

## Kering CEO Says Fur Has ‘No Place in Luxury’

*In an effort to meet the sustainability demands of the consumers, the CEO of French luxury group Kering declares a fur-free policy.*

Over the past decade, some of the prominent luxury fashion brands have had one core focus: to produce timeless, durable clothing wrapped in sustainable business practices. It's no secret that the entire fashion sphere has come together in unison to demand a change in the sourcing, manufacturing, and distribution process of luxury fashion. And while sustainability is now sparse throughout the clothing industry, some decisions might seem positive at first glance, however in the grand scheme of things these shifts might not be as eco-conscious as they have been presented after all.

Four years after Gucci announced that it would never use fur in its clothing and accessories ever again, parent company Kering placed a company-wide ban across all its labels. Evidently, luxury fashion brands like Bottega Veneta, Alexander McQueen, and Balenciaga have all declared fur as an unethical material and moved on to a seemingly more sustainable future. In fact, amidst this eco-friendly shift, Saint Laurent and Brioni were the only two labels left using fur products in their latest collections.

Similarly, after Gucci proclaimed that fur is now "outdated", an array of other luxury brands, from Versace, Chanel to Prada, and Burberry, have decided to follow the fur-free road. From Fall 2022 and onwards, none of the Group's Houses will be using fur.

Otherwise known as the oldest form of clothing, fur has long been praised for its luxury and warmth. Nevertheless, at a time of increasing demand for ethical alternatives and vocal disagreements from animal rights activists, Kering's CEO François-Henri Pinault is set to institute the group as a prominent leader in the sustainable luxury fashion industry.

"When it comes to animal welfare, our Group has always demonstrated its willingness to improve practices within its own supply chain and the luxury sector in general," in his latest statement in Business of Fashion.

By breaking this long luxury tradition, Kering aspires to be a vocal ally of the sustainability movement by raising the ethical and environmental responsibilities of its brands.

"[Fur] is symbolic; it's a material that was very much linked to the luxury industry historically," Pinault notes. "Going fur-free gives a good signal that things are moving seriously in this industry in different ways to sustainability. Through this lens, some materials have no place in luxury," he added.

During the first six months of 2021, the consolidated revenue of Kering Group surpassed its expectations and rose to €7.708 billion. That's a staggering 54.1% increase from the previous year with Gucci being the most profitable luxury label. The Italian fashion house's revenue in 2021 was €4.47 billion, facing an increase of 45.8%. However, when Gucci

stopped using this animal-based material 4 years ago, fur had accounted for almost US\$11.7 million in sales (less than 0.2% of its overall revenue).

Undoubtedly, Kering understands that the company-wide ban on fur will result in a loss in revenue as certain customers are interested in this luxurious material. Nonetheless, it also recognizes that this move is a step in the right direction to attract a younger customer demographic as part of its wider sustainable strategy.

“The time has now come to take a further step forward by ending the use of fur in all our collections. The world has changed, along with our clients, and luxury naturally needs to adapt to that” François-Henri Pinault, Chairman, and CEO of Kering, added.

As explained by Kering sustainability chief Marie-Claire Daveu, “Young consumers and young millennials also expect now that companies pay attention to these values,”

This decision comes as no surprise given that the total number of Millennial consumers is predicted to grow from ~32% to ~50%. When it comes to luxury goods, Millennials will make up for 60% of the total number of customers by 2025. Environmental, animal and ethical manufacturing concerns influence 64% of their luxury purchases. As a result, luxury brands are trying to align their practices with this value-conscious consumer base. Still, the LVMH group, which houses brands like Dior, Louis Vuitton, and Fendi, has not taken the same sustainability pledge just yet.

## **Is luxury fur-free clothing and accessories really that sustainable?**

At first glance, this new generation of “vegan fashion” which is solely based on artificial alternatives to animal-based textiles such as leather, and fur, seems pretty harmless at first glance. One of the most beloved substitutes is faux fur which looks and feels just like real fur, but it’s produced using synthetic fibers.

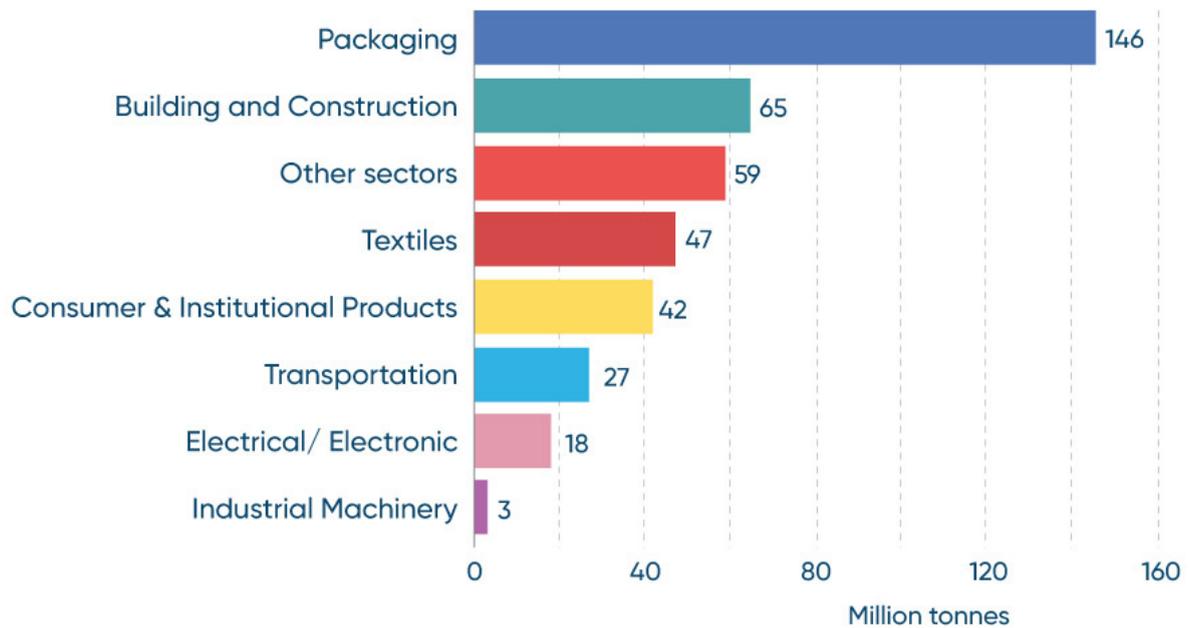
### **The environmental impacts of synthetic fur**

From a sustainability standpoint, these man-made materials have a tremendous environmental impact. As a result of inefficient practices, synthetic fibers from clothing are constantly released into the waterways due to washing. Moreover, during the production process, harsh chemicals are spread across the fields, assisting in the further pollution of the land, water, and air.

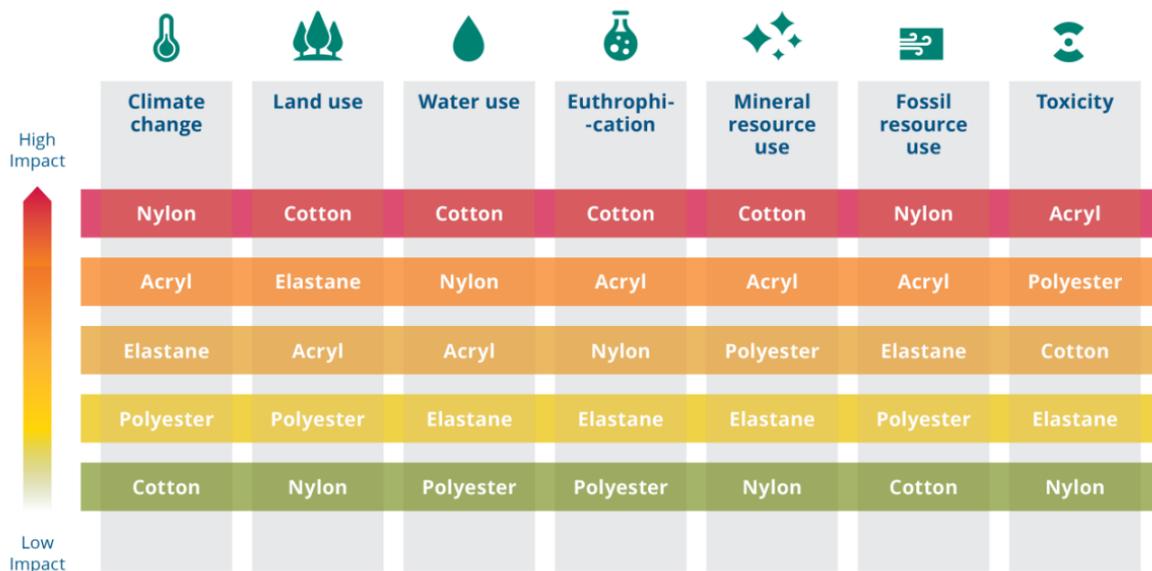
Faux fur clothing and accessories are typically made from synthetic polymeric fibers including acrylic, modacrylic, and/or polyester. All of the aforementioned fibers are essentially different forms of plastic; these materials are produced with the help of chemicals derived from coal, petroleum, and limestone.

Written by Konstantina Antoniadou for [surgeconsulting.co](http://surgeconsulting.co)

# GLOBAL PLASTIC PRODUCTION BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR



Global plastic waste generation per industrial sector, 2015, million tonnes/percent - Statistics from Geyer et al.



Comparison of the environmental impacts of the manufacturing of 1 kilogram of dyed, woven fabric - Statistics from OVAM (2019) and the Higg Index (Sustainable Apparel Coalition, 2020).

According to the Environmental Science & Technology Research, every time we wash a synthetic garment about 1,900 individual microfibers are released into the water. These

fibers are then consumed by aquatic organisms, which introduce plastic in the food chain. In reality, synthetic fibers contribute to 35% of the microplastics in the ocean.

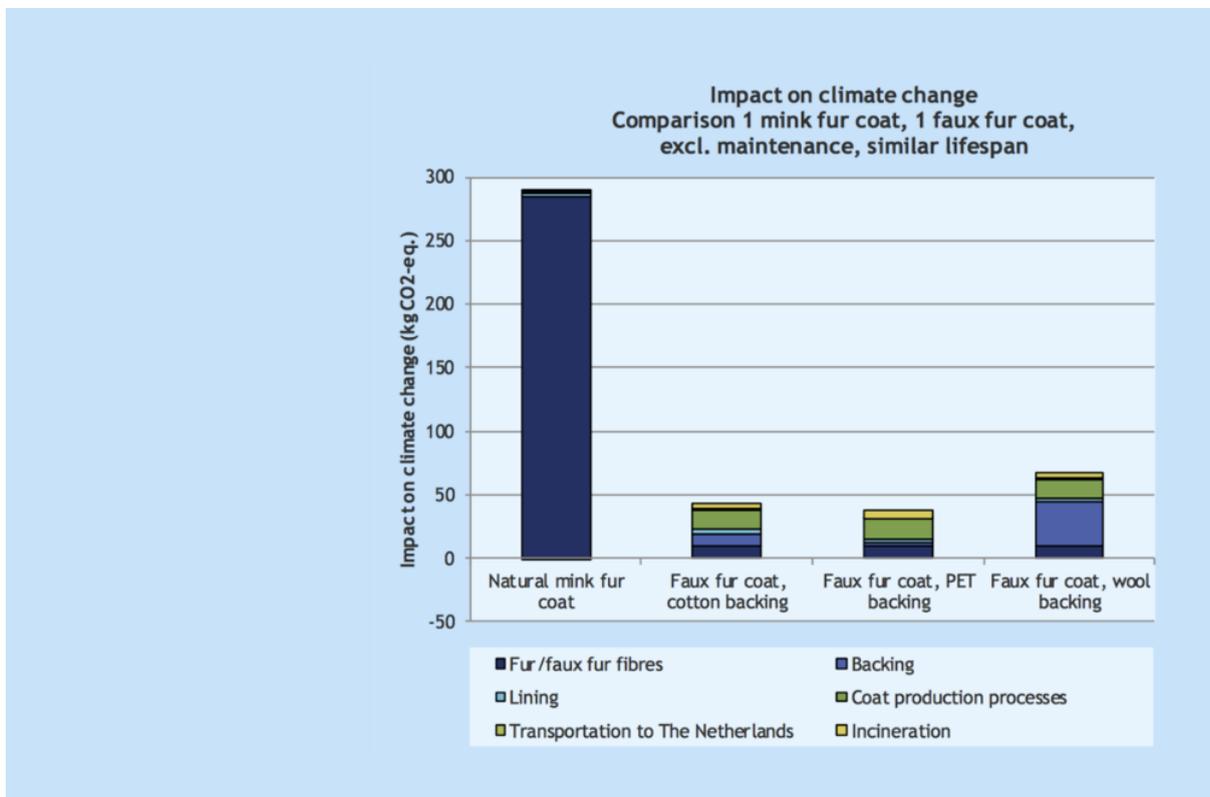
In fact, as explained by The [Ocean Conservancy](#), plastic has been found inside the bodies of more than 60 percent of aquatic breeds and 100 % of sea turtle species who think it's food.

In a recent interview in HuffPost Mark Oaten, CEO of the [International Fur Federation](#) mentioned that "Some of the fake fur is saying that it's being developed using recycled plastic, and that's great, however, it's still plastic," explaining that even if we put the harmful chemicals aside, there is still the issue of allowing non-biodegradable fibers to pile up in the landfills. Real fur "really is a sustainable product."

### The longevity and quality issues of synthetic fur

Faux fur has a significant difference in cost, breathability, durability, and /biodegradability. While the discussion of sustainability comes hand in hand with the longevity of the clothing we are using, faux fur products have a significantly lower lifespan than real fur.

Real fur can, most of the time, be upcycled and recycled into other fur products and gain a second chance in life, that's certainly not the case for synthetic fur. The longevity of a product is hugely connected with its quality. Real fur fashion and accessories are investments, sentimentally passed down through families similar to family heirlooms.



Impact on climate change: comparison one fur coat, one faux fur coat; excluding maintenance, similar lifespan - Source: CE Delft

Granted, artificial fur offers customers a wide variety of designs and colors, however, these synthetic fibers are known for being prone to wearing out and tearing. Just like its quality, faux fur's colors fade with time, thus there is a constant need for replacements which is not only environmentally wasteful but also money-consuming.