



PRESS RELEASE - JUNE 2014

THE EUROPEAN BAROMETER OF LINEN

1ST INDICATOR OF EUROPEAN LINEN CONSUMPTION

No, flax is not an exotic plant. The only plant textile fibre grown on our continent, flax is a European exception: 80% of global production comes from here. And yet almost 8 out of 10 Europeans fail to recognize it!

A desirable fibre, linen responds to the needs of the consumers who express themselves strongly influenced by ethics and traceability: 61% of them say they are willing to pay more for a product that can be certified as European.

An annual project, this survey was carried out across a representative sample of 1,000 people, 18+ years old, in France, Italy, Belgium and Great Britain, key countries in the production and consumption of European linen.

These findings were revealed in the **EUROPEAN BAROMETER OF LINEN 2014**, an initiative of the European Confederation of Linen and Hemp (CELC) and carried out in May 2014 by BVA. This revealing survey clearly identifies the perceptions and uses of linen by consumers: a linen that while it may be omnipresent in our everyday lives still only accounts for 1% of the world's textile fibres.

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Where do flax and linen come from? From a land far away? For 57% of interviewees, flax is grown outside Europe, and 19% simply admit to having no idea whatsoever of where it originates.

Europe as the center of linen production is a reality: it's ranked N°1 in the world with 137,650 tons of scutched flax from a total of 71,000 hectares cultivated (2013 harvest). France, alone is responsible for 80% of the continent's production.

It's a local and regional example of farming whose presence in Europe comes about as a result of a situation that cannot be duplicated anywhere else in the world, as it represents the combination of the linen growers' non-transferable expertise, a unique land, and the benefit of having a temperate and humid climate. Little known facts: 51% of those interviewed believe that the growing of flax is a relocatable activity, with 77% saying it might involve the use of GMOs, and 66% that it requires large amounts of irrigation.

European flax is guaranteed to be GMO-free, a commitment signed by all the CELC producers as part of the European Flax Charter.

Flax is also a remarkable ecological plant and the conditions of its cultivation is unknown to 78% of those interviewed. They also don't know that it is first of all, an ecologically-responsible fibre: zero waste, zero irrigation, zero defoliant, zero GMO!

With 42% and 39% of linen fans respectively, the Italians and the British are the leading consumers of linen in Europe. 55% of Belgians and French describe themselves as occasional buyers. The French bring up the rear as they have the highest percentage of non-purchasers: 14%.



The consumer demand is essentially a textile one, which is expressed by 60% in fashion, and has made a notable return in the lifestyle sector (57% bed & table linen, 41% upholstery & curtaining, 35% bathroom textiles) where its uses are multiplied. Linen is also revolutionizing the composites industry as a high-performance plant fibre. From sartorial style to the purest design, from sofas and curtains to tableware and bed sheets, from bathrobes - even to tennis rackets, linen is everywhere.

Each identifies their own benefits: 67% of Italians buy linen because it is natural, 35% of French because it's light and comfortable, 22% of the Belgians and the British favor its long lasting quality.

87% state that linen is an innovative fibre; 88% would even go so far as to describe it as an asset to Europe!

The origin in Europe that acts as the principal reason for buying linen

If for 62% of interviewees price remains a barrier, almost the same number - 61% - describe themselves as willing to pay more for a product that is certified of European origin.

Responses from the European linen industry: the labels **European Flax**[®] - the qualitative visa of premium European flax fibre in all its applications - and **Masters of Linen**[®] - the seal of textile excellence and European traceability, provide some of the reassurances that can be given to the consumer. These two labels appear on linen products at all stages in their transformation, right down to the finished product and can be found on the tag at the point of sale. Those interviewed rated this transparent level of certification as an extremely important factor.

**CELC —
CONFÉDÉRATION
EUROPÉENNE DU LIN
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About CELC —

The European Confederation of Linen and Hemp (CELC) is the only European agro-industrial organization bringing together and federating all the stages of production and transformation for flax and hemp. It is the specialized spokesperson for 10,000 European enterprises, overseeing the fibre's development from plant to finished product. Founded in 1951, the CELC is a source of pioneering thought, economic analysis, industry consultation and strategic direction.