



“Life Carries Weight – Together Against Slimming Mania” National Charter of the German Textile and Fashion Industry

Set up by:

Igedo Company

Deutsches Mode-Institut

GermanFashion Modeverband Deutschland e.V.

Verband lizenzierter Modellagenturen e.V.





Foreword

Many young people suffer because they feel they do not correspond with the prevailing ideal of beauty as propagated by the fashion industry, the media and advertising. Hence, more than half of the young people in Germany say that they would prefer to be thinner. Some are even willing to put their health at risk: eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia are becoming increasingly common.

With the National Charter drafted within the framework of the “Life Carries Weight – Together Against Slimming Mania” initiative, the Textile and Fashion Industry is sending out a clear signal: in favour of healthy ideals with regard to beauty and slimness – and against super-thin models on catwalks and in fashion catalogues. By doing so the industry is fulfilling its responsibility towards society and towards young people.

I am confident that this voluntary commitment will be implemented through the adoption of concrete measures and filled with life by companies within the industry. I also hope that others will follow the example of the fashion industry. This will bring us a major step forward in our campaign against the dangers of slimming mania.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Ulla Schmidt'.

Ulla Schmidt
The Federal Minister of Health

“Life Carries Weight – Together Against Slimming Mania” National Charter of the German Textile and Fashion Industry

Eating disorders are a current-day phenomenon and one of the most underestimated health problems of our day. Roughly 1.4 million children and young people between the ages of 11 and 17 display symptoms of eating disorders. Girls and young women are affected twice as often as boys and young men. They are often influenced – consciously or unconsciously – by unrealistic ideals of beauty and an exaggerated cult of youth and slimness.

As one of the leading consumer products industries in Germany, the Textile and Fashion Industry supports the Federal Government’s initiative “Life Carries Weight – Together Against Slimming Mania”. Even if the number of “super-thin models” employed in Germany is far lower than in other European countries, the industry still exerts a tremendous influence through the media. Working together with the Federal Government and other industries, the Textile and Fashion Industry is therefore sending out a clear signal to promote a healthier body image. Today it is more important than ever that fashion and its presentation address a diverse group of consumers. Fashion and beauty ideals are subject to constant change.

The goal of this Charter is to raise public awareness for healthier body images through joint activities and to initiate a change in consciousness. The Germany Textile and Fashion Industry is able to provide a number of good examples that prove that a creative approach to fashion can be combined with a positive and healthy body image. This puts the industry in a position to make an important contribution to the success of this initiative.

Declaration

The German Textile and Fashion Industry is convinced of the importance of engaging in a campaign across the boundaries of individual industries in order to promote more liberated and diverse body images. Together with other industries, it will formulate messages and initiate activities aimed at contributing to the prevention of eating disorders.

The parties to this Charter agree to adhere to and/or implement the following principles:

01. To recognize a social responsibility and support the initiative “Life Carries Weight – Together Against Slimming Mania”, the goal of which is to initiate a process of reorientation among children, young people and adults regarding prevailing beauty ideals.

“Life Carries Weight – Together Against Slimming Mania” National Charter of the German Textile and Fashion Industry

02. To promote and propagate a healthy body image and unequivocally reject the unhealthy ideal of extreme thinness particularly among girls and women.
03. To promote diversity in depicting body images in all of their activities and to avoid all forms of stereotyping. To work together with the media, advertising, the business world, and politicians in order to correct the health-threatening body image often transmitted.
04. To emphasize the need to promote the engagement of numerous industries in order to establish a strong social movement.
05. To promote recognition of the fact that the depiction of a healthy body image, a creative approach to fashion, and diversity are not mutually exclusive.
06. To ensure that the models employed on catwalks and for photo shootings always fulfil the standard now being adopted in a growing number of European countries: a body-mass index of 18.5 and a minimum age of 16 in order to protect the health of models.
07. To refuse to accept and distribute any images that contradict the intentions expressed in this Charter (particularly photos of extremely thin potential role models).
08. To promote preventive measures with regard to eating disorders.
09. To promote a renewed European discussion of issues of anorexia and prevention with the aim of consolidating the activities of various countries and to channel these efforts into the adoption of a European Charter.
10. To develop internal rules to regulate the implementation of the Charter.
11. To enlist additional active supporters for the initiative “Life Carries Weight – Together against Slimming Mania” in their surroundings in order to establish the initiative as a broader social movement.

Berlin, 11. Juli 2008