

Techtextil and Texprocess 2026: Innovation as a Key Driver of the Textile Future

Frankfurt am Main, 15 January 2026. Innovations are the textile industry's response to economic uncertainty, geopolitical tensions and continued restraint in investment. Today, this became clear at the press conference of the leading international trade fairs Techtextil and Texprocess. In a panel discussion, industry representatives explored how innovation is accelerating the transformation of the textile sector – from artificial intelligence to sustainable materials and new production models. This innovative strength is concentrated in the Techtextil and Texprocess Innovation Awards, which showcase pioneering solutions driving the textile transformation.

“Especially in times of restrained investment, it becomes clear just how crucial innovative strength is,” emphasised Olaf Schmidt, Vice President Textiles & Textile Technologies at Messe Frankfurt. “Techtextil and Texprocess are the places where ideas are not only presented but further developed into market-ready solutions. The Techtextil and Texprocess Innovation Awards make this innovative strength tangible – giving new technologies visibility, credibility and often the decisive impetus needed to turn research into concrete industrial applications and partnerships.”

The discussion also focused on how companies can remain competitive in the view of global challenges. Elgar Straub, Managing Director of VDMA Textile Care, Fabric and Leather Technologies, made it clear: “Today, innovation serves both as a lever for efficiency and a driver of growth. Digitalisation, automation and AI enable companies to conserve resources, produce flexibly and reposition themselves more effectively and competitively.”

The extent to which digital processes are already transforming development and production was illustrated by insights from industry practice. Walter Wählt, Chairman of the Texprocess Innovation Award and Senior Director Advanced Creation at adidas, explained: “3D design, virtual prototyping and AI drastically shorten development cycles and reduce material use. Yet despite all the technological momentum, people remain decisive – creativity, experience and judgment cannot be automated.”

António Braz Costa, Chairman of the Techtextil Innovation Award and General Manager at CITEVE, underlined the central role of research and advanced materials in making sustainability viable: “Sustainability, particularly when applied to high-performance materials and products, only becomes economically viable through a virtuous tandem of research and innovation. Recycling technologies, circular solutions or entirely new materials are meaningless if they remain confined to the lab. What matters is their translation into real industrial processes. Trade fairs such as Techtextil and Texprocess – and the Innovation Awards themselves – are critical in bridging research and the market.”

The Techtextil and Texprocess Innovation Awards bring these developments together into a clear vision of the industry's future. They demonstrate how technical textiles, nonwovens and textile processing are evolving through AI, new materials and sustainable production methods – and why innovation is becoming a decisive competitive factor. The award-winning solutions exemplify the ambition of the two leading trade fairs: to bring research, technology and application together in a way that turns ideas into market-ready answers to global challenges.

Techtextil and Texprocess will take place from 21 to 24 April 2026.

The winners of the Techtextil and Texprocess Innovation Awards will be announced starting on 14 April 2026.



Foto: Messe Frankfurt / Pietro Sutura

Press information and photographic material:

<https://techtextil.messefrankfurt.com/frankfurt/en/press.html>

<https://texprocess.messefrankfurt.com/frankfurt/en/press.html>

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Your contact:

Eline Welke

Phone: +49 69 75 75-3678

eline.welke@messefrankfurt.com

Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH

Ludwig-Erhard-Anlage 1

60327 Frankfurt am Main

www.messefrankfurt.com

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