



Textile Transparency Report 2024

Collection and distribution of textiles 2024

Humana Sweden



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^{1,2}. 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 second-hand 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^{3,4}.

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 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 2024 is part of an annual undertaking by Humana People to People. The purpose of this report is to document where the textiles collected by Humana Sverige (Humana Sweden) end up, and what purpose they serve.

¹ G. Sandin, G. M. Peters, [Environmental impact of textile reuse and recycling – A review](#), Journal of Cleaner Production, 2018.

² Global Recycling; [Old Textiles: Benefits of Reuse and Recycling](#) (1/2023)

³ JRC 2021. [Circular Economy Perspectives in the EU Textile sector](#).

⁴ 2022. [EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles](#).

Humana Sweden

Humana Sweden is a non-profit 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 Sweden. Humana Sweden works in accordance with the waste hierarchy, focusing on waste prevention and increased reuse.

Humana Sweden collects used textiles from collection points, second hand shops and recycle stations. Some of the textiles are also bought from other Swedish textile collectors (Stadsmissionen in Sweden). Most of the collection are serviced by Humana Sweden's own operators, while one area is serviced by independent actor that collect the textiles and deliver them to one packing point. Humana Sweden also collect not sold items of clothing and textiles from own and other Second-Hand Retail shops, both private and charities.

The textiles are picked up by drivers in vans or trucks and transported to four regional warehouses. The drivers remove or separate obvious waste from the textiles upon collection. At the warehouses textiles are packed in big-bags and loaded in shipping containers or trucks for transport to sorting centres in EU. During packing, more waste might be discovered and removed. Waste from collection and packing is sent to incineration. The waste is handled by waste management companies locally. Humana Sweden has four second-hand shops in Sweden. The stores are supplied with high-quality reusable clothing from the sorting centres abroad. In 2024, Humana Sweden received 120 tonnes of sorted clothing, which is the equivalent of 3,6 % of the collected amount.

Results

Collection of textiles

Feil! Fant ikke referansekilden. Table 1 presents the amount of textiles collected by Humana Sweden in 2024. In total, Humana Sweden reports having collected 3 280 tonnes in 2024, including 149 tons of waste removed in the collection. This is an increase from the previous year. The collected textiles were sold to 19 different sorting centres. Of these, five centres were asked to report. These five sorting centres handled 82,5 % of the textiles sold by Humana Sweden and have all provided detailed reports. The remaining 14 centres received only small volumes and were not required to submit reports.

For some of the sorting centres, there are some differences in the amounts reported received from Humana Sweden, compared to the reported amount sent from Humana Sweden. The difference accounts for 9,9 % of the total amount sent, where most of this has to do with HPP Bulgaria where the transport distance (by boat) is long and time consuming. We have asked for confirmation of the amounts reported and explanations from both parts. Most likely the difference is due to shipments in transit.

Humana Sverige has its own second-hand shops for sale of sorted textiles bought from some of the sorting centres used for the collected textiles. This amounted to 120 tonnes in 2024, corresponding to 3.6 % of the total collection.

Table 1. Amount of textiles from Humana Sweden 2024, tonnes and percentages.

	Amount sold ¹⁾	Amount received from Humana Sweden ²⁾	Total amount received at sorting centre	Humana Sweden's share of total amount received at sorting centre
Total collection ³⁾	3 280			
Waste removed during collection	149			
HPP Bulgaria	1 180	969	12 839	7,6 %
HPP Slovakia	704	701	8 235	8,5 %
Umana Poland	550	507	2 435	20,8 %
HPP Lithuania	136	136	38 663	0,4 %
Samulak Poland	18	18	783	2,3 %
Other (12) not reporting	543			
Total sold	3 131			
Total received		2 332		
Deviation sold – received (t)		256		
Deviation sold – received (%)		9,9 %		
Total sold to reporting sorting centres	2 588			
Reported from sorting centres as share of total sold	82,7 %			
Sorted textiles sent back to Humana Sweden for sale in Sweden	120			

1) Reported by Humana Sweden
 2) Reported by the sorting centre receiving the textiles
 3) Corrected for changes in warehouse inventory

Utilisation of the collected textiles

Figure 1 shows that 74,2 % of the textiles collected by Humana Sweden in 2024 were delivered for reuse and 11,0 % went to material recycling. The remaining 14,9 % are classified as waste. This is non-textile materials like packaging, items that should not be delivered in the textile container, or damaged/dirty textiles in mixture with other waste from the sorting centres. The waste can be divided into waste removed in the collection process (4,5 %), sorted materials for material recycling (1,3 %) and waste removed from the textiles at the sorting centres (9,0 %).

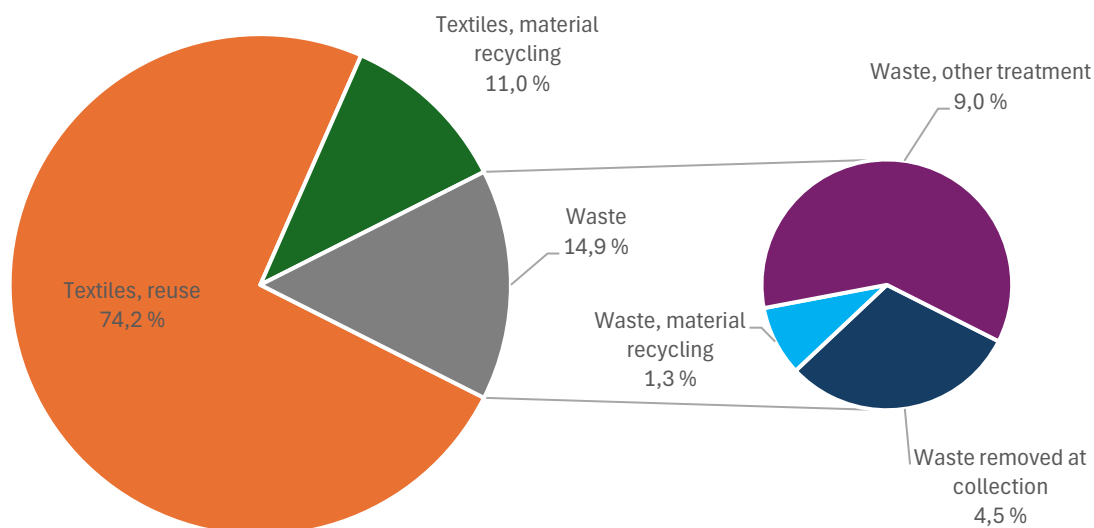


Figure 1. Distribution of purposes for textiles originally collected by Humana Sweden in 2024.

Table 2 shows how the materials collected by Humana Sweden are distributed among the different utilizations. From the table it can be seen that the reuse rate is about the same as in 2022. The share sent to material recycling was lower in 2024 compared with the previous two years, while the waste rate was higher in 2024 compared to the last years.

Year-to-year variations can be explained by changes in sales to different sorting centres. The share of textiles directed to reuse or recycling from each sorting centre depends on the average quality of textiles received, but also on the specific markets they serve. Since sorting centres must adapt to changing market demands, outcomes will naturally shift over time. As the textiles from Humana Sweden represent a rather small portion of the overall volumes processed (see Table 1), the results are likely influenced by textiles collected from other sources.

Table 2. Utilisation of used textiles originally collected by Humana Sweden in the period 2020- 2024.⁵

	2022	2023	2024
Waste removed at collection	3,1 %	3,0 %	4,5 %
Textiles, reuse	74,3 %	71,8 %	74,2 %
Textiles, material recycling	15,0 %	16,0 %	11,0 %
Textiles, other treatment	0,6 %	1,5 %	0,0 %
Waste, material recycling	0,7 %	0,7 %	1,3 %
Waste, other treatment	6,4 %	7,0 %	9,0 %
Total	100,0 %	100,0 %	100,0 %

Geographical distribution of sold textiles

Figures 2 and 3 show the geographical distribution of textiles and waste collected by Humana Sweden. The distributions are based on sales figures for sorted textiles sold from the sorting centres used by Humana Sweden. The Asia region includes Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, India and other countries in Asia. The Nordic region is shown separately and consists of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

Figure 2 shows that 49,4 % of the textiles end up in Europe including Nordic countries. This is somewhat lower than previous two years. In the same period sale to Asia has increased, reaching 26,6 % in 2024. Textiles sold to Africa accounts for 23,2 % of the collected textiles from Humana Sweden.

A small share (0,7 %) of sorted textiles cannot be traced to a specific customer or country. This has to do with some inadequate reporting from Humanas sorting centre in Slovakia.

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.

⁵ The results differ from previous reports because the category «waste removed at collection» was not included earlier.

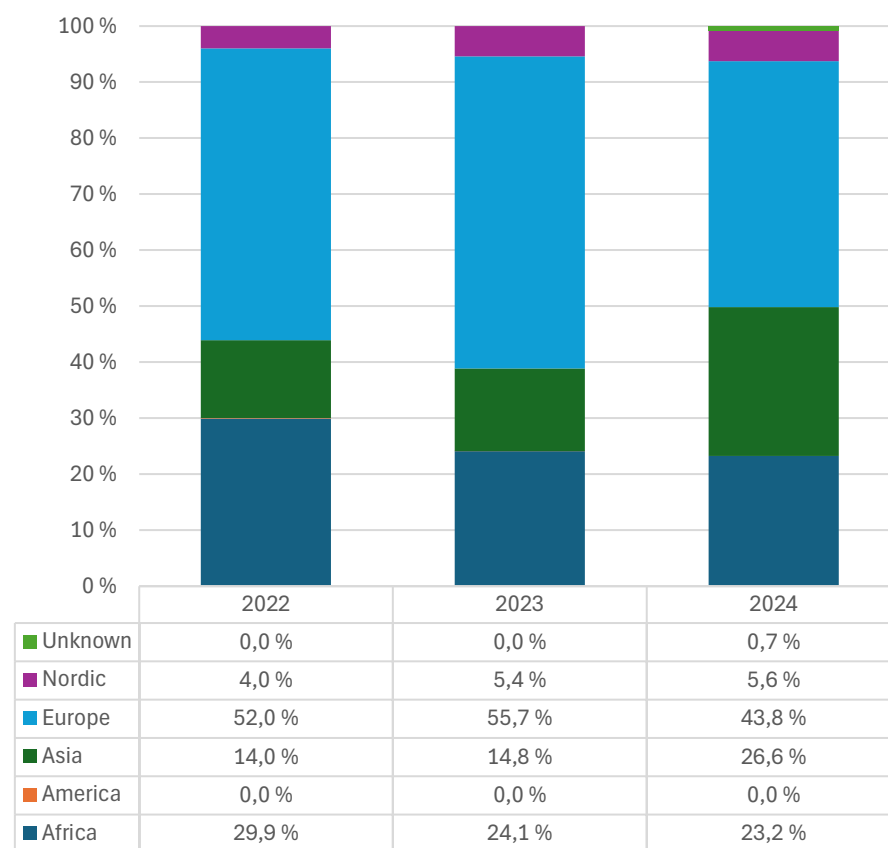


Figure 1: Recipient continents for used textiles originally collected by Humana Sweden, 2020-2024.

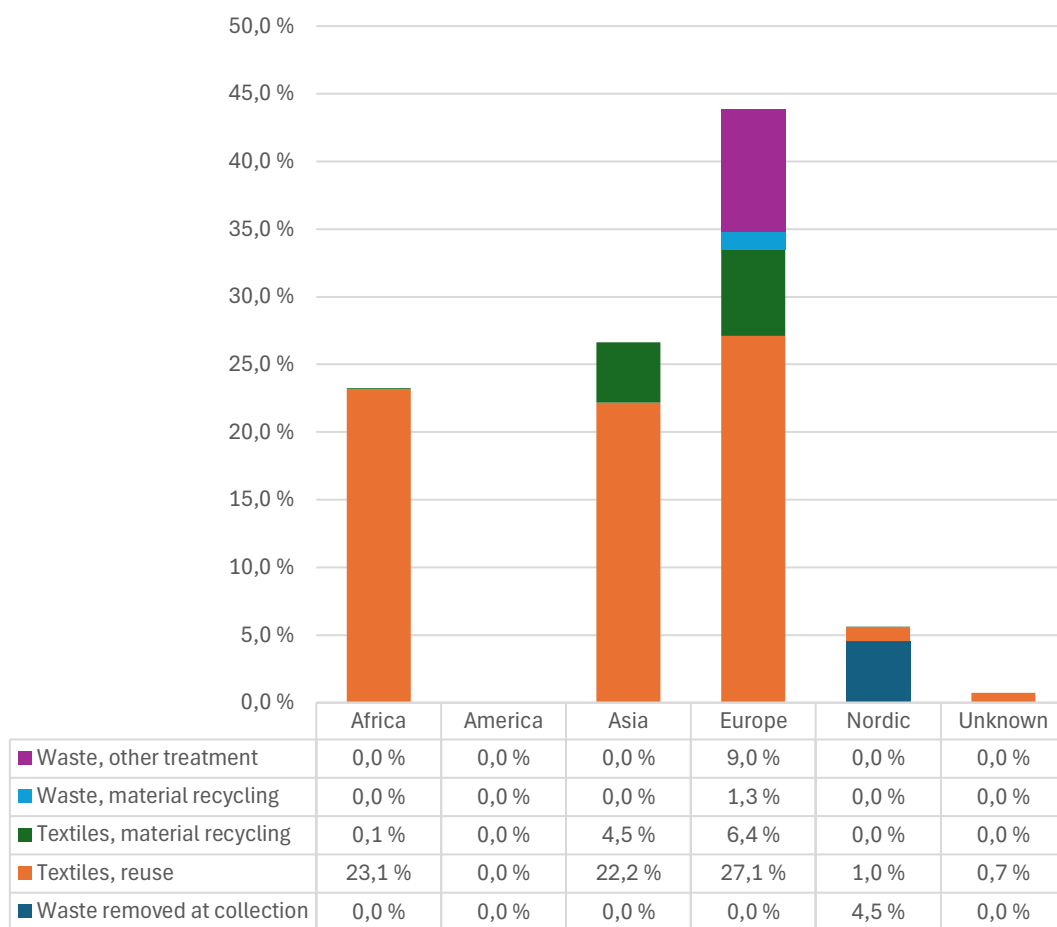


Figure 2: Continents and purpose of used textiles originally collected by Humana Sweden in 2024.

Methodology

Data collection

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

Collection organisations

Data from the collection organisations is collected through a survey in the form of a spreadsheet. Humana Sweden 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

In line with the Humana People to People Code of Conduct, all sorting centres used by Humana Sweden 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.

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 Humana Sweden 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.