

Apulia fashion future shown to British monarch

Posted on May 5, 2026 by Alina Trabattoni

LONDON – An Italian-led initiative to grow regenerative cotton in Apulia was presented today to King Charles III at Buckingham Palace, as the global fashion industry's most powerful sustainability coalition showcased measurable progress on reconnecting luxury brands to the land where their raw materials originate.

At the centre of the project are the two founding Italians. Giorgio Armani, who passed away in 2025 and whose eponymous group has become one of the world's most recognised luxury fashion houses since its founding in Milan in 1975, was one of the founding fathers of the Apulia Regenerative Cotton Project. And also Ravenna-born entrepreneur Federico Marchetti, who founded Yoox in 2000 and transformed the way the world buys luxury fashion online.

The initiative was presented to the King and others present at Buckingham Palace by Marchetti, a member of the King's broader sustainability advisory circle.

"I built a fashion-tech company from Italy for the world, and now from Italian soil we can help reinvent what Made in Italy means," Federico Marchetti, who heads the Sustainable Markets Initiative Fashion Task Force which has spearheaded the initiative.

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/marchetti-presents-apulia-fashion-future-to-king-charles/



Cotton fields, Apulia (*Credits: Federica Livia*)

The Task Force brings together brands with a combined revenue of over £24 billion, including Armani Group, Prada Group, Brunello Cucinelli, OTB, Stella McCartney, and Burberry. The Apulia Regenerative Cotton Project, which it coordinates, was launched in June 2023 and has delivered documented gains in soil carbon and biodiversity across its Apulia trial site.

Sustainable monarch

That it was presented to a king who has championed regenerative agriculture for decades, by an Italian entrepreneur who built a global business on the idea that fashion and technology belong together, gives the story a symmetry that goes beyond the operations on the ground.

King Charles III has in fact long argued that healthier farming begins with healthier soil, promoting organic practices, crop rotation and biodiversity restoration as a way to ease climate pressure and rebuild the land. That makes the Puglia project more than a royal photo-op, as it also underlines the neat paradox of Federico Marchetti, the Yoox founder who once sped up global luxury commerce, now helping to anchor fashion’s future in slow, land-based regeneration.

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King Charles III, Federico Marchetti, Riccardo Stefanelli (*Credits: Rob Cadman*)

In fact for Apulia, a region better known for olive oil and wine than cotton, the project opens a quiet new chapter in Italian agricultural identity.

“The fact that a region not historically linked to cotton could help redesign fashion’s future supply chain is exactly the kind of unexpected innovation Italy does best,” Marchetti told Italy Now.

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