



Collection and Sales of Second-hand Clothes

Exporting reusable clothes, shoes and textiles is good!

People in Europe buy so much new clothing that the local second-hand markets cannot yet absorb and sell the quantities when the clothing has been used, but not yet worn out, within the country's borders. Local use of all of these products until they are worn out presupposes a fundamentally different use practice.

Optimal utilization of the clothes, in compliance with the Waste Hierarchy, becomes optimal DUE TO exports, where the used shirt not only gets a chance for reuse in the local second-hand shop, but further in Malawi, where someone needs a good shirt but cannot afford one as new.

The export of too much in Europe to too little in Africa goes hand in hand with optimal environmental benefits (and we haven't yet talked about all the other benefits).

"Exports of Nordic Used Textiles: Fate, benefits and impacts", Nordic Council of Ministers, 2016, writes:

"Significant global environmental benefits

Annual Nordic exports of 75,000 tonnes of used textiles are estimated to give an annual net saving of 193,000 tonnes CO₂equiv of greenhouse gases and 72 million m³ of water use, and a host of other environmental benefits.

The benefits arise because the impacts caused by the transportation and processing of used textiles were found to be small in comparison to the savings caused by offset new textile production. This is despite conservative estimates for the degree to which sales of used textiles offset production of new textiles.

The benefits are far higher than would have been achieved if the textiles had remained in Nordic countries. In this case the most likely fate would be incineration; domestic markets currently don't exist to reuse or recycle 75,000 tonnes of additional used textiles."

