCLISTS



have been using the opportunity to date to lease an e-bike through Hero Textil. And their numbers are continuously rising.



RAW YARN MATERIALS

In 2022, we processed 83 tonnes of yarn more than in the previous year. The total amount was

527 TONNES



108 HEROS

are currently part of the Hero Textil corporate family. They work at our sites in Crailsheim, Limbach, Litoměřice and sometimes also from their home offices.

RECYCLING YARN
from overall

1.591.800 PET-BOTTLES



were processed into textiles by us in 2022 and therefore contributed to sensible reuse.



24.162 CUPS OF COFFEE

were had by people at work in 2022. This equals an average per-capita consumption of 224 „pick-me-ups“ per year.

517.801 KG

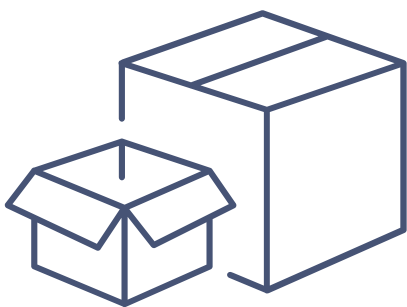
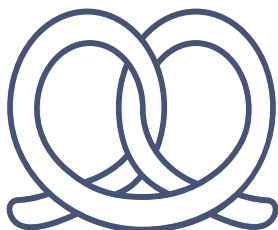
was the weight of the elastic knits and woven fabrics produced by us in 2022. That was 123,477 kg more than in 2021.



PRODUCED TEXTILES

2.160 PREZELS

changed hands at the counters in regional bakeries in 2022 to then land on our desks, in break rooms and on conference tables.



SHIPPED PARCELS

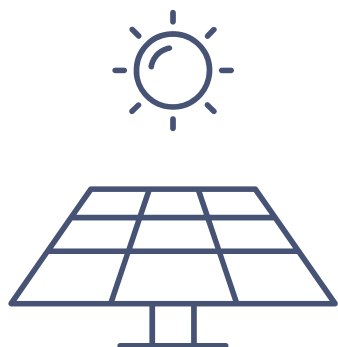
Good for the environment: We dispatched overall 258 fewer parcels in 2022 compared to the previous year.

5.392

291.645 KWH

were generated by our company's own photo-voltaic rooftop system in 2022. Compared to the previous year, this is an increase of an additional 40,500 kWh for our exclusive internal use.

ELECTRICITY FROM SOLAR ENERGY



FINALLY ARRIVED!

Manar's long journey – escaping from her Syrian home in Aleppo to starting over as IT specialist at Hero Textil.

People from foreign countries with unfamiliar cultures and religions can be found to be extremely enriching. Or strange instead. We believe that clearly the former applies to Manar. Since September 2022, she has been training as IT specialist. At the same time, we are also learning from her each and every day. For example, what you can achieve when you believe in yourself, have a goal in sight, and never give up hope for a better life.

You would like to find out more about Manar? Here is her story.



Manar Mohamed (22) works on raising the level of digitalisation at Hero Textil even further



Top left: My family and I directly after crossing the sea from Turkey to Greece in a dinghy. Bottom left: In the Freiburg camp. Right: I the vicinity of our group home in Langenburg.

Hello, my name is Manar Mohamed, I am 22 years old and come from Syria. Aleppo to be precise. When I was twelve, the war forced us to flee my country. At that time, our house was being bombarded and we lost everything. With nothing more than the clothes on our backs, my parents made their way out together with my two sisters and myself. It was very hard for us. But at least all of us were together and unharmed – this gave us hope.

It was terrible to see that nothing was left of our home. Turkey was our first stop on our long journey. My family and I were given shelter in tents there. I couldn't go to school. Instead I had to work for sustenance at a shopping mall. We left Turkey after three years because my parents didn't believe there were any opportunities for our future there.

In France, I wasn't allowed to go to school either – at least not if I kept wearing a headscarf.

Our path led us to Greece. In Athens, we reported to a U.S. organisation that distributes refugees from Greece by plane to other EU States. France selected us then, which is how it became our third stop.

When I wanted to go to school in France, the police were standing at the entrance of the building. I was only to get in without headscarf, the officer said. Of course, we knew that we were not in our home country and had to respect the local circumstances. But we didn't want to deny our own principles, our religion, and culture either. And this is why we ultimately decided to come to Germany.

We received a residence permit in Germany thanks to my dad's Syrian passport and mom's Syrian ID.

During our long escape, we sometimes lived in tents for several months together with many other refugees. We mostly only had bread to eat. These were difficult times for my parents. They were often despaired and didn't know how to carry on.

By presenting her Syrian national ID, my mom managed to prove that we really come from Syria and we received a residence permit. In late 2016, we also lived in a sort of tent in Freiburg in Germany at first for about three months, before we were transferred to a refugee home in Langenburg.

Crailsheim is my new home. Whenever I'm away, I get homesick.

On arrival in Langenburg, the job centre decided that I may go to Eugen Grimminger School in Crailsheim. I was happy! My father not so much. Since there had just been a bus accident on the route between Langenburg and Crailsheim shortly before then, he was very worried to send his daughters exactly on this way to school. The responsible case worker in Crailsheim was understanding and this is how we were actually transferred to Crailsheim. Into a small flat of our own. After a long time, we had three rooms – just for us. It was unbelievable!

After many years of moving around, my family and I had finally found a permanent place to stay and I was even allowed to go to school. I attended preparation courses for two years in which I learned German and reached the B1 skill level. After this, I continued to successfully graduate from secondary modern school.

I was thrilled when I heard that there is occupational training as IT specialist.

Toward the end of my school years, I received a lot of support from my teachers. They gave me guidance and recommended that I go to job counselling. After I took a test there, it turned out that I would be a good fit for a job in information technology. To me this was a reaffirmation because I have always been interested in computer games since I was little and always tried to solve digital problems on my own.

However, I had always believed that you had to study at university to get a job in IT. I was therefore very pleased to hear that there was also occupational training, so I was extremely thrilled and sent out applications right away. Without success. Despite good grades and qualifying exams, I received nothing but declining letters from the companies. When there was personal contact, people often spoke with me very slowly, using their hand and feet – assuming that at most, my German was very bad. At one time, I actually had a job interview, but then the people in charge again only wanted to know if I was willing to take off my headscarf.

I owe it to my sister that I applied to Hero Textil.

In the end, it was my sister who saw to it that I heard about Hero Textil as an employer. During her internship at the company, she found out that Hero trains IT specialists. I then applied for it immediately. And I even received an invitation to come to a job interview.

Before the job interview, I was incredibly nervous and wanted to do everything right.

I virtually took an eternity to prepare for my job interview. I researched everything about the company and was prepared for all of the questions. I was all the more surprised when I was sitting across from Jessica Heck and Sascha Bertram and Sascha simply said: „Hello Manar, nice that you're here. Tell us something about yourself. Anything.“ Wow! Somebody was truly interested in me as a person. That gave me a good feeling and I was much more relaxed then. In the end, Sascha offered me a one-week internship as trial period. He came up to me after three days and asked me if I was comfortable or if there was anything not right. Everything was just right. We completed the trial period and I got the job.

I have now been with Hero Textil as a „Trainee Specialist Application Development“ since September 2022 and I really like it very much. Never has anyone here put me down or asked uncomfortable questions. I can be who I am here. In addition, I get all the support I need to continue my development as fast as possible.

// We can be heroes it says on the Hero Textil website and this is in fact put practiced in how we treat each other here. We are truly a Hero family here. And I am proud and grateful to be a part of it.

MANAR MOHAMED

MANAR'S GERMAN-SYRIAN CULTURE CHECK

1

THREE THINGS THAT I
BELIEVE GERMANY COULD
READILY ADOPT FROM SYRIA:

There is more life in the streets at night in Syria. Shops are opened, everyone gets together and social life takes place outdoors. I miss this a bit here.

2

There are all sorts of spices in Syria that smell and taste fantastic. Our culture is virtually in the air. These spices add the refine great food and add the final touches to great recipes.



3

Our sweets with pistachios are simply unbeatable. These should definitely also be available everywhere in Germany.



THREE THINGS THAT I FIND
BETTER IN GERMANY THAN
AT HOME:

ONE

I like people's punctuality in this country. When you schedule something, everyone keeps the date and time, and they show up punctually. I like that.

TWO

Sometimes people simply walk in on you to come on a visit in Syria. Here, people ask beforehand, knock or ring your bell. I can easily get used to this.

THREE

Many women in Germany greatly value family and children. But their independence and, for example, their occupational training is just as important to them. I feel the same way. That is why I like it.

BE FREE



FOR BOUNDLESS FREEDOM IN THE OUTDOOR SECTOR.

The third design of our Four Elements Collection conjoins the characteristics of earth with the standards of professional outdoor clothing. The outfit kept in different natural shades of colour adjusts effortlessly to any temperature.

Sleeves and legs of trousers can be taken off, thanks to the zip-off function offered by a snap fastener strip. This means, you need to keep only one single outfit for summer and winter in your closet – production uses no more than the absolutely necessary amount of raw materials. The design is also sustainable by virtue of its high degree of recyclability: all materials are processed in such a way to ensure they can be completely separated from each other later on.

A reflective piping makes for good visibility of the clothing even in the dark. A ventilation element is worked into the trousers around the knees. This ensures a high level of comfort when wearing them on the sweatiest of tours through nature.

HOW DO YOU GO BEYOND YOUR LIMITS?

OUR "NEXT LEVEL TEXTILES" YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAMME HELPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL STRENGTHS.

What is worse than not having good managerial staff? Having good trained professionals but not being able to retain them over the long term. To prevent precisely this from happening to us, we have organised an advanced training programme that appreciates young professionals, expands their potential, and gets them excited about Hero Textil as an employer.

The idea for the young professionals programme emerged from a qualification alliance with the textile companies Amann and Olymp. The shared objective is to train promising employees inter-occupational skills and let them broaden their horizon.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME MAKES COMMUNICATION EASIER AND BROADENS THE HORIZON.

// That is exactly what it is about! In the Next Level Textiles programme, we show our trained professionals an exciting development path. We do this in a permanent exchange with our partner companies Olymp and Amann. And in this exchange, our graduates also have the opportunity get to know the employees, structures, and projects of our partners. The next career step at Hero Textil can follow after the participation in the programme but this is definitely not the main goal.



Anna Sophie Göggerle
Head of Personnel Hero Textil



JESSICA HECK
IS MISS NEXT LEVEL
TEXTILES 2022/23.

Speculative applications for the programme cannot be accepted. Instead, the participants are selected by the managerial staff at the respective companies. The honours in the year of the programme's premier went to Jessica Heck at Hero Textil. After her vocational training as industrial clerk, the 21-year-old Crailsheim resident was taken over in the purchasing department where she communicates closely every day with the suppliers. At the same time, she is now taking part in the one-year development programme together with four young professionals of Amann and seven of Olymp. Since the start in October 2022, she has made quite a few experiences.

Jessica Heck: "In one of the first modules in the development programme, we had to prepare a short presentation that we then held before the group. I learned from this that I had to become a little more confident.

In addition, we performed a personality test that helped me to get to know more about myself and my strengths and weaknesses. That was a true challenge but also very insightful."

And what was all of this for? Jessica explains: "The results of the test let me see the points where I want to improve. On this basis, I can then set my completely personal development goals." Exciting! The Next Level Textiles will soon end for you already. What were the highlights for you? "Definitely the last module of the programme. It was about social skills and about how you can influence others. What was also nice was the evening around the fireplace with the managing directors of Amann, Olymp and Hero Textil. It was a dignified and at the same time very relaxed finale."



Carmen Odenell
Head of Personnel
Development AMANN
Group

“Next Level Textiles is exactly the right programme for Amann, as we not only make demands but we can also actively support a target group that has been outside of our focus so far. The networking of the three companies Olymp, Amann, and Hero Textil enables all participants get interesting insights into other companies in the textiles industry. I appreciate the very good cooperation and communication with one another about various topics and needs for personnel development in the work together in the qualification alliance. We learn from one another through the cooperation and many new impulses are gained.”



Tanja Obermann
Head of Personnel
Development OLYMP
Bezner KG

“The young generation is highly trained and wants to continue its development. Foremost one’s personal development and deeper meaning of one’s own actions are regarded as essential. By participating in the Next Level Textiles programme, we show young talents that we actively support them, appreciate their performances, and want to take the next steps in their careers together with them. With the Next Level Textiles we are definitively on the right track. Regular feedback meetings with the young professionals and managers confirm this.”



Frauke Höllander
Manager of Qualification
Associations in the Textiles
Industry, Bildungswerk der
Baden-Württembergischen
Wirtschaft e. V.

“The three companies forming the Next Level Textiles qualification alliance have proven how sensible it is when you don’t try to solve big challenges on your own like the shortage of trained personnel, but when you share your own knowledge openly with one another. They not only save time and money by joining forces for the expanding the potential of their young professionals, but they enable their employees to further their personal development, learn about other corporate cultures, products, and processes. The companies can this way add to their appeal as employers in the industry.”



Do you have further questions about Next Level Textiles or would you like to discuss it with us?
Our Head of Personnel Anna Sophie Göggerle is looking forward to your message:
anna.goeggerle@hero-textil.de

SRDEČNĚ VÍTÁME!

You do not know what our heading means? Well then we are happy to help you! "Srdečně vítáme!" is Czech and translated it means "Welcome!" and it addresses the employees of Hero Textil Czech Republic, the new member to our family.



On 1 November 2022, our Hero Holding took over all shares in the company based in Litoměřice, which had been known until then under its company name „Reitex.“ This step has become necessary in the short term, as all previous owners of Reitex had decided to sell the company for health reasons.

To date, Reitex has been our reliable supplier and we have been a customer of the company for many years. Reitex offered us a number of production services, which we have not been able to procure anywhere else in comparably high quality.

PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY WE SECURE OUR QUALITY.

As our new affiliate, Hero Textil Czech Republic, performs the contract work as before for Hero Textil Crailsheim at the familiar high level of quality, but now in a sort of holding-internal production division. But that's not all.

STRATEGICALLY WE ARE RAISING THE PRODUCTION CAPACITY, BROADENING THE RANGE OF PRODUCTS, AND IMPROVING FLEXIBILITY.

we are raising the production capacity, broadening the range of products, and improving flexibility.

With the integration of Hero Textil Czech Republic, an important step is also made toward production process control as relates to our ready-to-wear work that we can now supervise even better than in the past.

Moreover, Hero Textil Czech Republic can take on new orders or projects, so we can gradually expand our product diversity. The cooperation between KreativControl and Hero Textil Czech Republic also makes a lot of sense and we will pursue it more closely in the near future. Its result will be that models and prototypes for the customers of KreativControl can soon be produced in Litoměřice and no longer need to be contracted to outsiders. The personnel in the Czech Republic is currently getting the appropriately training.

ON THE HUMAN LEVEL WE ARE PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.

For historical reasons, at least 50% of all employees at the site in the Czech Republic have a physical disability. We will continue this inclusion concept in the interest of cooperation enriching us all. Together with the team, which we have taken over completely from Reitex. And the new employees, who we want to recruit for Hero Textil Czech Republic as soon as possible.

IN TERMS OF PERSONNEL WE ARE IN A GOOD POSITION.

The managing director of Hero Textil Czech Republic is Richard Kirbs, the son of the original company founder, Richard Kirbs senior, who continues to work for the company in an advisory role. Our Hero Textil head of purchasing, Timo Rehbach, takes on the plant management in the Czech Republic to provide key support to the just 24-year-old Richard Kirbs for his tasks. Jessica Heck from Hero Textil purchasing is also a contact for all operative matters relating to Hero Textil Czech Republic. Together with Richard, she is in charge of organising and planning the daily business, which has already been optimised in many areas over the recent months.

A WIN-WIN SITUATION ALL AROUND.

Our new Hero Textil site in the Czech Republic helps us to improve our independence from external suppliers. At the same time, we are also improving the working conditions in Litoměřice and secure the future of our present contracted manufacturer and its employees.



HERO TEXTIL CZECH REPUBLIC – TIME FOR A FIRST STOCK-TAKING.

What is working well? What can still be improved? An interview with the management team
Richard Kirbs, jun., and Timo Rehbach.

Richard, you are the new managing director of the company that was founded by your father in 2006. How do you feel about this?

Richard: I have a very good feeling about this because a lot has changed for the better in the first months after the takeover by Hero Holding. The work morale at the company has clearly improved. People laugh more. This of course also has a lot to do with the move to the new premises, which offer much improved working conditions for our employees in production, warehouse and administration. The production planning and the precise cycle timing of the orders has been ideally optimised thanks to Jessi and simplifies the daily communication a great deal not only in the team but also with Germany.

And are there also things that could still work better, Timo?

Timo: Yes, sure. There is always something. Especially after just such a short time. We intend to ensure with both new machinery as well as training for the personnel to be able to process even more orders in the Czech Republic in the future in order to secure our order intake there for the long term. The cooperation with our team of KreativControl will also play a major role in this. What is most important to me personally, however, are the people for whom we want to do everything to reach a big improvement of the familiar conditions in all areas. We want to achieve that they get up in the morning and look forward to their jobs. And that they do so not only because they get paid for it but because the job and the Hero team give them this feeling.

Has something like a sense of „togetherness“ already developed between Litoměřice and Crailsheim?

Timo: Something like that must grow of course. This is supported, for example, by regular communication via Teams, phone, and email correspondence that we engage in on a daily basis. But also visits to the Czech Republic will help achieve this. Our aim is to be in Litoměřice at least once per month for three to four days to not only act remotely but also actually cooperate on site. The hiring of new employees there continues to be generally very job-oriented. But the more we involve people in the individual processes, the stronger and more appreciated and connected they feel with the work and the company Hero Textil.

As known, work is only half of life. Have you already had the chance to celebrated together?

Richard: My father and I were invited to the 2022 Christmas Party in Crailsheim. And here in the Czech Republic, we also had the first Christmas dinner together last year with the staff and the new management team, which was very nice and also very well received. We want to do things like this more frequently in the future. We want to surprise the employees with small goodies in between as well. We want to achieve by this that everyone feels well and understands that they are an important part of Hero Textil.



Timo Rehbach, Jessica Heck & Richard Kirbs jun.

THE FELT TRUTH

Info charts and diagrams are a good way to illustrate facts in a simplified manner. They are normally based on opinion poll results or measurements or other scientific surveys. The ones here are exclusively based on our very personal assessments. They accordingly also only serve one single purpose: your entertainment. Have fun!

WHY VIDEO CALLS ARE A GREAT THING...

because they reduce the amount of petrol we use for driving (19%)



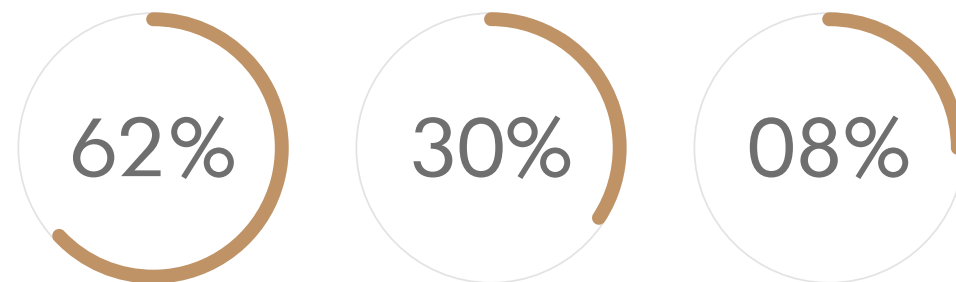
because it is so easy to dial in (8%)



because you can keep your comfy slacks and slippers on (73%)



WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A CUP OF COFFEE IN THE OFFICE ...

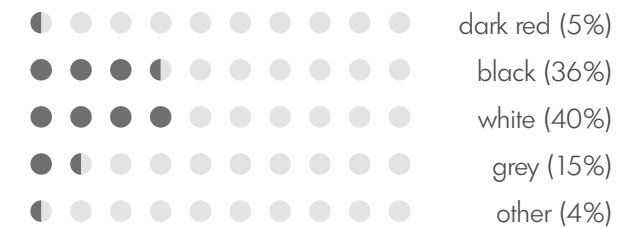


put it down and let it
get cold

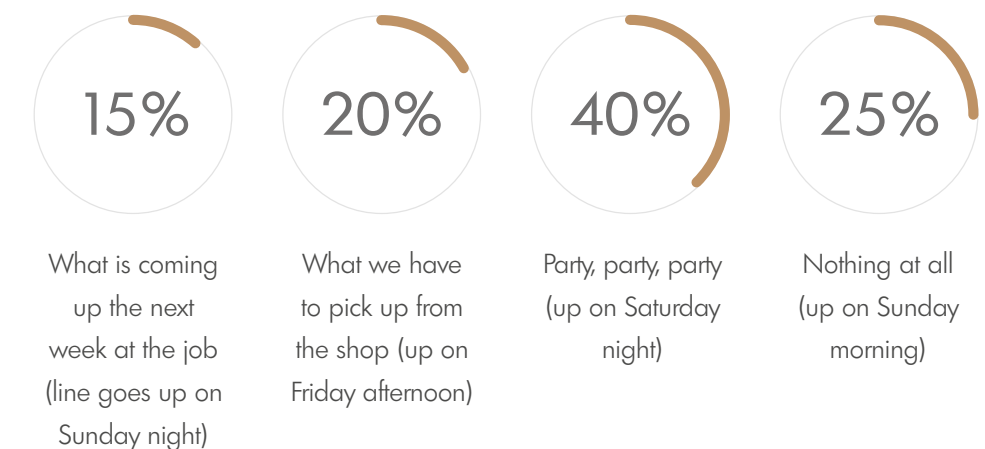
carry it around and then
forget it somewhere

drink it

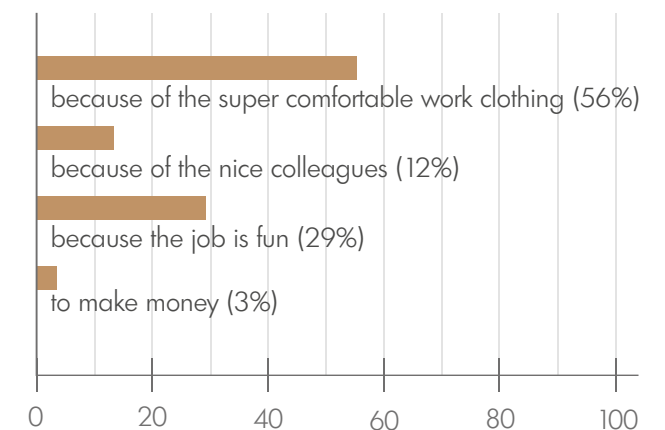
WHAT COLOURS DO
YOU SEE IN A DAY
AT HERO TEXTIL ...



WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT ON WEEKENDS...



WHAT DO WE
AT HERO TEXTIL
THINK IS THE REA-
SON WHY PEOPLE
LIKE GOING TO
WORK...



What is circling your head when you hear the word „knitting mill“... Industrial plant with modern knitting machines? Knitted belly top for the summer? Coffee party with grannies knitting socks?

What felt truth comes to your mind from your professional or private everyday life? You are invited to tell us more about it: strickschrift@hero-texil.de

FEEL SAFE



FOR PERSONAL PROTECTION IN HAZARDOUS WORK ENVIRONMENTS.

The final design of our collection is inspired by the element fire. It is oriented on the requirements for PPE, without holding claims to 100-percent fulfilment of the prescribed standards.

The design uses flame-retardant materials and fireproof yarns as well as zippers. The jacket and flap trousers have reflective strips to assure good visibility. Details such as the high-closing collar or sufficiently long sleeves with elastic cuffs see to uncompromising skin protection. Reinforcement in the knee area protects the fabric against abrasion.

Another one of our goals pursued with this design was to process yarns from our inventory into a mélange and use them up this way. And to create as much excitement as possible, despite the limited options for colours, we have increasingly incorporated fiery contrasts.



100%

WE CAN DO CIRCULAR ECONOMY – ONLY TOGETHER.

The textiles industry is wasting valuable resources. At the same time, it produces huge mountains of waste. Of all textiles globally, 87 percent go into landfills, are combusted, or wind up uncontrolled in the environment¹. If this is to be truly stopped, a functioning circular economy is the only solution.

But who takes responsibility here? The answer must be:
All of us!

The textiles industry comprises thousands of big and small players every one of which without exception must be willing to make a contribution according to their possibilities. Not as solo efforts but in cooperation with other companies, institutes or initiatives, which pursue similar objectives and who complement and support each other.

The good news is: the textiles industry wants to make it – and is organising.



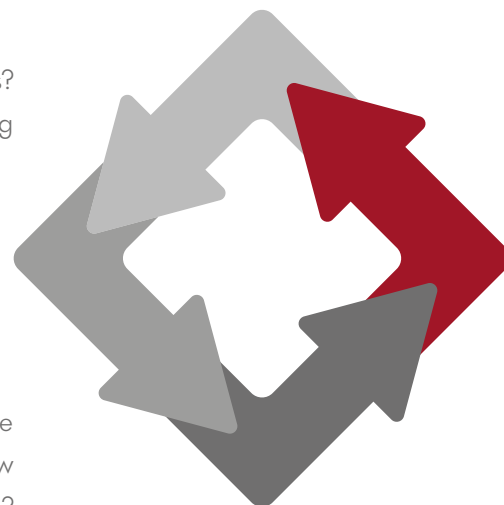
Smart strategies are being devised in promising startups and interest associations, while pioneering research projects are initiated and projects are being implemented dynamically. We at Hero Textil also always deal very closely with the matter of the circular economy. Sometimes on our own initiative but sometimes also as a member of organisations such as MaxTex, which is the central network for sustainable solutions in the textiles industry.

We at Hero Textil are focused on four central fields of action.

Our strategic attention in our commitment for a functioning circular economy rests on four core areas where we promote improvements that we want to implement with our partners:

WASTEMANAGEMENT
How do we handle old products?
How do we organise their recycling and reuse?

CUTTING TO SIZE
Where does the cutting need to be done so that the waste becomes raw material again as quickly as possible?



YARN PRODUCTION
What recycling yarns do we want to produce? What machinery is needed for this?

GRANULATE PRODUCTION
Which old textiles are good to process?
By means of what technology?

What this diagram shows: It is important that the textiles industry stays within its own cycle. All of us have to have the aim of making it possible to process textiles into granulate, yarn, and then into textiles again – entirely without quality losses. Recycling yarns made of PET bottles are nonetheless a good idea. But they do not help reduce the mountains of textiles wastes.

We need more recyclable textiles.

What is important for a closed textiles cycle to become prevalent are economic and sustainable recycling technologies that make even mixed textiles with portions of polyester recyclable. Today, still 80 percent of all textiles cannot be reused². That must change rapidly.

Valuable approaches to this end are provided by research companies such as Rittec. In cooperation with the Technical University of Braunschweig and further partners, environmental engineers are working on concepts for technologies by means of which the gaps in the materials cycles can be closed and which enable a handling of available resources in a manner that is viable for the future.

Our objective: Starting at an early point, thinking holistically, acting consistently.

We notice time and again in general when it comes to the matter of the circular economy: the earlier you start in the process, the more effective is the measure or the bigger is its outcome.

Who, for example, plans cuts and designs so that the textiles can later be more easily separated again into mono-materials has made a big gain. Or better yet: Who avoids textiles wastes from the start does not need to see to their recycling later.

A holistic consideration of the matter is also important. If you plan, for example, the recycling of textiles, it makes sense to include this aspect at the time of their delivery already, possibly by means of textiles tracking.

It is fortunate that there are infinitely many points where we can get started to make adjustments within the textiles cycle. We simply have to do it. Everyone for themselves. And everyone together!

¹ Source: www.rittec.eu/loesungen/revoltex.html#revolTEX

² Source: www.rittec.eu/loesungen.html#textil

WHAT ACTUALLY WANTS... THE NEXT GENERATION?

Specifically for this edition on the themes of sustainability and the future, we have slightly renamed our column „What happened to...?“ which has so far been featured at the end of the Stickschrift. This time, it is entitled „What actually wants...?“ and we passed the word to the children, nieces, nephews and grandchildren of our employees.

We asked the next generation of Hero Textil quite concretely the following question: „How would you make the world as you like it?“ The answers we received give us hope for a next generation who wants to and will do better. A next generation, we therefore also deliberately call the next and not last generation.



Lucien (6):

I want that there is no more war.
And no fights either.

ok



Lennox (9):

I would get rid of war
so that everyone has
something to eat and
that everyone is simply
doing well.



Jannik (7):

I would make the world so that
there are only kind people.



Hannah (9):

I want to become a doctor when I'm big. I want
to help all people this way. And perhaps I will
then also join Doctors Without Borders to go to
poor countries and care for the people there.

Woow



Jana (10):

The world would be
perfect to me if there was
no war ever again.



YES!



Nahla (11):

I would make the world more
climate-friendly and do more
for animal and nature protec-
tion so that lots of forests,
mixed forests, many colourful
flowers and meadows with
herbs can continue to exist. It
should also be ensured that
the animals are treated as
appropriate to their species.
That would be my world.

Vince (11):

I would make the world a place where everyone can
live with each other in peace so that there wouldn't be any
famines anymore and we could all lead a healthy life worth
living. There should be good education for everyone, no matter
how much money they have. I would wish that we could
get climate change under control by creating less
waste, producing clean energy, and overall
leading a sustainable life.



Lukas (13):

I would also hope for all of the cars and the whole emissions being prevented
by some kind of substitution so that the environment is spared. Everyone should
also take their garbage home and throw it away there instead of simply
dropping it in the street.

MAKING-OF STRICKSCHRIFT

A look behind the curtain of our Hero Magazine editorial board.

Well, did you notice something when reading this edition of Strickschrift? All the better if you have not, because: we have produced the third edition of our customer magazine entirely on our own for the very first time. And we did so with a diverse team thrown together of the editorial board, composed of permanent staff and freelancers, as well as members of the Hero Textil management board.

We have had a lot of fun on our adventure of Strickschrift #3. We have learned a lot in the course and hope very much that we have accomplished to inform and entertain you.

Your editorial team Vanessa, Nadja, Anna, Paula, Barbara, Peter, Jutta, Christoph and Jonas.

LAYOUT

1 Christoph Ulrich and Vanessa Baliero discussing the draft titles. 2 The editorial team. 3 Jonas Küstner and Jutta Zielosko during the shooting preparations.



TEXT



We are looking forward to your honest and appreciated FEEDBACK on this edition which is specifically dedicated to the subject of sustainability. You are welcome to write us what we can do differently or better next time: strickschrift@hero-textil.de

PHOTOS

4 Nadja Stellwag with Paula Ulrich during the shooting and 5 Vanessa Baliero with during the layout check.



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