



# Textile Transparency Report 2024

Collection and distribution of textiles 2024

UFF Norway



## About the report

In recent years, public awareness around textiles collected for reuse has grown significantly. Studies confirm that extending the lifecycle of textiles yields substantial environmental gains by minimizing demand for new textiles<sup>1,2</sup>. Additionally, reuse initiatives can deliver meaningful socio-economic benefits, including support for charitable causes and job creation. At the same time, the export of used textiles to parts of Africa, Asia, and South America is a source for concern, where large amounts of textiles may end up as unmanaged waste or disrupting local textile markets. Such criticisms have fostered scepticism toward the second-hand clothing sector at both local and global levels, with repercussions on political discourse and EU legislation connected to textile production and trade<sup>3,4</sup>.

The Humana People to People network is dedicated to advancing transparency and traceability throughout the second-hand clothing sector. Ensuring full visibility along the value chain from

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<sup>1</sup> Gustav Sandin, Greg M. Peters, Environmental impact of textile reuse and recycling – A review, Journal of Cleaner Production, Volume 184, 2018, Pages 353-365, ISSN 0959-6526, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.02.266>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959652618305985>)

<sup>2</sup> [https://global-recycling.info/archives/8171?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://global-recycling.info/archives/8171?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>3</sup> JRC 2021. Circular Economy Perspectives in the EU Textile sector. <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC125110>

<sup>4</sup> 2022. EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles. [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/textiles-strategy\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/textiles-strategy_en)

collection to reuse, recycling, and beyond, is vital for driving sustainability, enhancing resource efficiency, assuring quality, upholding ethical practices, and empowering consumers.

The Textile Transparency report for 2024 is part of an annual undertaking by UFF Norway to document where the textiles collected by UFF Norway end up, and what purpose they serve. In line with the Humana People to People Code of Conduct, all sorting centres used by UFF Norway are obliged to be transparent about their activities and to report their sales of textiles for reuse, material recycling and waste, specified by customer and country.

## UFF Norway

UFF Norway<sup>5</sup> is a civil society organization and part of the international Humana People to People network. Since its establishment, the organization has worked to extend the life of textiles by collecting, reusing, and reselling clothing across Norway. UFF Norway works in accordance to the waste hierarchy, focusing on waste prevention and increased reuse.

The organisation UFF Norway collects used clothing from collection points and recycling stations throughout Norway. At the collection points, the drivers carry out an initial screening, removing obvious waste. A second pre-sorting stage is performed at local warehouses, where clothing is prepared and packed for export. Any rejected textiles or non-textile waste from this process is delivered to local waste management facilities. The pre-sorting of textiles is important to preserve the quality of the collected clothing, by avoiding that humid or dirty items contaminate the dry and clean items.

A part of the textiles collected from the northern part of Norway was until June 2024 sorted at UFF sorting centre in Bodø (Arctex). The sorting centre was established in 2023 and closed down in June 2024.

UFF Norge operates 14 regional warehouses where the collected textiles are repackaged in sacks and loaded into shipping containers. The containers are shipped to sorting centres at different locations. Some consignments are weighed upon arrival, while for container shipments, the weight is calculated using the container's gross mass.

UFF Norway runs 12 second-hand shops across Norway, including a small number of self-service outlets. These stores are stocked with high-quality clothing that has been sorted at international sorting centres. To a limited extent, the shops were supplied with garments from the Arctex sorting centre<sup>6</sup> before the sorting was discontinued.

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<sup>5</sup> Foreningen UFF-Butikkene i Norge (UFF Norway)

<sup>6</sup> In 2023, UFF Norway established Arctex, a textile sorting centre located in Bodø that received collected textiles in the northernmost areas of Norway. This was discontinued in 2024.

## Results

### Collection of textiles

**Feil! Fant ikke referansekilden.** Table 1 presents the amount of textiles collected by UFF Norway in 2024. In total, UFF Norway reports having sold 7 026 tonnes in 2024. This is a small reduction from the previous two years. The collected textiles were sold to 14 different sorting centres. Of these, seven centres each received around 500 tonnes<sup>7</sup> or more and were therefore asked to complete reporting forms. Together, these seven centres accounted for 84 % of the textiles sold by UFF Norway and have provided detailed reports. The remaining five centres received only small volumes and were not required to submit reports.

Overall, the deviation between the amounts reported sold by UFF Norway and the amount received by the reporting sorting centres is 2 %, which is considered acceptable. The discrepancies are accredited to shipments in transit.

Table 1. Amount of textiles from UFF Norway 2024, tonnes and percentages.

Sorting centre	Amount sold <sup>1)</sup>	Amount received from UFF Norway <sup>2)</sup>	Total amount received at sorting centre	UFF Norway's, share of total amount received at sorting centre
Bultex Bulgaria	2 475	2 506	2 717	92,2 %
TH Slovakia	1 508	1 571	24 712	6,4 %
TEXX Team Bulgaria	682	702	6 285	11,2 %
Samulak Poland	644	645	783	82,4 %
UFF Norway Bodø sorting (Arctex)	227	199	250	79,6 %
HPP Bulgaria	211	228	12 839	1,8 %
HPP Slovakia	78	78	8 235	0,9 %
Other (5)	1 201	Not reporting		
<b>Total sold</b>	<b>7 026</b>			
<b>Total sold to reporting sorting centres</b>	<b>5 825</b>			
<b>Total received at reporting sorting centres</b>		<b>5 928</b>		
<b>Deviation sold – received (t)</b>		<b>103</b>		
<b>Deviation sold – received (%)</b>		<b>2,0 %</b>		
<b>Reported from sorting centres as share of total sold</b>		<b>84 %</b>		

1) Reported by UFF Norway

2) Reported by the sorting centre receiving the textiles

<sup>7</sup> Total for all participating collection organizations in the project.

### Utilisation of the collected textiles

In 2024, 82.2% of the textiles collected by UFF Norway were delivered for reuse (Figure 1). A further 10.9% went to material recycling, while only a negligible share was sent to other forms of waste treatment.

In addition, 6.9 % of the total amounts received by the sorting centres was classified as not textiles. This fraction was handled as waste at the sorting centres, with 2.5% directed to material recycling and 4.4% to other waste treatment methods, such as incineration and landfill.

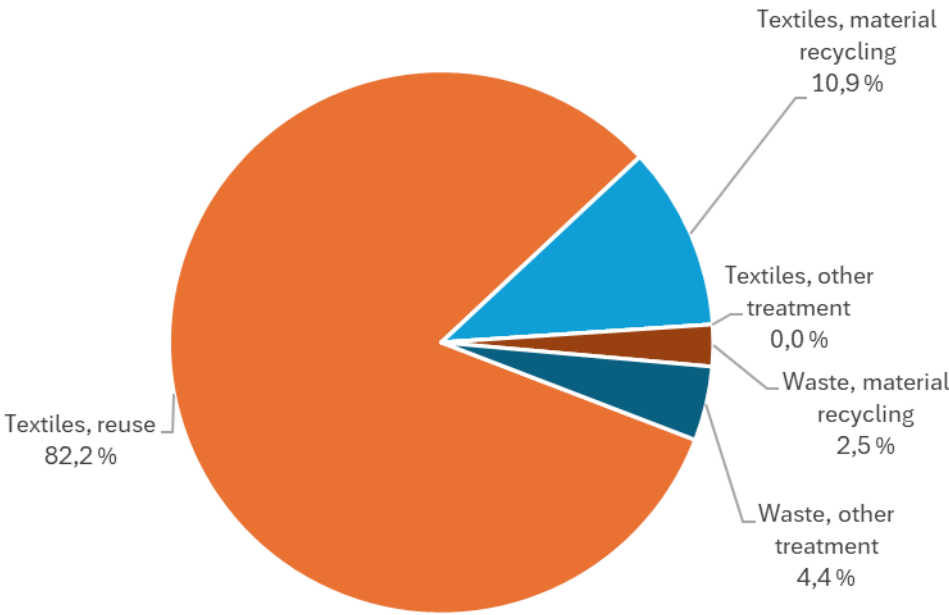


Figure 1. Distribution of purposes for textiles originally collected by UFF Norway in 2024.

Table 2. Utilisation of used textiles originally collected by UFF Norway in the period 2020- 2024.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<i>Textiles, reuse</i>	71,2 %	73,0 %	78,2 %	82,2 %	82,2 %
<i>Textiles, material recycling</i>	19,4 %	19,3 %	15,8 %	11,3 %	10,9 %
<i>Textiles, other treatment</i>	4,8 %	2,7 %	1,5 %	1,2 %	0,0 %
<i>Waste, material recycling</i>	1,5 %	1,6 %	0,9 %	1,1 %	2,5 %
<i>Waste, other treatment</i>	3,1 %	3,4 %	3,6 %	4,2 %	4,4 %
<i>Total</i>	100,0 %	100,0 %	100,0 %	100,0 %	100,0 %

As shown in Table 2, the reuse rate in 2024 remained unchanged from 2023, and was somewhat higher than in 2020–2021. The share sent to material recycling was slightly lower in 2024 compared with the previous four years, while the waste rate has remained largely stable over time.

Year-to-year variations can largely be explained by changes in sales to different sorting centres. The share of textiles directed to reuse or recycling at each centre depends mainly on the quality of textiles received, but also on the specific markets they serve. Since sorting centres must adapt to changing market demand, outcomes will naturally shift over time. From 2023 to 2024 the shipments to Humana/BTT sorting centre in Lithuania is stopped (about 10% of total in 2023) while the sorting centre Samulak in Poland has received about the same amount in 2024.

Because textiles from UFF Norway represent only a small portion of the overall volumes processed, except at Bultex, the results are also influenced by textiles collected from other sources.

### **Geographical distribution of sold textiles**

The geographical distribution of textiles and waste collected by UFF Norway is shown in Figures 2 and 3. The Asia region includes Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, while the Nordic region is shown separately and consists of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

More than 50 % of the textiles end up in Europe, a share that has remained relatively stable throughout 2020–2024. More specific, nearly 30 % are sold to customers in Bulgaria because of the large share of collected textiles from UFF Norway sold to Bultex in Bulgaria. Bultex (as most of the sorting centres) sells a large share of their sorted textiles in own shops in the nearby areas.

Textiles sold to Africa are used entirely for reuse, whereas those sent to Asia are used for both reuse and material recycling.

As illustrated in Figure 3, all waste generated during sorting is treated locally in Europe.

In line with the discussion in the previous chapter, the change from year to year might be more strongly linked to the selection of sorting centres, which have different sets of customers for sorted textiles.

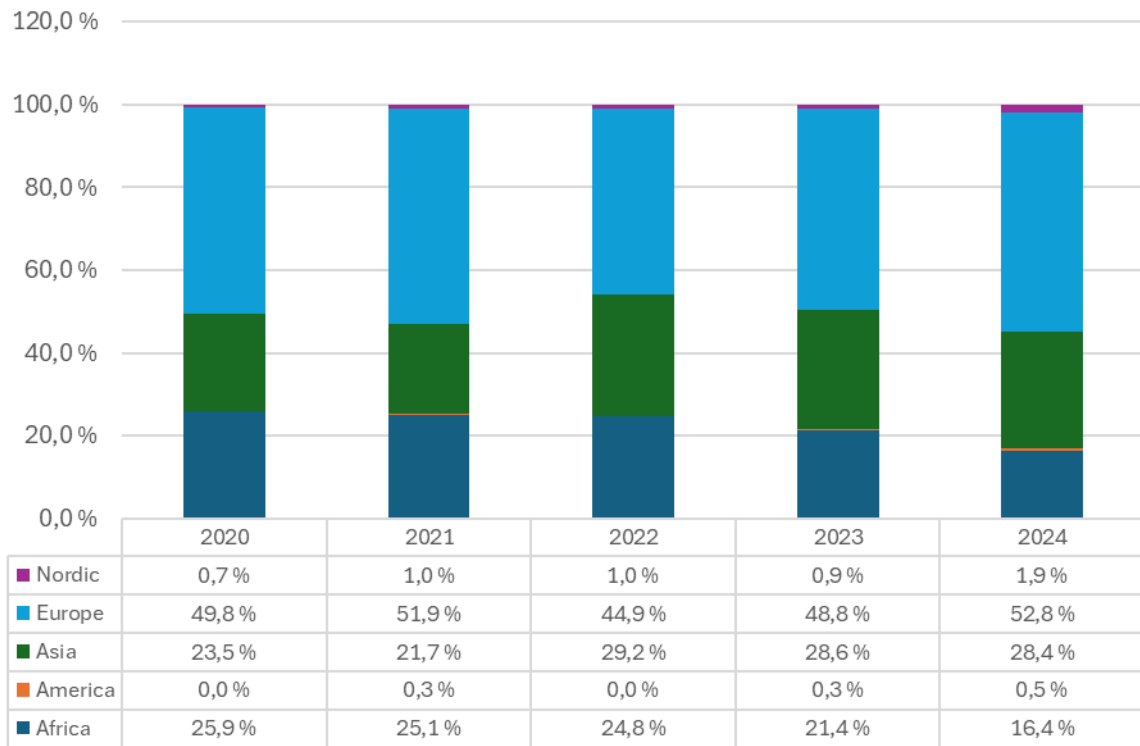


Figure 2: Recipient continents for used textiles originally collected by UFF Norway, 2020-2024.

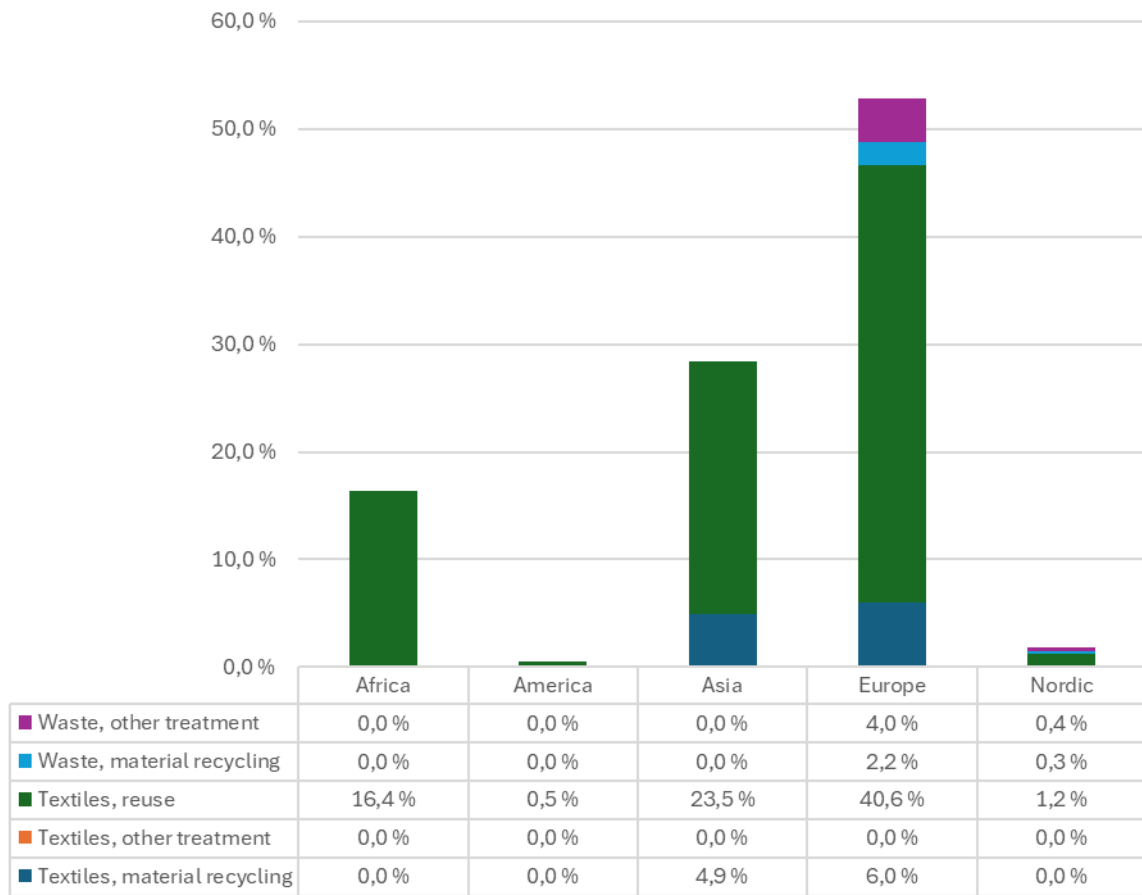


Figure 3: Continents and purpose of used textiles originally collected by UFF Norway in 2024.

# Methodology

## Data collection

This report is based on data collected from UFF Norway and data from sorting centres receiving the collected textiles from UFF Norway. This is a part of a joint project with participants from six Humana collection organizations for used textiles in Europe (Denmark, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden).

## Collection organisations

Data from the collection organisations is collected through a survey in the form of a spreadsheet. UFF Norway has provided quantitative information on the amounts of textiles they collected, the amounts sold to different customers (sorting centres), as well as qualitative data on their collection system and how they register data on the textiles and waste they handle.

## Sorting centres

Data from sorting centres is collected through surveys, using spreadsheets. Two forms are used: one for sorting centres that receive more than 1 000 tonnes from all participating Humana collection organisations, and one simplified form for sorting centres that receive between 500 and 1 000 tonnes from all participating Humana collection organisations. The sorting centres are asked to provide data on all textiles that they have received and sorted at their location, including customers outside the Humana network.

Most advanced sorting centres sort the textiles into more than 100 unique categories. In their report for this work, the sorting centres are asked to group these into the following main categories:

- Textiles, reuse: textiles that are used again for the same purpose as originally intended
- Textiles, material recycling: textiles processed into recycled textile fibres used for other products like wipers etc.
- Textiles, other treatment: waste treatment in form of incineration, with or without energy recovery and/or landfill.
- Waste, material recycling: non-textile waste, processed into secondary raw materials for other products.
- Waste, other handling: non-textile waste for incineration, with or without energy recovery and/or landfill.

Textiles to waste are mostly damaged, wet or dirty textiles not suitable for either reuse or material recycling.

Waste material are mostly packaging materials for the textiles and incorrect sorted items.

## **Comparison with previous results**

Collected data are registered in the database which Mepex has compiled as part of the work with previous years' reports. In the registration process, the data are checked for inconsistency and quality, and where necessary the sorting centres are asked to clarify. All communication with the sorting centres has taken place in writing.

## **Audits**

As part of the quality control of reported data, Mepex conducts audits of selected sorting centres to ensure that their routines and practices for registration, sorting quality and reporting are credible. There has not been any audits in 2024.

## **Assumptions and calculations**

### **Assumption on quality and averages**

Most sorting centres do not have specific information of the utilisation of textiles collected by any specific collection organisation (i.e. the share of textiles from UFF Norway that is of reuse quality), as the textiles are mixed with textiles from other collection organisations in the sorting process.

A distribution of the utilisation of the textiles (reuse, recycling and waste management) is established for each sorting centre. We assume that for each sorting centre, the quality of the textiles from the Humana organisation is at least equal to the average quality of the total amounts of textiles received at the sorting centre. The overall usage distribution for each collection organisation is then calculated as a weighted average based on the amount of textiles sold to each sorting centre.

### **Calculations**

Unless otherwise specified, all calculations are made based on the received reports from the sorting centres. As an example, the share of textiles from a sorting centre that is reused is calculated as a percentage of the total amount of textiles reported as received by the sorting centre.

The amount of textiles accounted for is calculated as the share of textiles sold from the collection organisation to sorting centres which have reported, divided by the total amount of textiles sold by that collection organisation. This means that waste removed by the collector prior to export is not included in the calculation.

## **Sources of uncertainty**

### **Shipments in transit**

There are some examples of minor differences between the amounts of textiles reported as received by the sorting centres and the amounts reported as sent by the collection organisation. This difference is in most cases attributed to the transit of shipments, i.e., shipments sent late in the year and received at the sorting centres early in the next year. Such minor deviations will not significantly affect the results. Larger deviations are checked out through the checks carried out after receipt of the reports.

### **Interpretation of the survey form**

The sorting centres are asked to report on the purposes that the sorted textiles are used for, hereunder reuse of clothes, shoes, textiles and accessories. The option “sold for further sorting” are not accounted for, to reduce the possibility for counting textiles more than once.

We are aware that the definitions of reuse and recycling given in the reporting form are interpreted in slightly different ways, which might affect the balance between reuse and material recycling. The sorting centres use different labelling systems for their qualities, which means there is an interpretation done to match the survey form. In some cases, typically for low price mixed qualities sold to Asia, the sorting centres are not sure whether the sold textiles are reused or being recycled. As a principle, textiles are accounted for as material recycling.