

## Frequently asked questions

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### **EBCA membership**

#### **BACKGROUND**

This document provides information to companies interested in joining the European Branded Clothing Alliance (EBCA). If you have any questions, please contact the EBCA Secretariat via email at [secretariat@ebca-europe.org](mailto:secretariat@ebca-europe.org).

#### **WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN BRANDED CLOTHING ALLIANCE?**

The European Branded Clothing Alliance is a coalition of European and global retail clothing brands. Between our members we represent more than 60 brands and employ over 150,000 people in Europe. Established in 2007, the Alliance provides the first collective and exclusive voice in Europe for retail clothing brands operating global value chains. Drawing upon a balanced and representative membership present in a range of EU Member States, the Alliance seeks to serve as a sounding-board for EU policymakers to develop views on trade policy that seeks to balance the interests of all Europeans in an increasingly global environment.

EBCA showcases the contribution of clothing retailers to European competitiveness and jobs, and seeks to ensure a more predictable business environment, a positive trade agenda, and a better deal for European consumers and businesses.

#### **WHAT ARE EBCA'S KEY POLICY PRIORITIES?**

EBCA focuses its activities in Brussels on three aspects of international trade: trade negotiations, market access barriers and trade-related legislation.

**Trade negotiations:** The Alliance is seeking an open EU and global trade agenda that benefits all stakeholders. We continue to actively support the European Commission's work to negotiate free trade agreements with key commercial partners, the removal of tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade, as well as the adoption of simple and effective rules of origin to improve the use of trade agreements and ensure optimal benefits for all trading partners.

**Market access barriers:** A trade agreement is only as useful as its implementation. As more and more countries and regions sign up to FTAs, we must be ever more vigilant about the rise of market access barriers. EBCA is in regular contact with key EU decision-makers, informing them about new protectionist measures in third countries and creating opportunities for early intervention and the

resolution of burdensome barriers that prevent EU producers from benefitting from the full potential of EU trade relationships.

**Trade-related legislation:** The Alliance is closely following several legislative files currently under discussion at EU-level. While the subjects are diverse, ranging from the generalised scheme of preferences to Union Customs Code, these initiatives are apt to impact the business environment of our members. The Alliance is in regular contact with EU officials, representatives of Member States and Members of the European Parliament to ensure that the interests of our members are heard and taken into account at all stages of the decision-making process.

## **WHICH COMPANIES ARE MEMBERS OF EBCA?**

EBCA's members include H&M, Cortefiel Group, Inditex, Levi Strauss & Co., Ralph Lauren, PVH and VF Corporation. An eighth member is in the process of re-joining EBCA.

## **WHO CAN JOIN THE ALLIANCE?**

Any company that fulfils the following criteria can join EBCA:

- Ownership of textile, clothing or footwear brands,
- Operation of a global value chain,
- Strong European footprint,
- Commitment to highest social and environmental standards in the supply chain.

## **HOW CAN A COMPANY BECOME AN EBCA MEMBER?**

As a first step, please contact the EBCA Secretariat with your request for membership. The secretariat will submit the request for consultation with members. If there are no objections, the secretariat will prepare a draft contract. The membership comes into effect on the date specified in the contract upon signing of the document.

To produce a draft contract, the following information is required:

- Name of the contact person within your company
- Legal address
- Phone number
- Email
- VAT number

## **WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF MEMBERSHIP?**

The membership fee is €20.000 per year – excluding VAT. The fee can be paid on a monthly or a quarterly basis.

## **HOW CAN A MEMBER CANCEL ITS MEMBERSHIP?**

A company can terminate its EBCA membership at any time by giving three months' notice in writing.

## **WHAT IS EBCA'S INTERNAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE?**

One of EBCA's key advantages is its lean organisation and governance structure, providing each member with the distinct possibility to shape the Alliance's agenda to reflect individual members' needs. An internal strategy meeting with representatives from all member companies takes place annually (preferably in person in Brussels) to discuss and agree on EBCA's priority issues and annual work plan. Whenever possible, decisions are taken by consensus. Where no consensus can be reached, decisions are taken by 2/3 majority.

On the basis of the decisions taken at these strategy meetings, the secretariat receives a mandate from its members to act on their behalf and to represent their interests vis-à-vis external stakeholders. The secretariat also provides *ad hoc* support services to individual members (e.g. company specific questions, support on particular market access issues) which do not require the consent of other members.

## **HOW WILL THE LOGO AND NAME OF MY ORGANISATION BE USED BY EBCA?**

The name and logo of each EBCA member is displayed on the website. However, to ensure a necessary level of discretion, they are never used in any EBCA external documents (position papers, press releases, etc.). Furthermore, the name of the contact person for each company will not be communicated to external stakeholders.

## **HOW DOES EBCA MAINTAIN THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION?**

To ensure that the interests of its members are best represented in Brussels, the secretariat is in regular contact with the representatives of each member company. When necessary, the secretariat requests feedback and input on various issues (ideal outcome of trade negotiations for a company, information on a new protectionist measure in a third country, etc.). All information provided by members is used by the secretariat in an anonymous way. We treat all information and documents provided with the utmost confidentiality and never mention which member has shared what information to other members or external stakeholders (only referring to "one of our members"), unless explicitly approved by the member in question.

## **WHO IS RUNNING THE EBCA SECRETARIAT?**

The Brussels-based secretariat of EBCA is outsourced to [Hanover Communications](#), an independent public affairs and corporate communications agency with offices in Brussels and London. Hanover is

also part of a global network of public affairs and communications firms. Four members of the Hanover Brussels trade department are taking care of the day-to-day work of the Alliance.

Find out more at [www.ebca-europe.org](http://www.ebca-europe.org) and follow us on Twitter ([@EBCAeu](https://twitter.com/EBCAeu)).

Contact: Chad Jeudy-Hugo, EBCA Policy Director

[secretariat@ebca-europe.org](mailto:secretariat@ebca-europe.org) +32 (0)492 72 94 09