

Humana Textile Transparency Report 2023

Fundación Pueblo para Pueblo

Collection and distribution of textiles 2023





Project information

Project no	2024	Report date	21.08.24
Title	Humana Textile Transparency Report 2023	Distribution	Client decision
Author(s)	Olav Skogesal Kristiane Rabben	Number of pages	12
Client	Humana Fundación Pueblo para Pueblo	Attachments	0
Contact person	Carlos de Llanos Rafael Mas Mariana Franzon		
Keywords	Textile reuse, Second-hand clothing	Geography	Spain
Project manager	Olav Skogesal	Controlled by	Kristiane Rabben



Table of content

1. About the report	3
2. Humana Fundación Pueblo para Pueblo, Spain	3
3. Results	6
3.1. Utilisation of the collected textiles	6
3.2. Geographical distribution of sold textiles	8
4. Methodology	10
4.1. Data collection.....	10
4.2. Assumptions and calculations	10
4.3. Sources of uncertainty.....	11



1. About the report

The Humana People to People network are working for more transparency and traceability in the business sector for used textiles.

Traceability in the value chain of used textiles is a crucial aspect of promoting sustainability, resource efficiency, quality assurance, ethical practices, and consumer empowerment within the textile industry.

Textiles collected for reuse have received increasing public attention in recent years. It has been documented that the reuse of textiles provides environmental benefits by keeping the textiles in use for a longer time and reducing the consumption of new textiles. Also, positive socio-economic effects like profits for charitable purposes, job creation etc. On the other hand, negative claims indicate that export of used textiles to Africa, Asia and South America creates waste problems there and outperform local textile industry. The critics have to some extent succeeded in creating distrust in the second-hand clothing (SHC) sector, locally as well as globally. It affects political decisions and European legislation regarding international textile production and trade. To enable politicians to build legislations on facts, transparency and documentation of the SHC sector, its volumes and flows, environmental and socio-economic effects are crucial.

The purpose of this report is to investigate and document on a factual basis where the textiles from Humana Spain¹ end up, and what purpose they serve. In line with the Humana People to People Code of Conduct, all sorting centres used by Humana Spain 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.

2. Humana Fundación Pueblo para Pueblo, Spain

Humana Spain works strictly by the Waste Hierarchy. The focus is on the top of the hierarchy, waste prevention and reuse. Consequently, it is of high importance to preserve the collected clothing as well as possible, avoiding that humid or dirty items contaminate the dry and clean.

The organisation Humana Spain collects used textiles from collection points across most of Spain. The textiles are picked up by drivers in trucks. The drivers remove or separate obvious waste from the textiles at the collection point.

¹ Humana Fundación Pueblo para Pueblo



After collection, the textiles are transported to transfer warehouses in Asturias, Galicia, Sevilla and Valencia or delivered directly to the sorting centres in Madrid and Barcelona, operated by Humana Spain. Transfer warehouses primarily supply textiles to the Madrid and Barcelona sorting centres.

Humana Spain has 51 second-hand shops in Spain. The stores are supplied with high-quality reusable clothing, where some of the volume is sorted from Humana Spain's original collection at their two sorting centres in Spain, Madrid and Barcelona.

Table 1 shows the amount of collected textiles that Humana Spain sold to eleven different sorting centres. Eight of them received more than, or around, 100 tonnes of textiles, and have been asked to fill out report-forms. These eight sorting centres have received 97% of the amounts that Humana Spain sold, and they have reported in detail. Three sorting centres has not reported. Two of them received small amounts, less than 100 tonnes each, and have not been asked to report. The last of the three was asked to report, but unfortunately did not deliver filled out reporting. There are some minor differences between the amount that Humana Spain reports sold versus the amount reported as received from the sorting centres. Some of this can be explained by shipments in transit.



Table 1. Amount of textiles from Humana Spain 2023, tonnes and percentages

Sorting centre	Amount sold (reported from Humana Spain)	Amount received from Humana Spain (reported from sorting centre)	Total amount received at sorting centre	Humana Spain's share of total amount received at sorting centre
HPP, Spain Madrid	8 436	7 839	9 463	83 %
HPP, Spain Barcelona	4 395	4 926	5 560	89 %
Pakistan	2 746	2 880	8 950	32 %
Spain	1 375	1 375	Not reported	n/a
Slovakia	626	612	26 638	2 %
Canada	448	448	467	96 %
Bulgaria	322	304	13 294	2 %
Turkey	108	108	14 525	0,7 %
Other sorting centres, not reporting (3)	545	n/a	n/a	
Total sold	19 000			
Total sold to reporting sorting centres	18 456			
Total received at sorting centres		18 492		
Deviation sold – received (tonnes)		37		
Deviation sold – received (%)		0,2 %		
Reported from sorting centres as share of total sold		97 %		



3. Results

3.1. Utilisation of the collected textiles

A total of 63,5 % of what Humana Spain collected in 2023 ended up as textiles delivered for reuse² (Figure 1). 29,6 % ended up as textiles delivered for material recycling, while 5,5 % ended up as textiles delivered for other waste treatment. 1,4 % out of what Humana Spain collected are not counted as apparel or textiles and are delivered for waste treatment from the sorting centres, either as material recycling (0,8 %) or other types of waste handling (0,6 %).

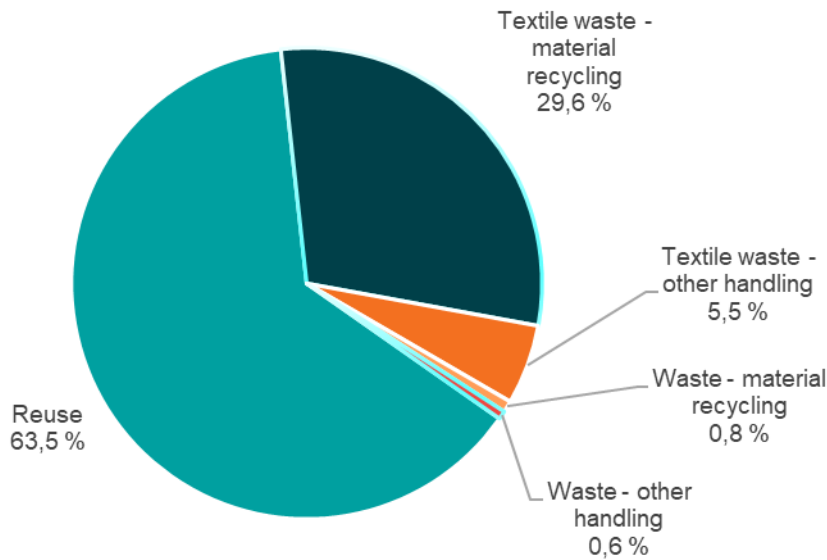


Figure 1. Distribution of purposes for textiles originally collected by Humana Spain in 2023

Figure 2 shows that the amounts of textiles for reuse have increased with a bit more than 10 percentage points. The amounts of textile waste going for recycling has decreased, and the amounts of textile-waste going for other treatment has increased. The amount of non-textile waste has clearly been reduced; more than 5 percentage points compared to the previous year 2022.

² Calculation from all reporting sorting centres, assuming that quality from the specific collecting organisation is equal to the total for the sorting centres (see detail in chapter 4)

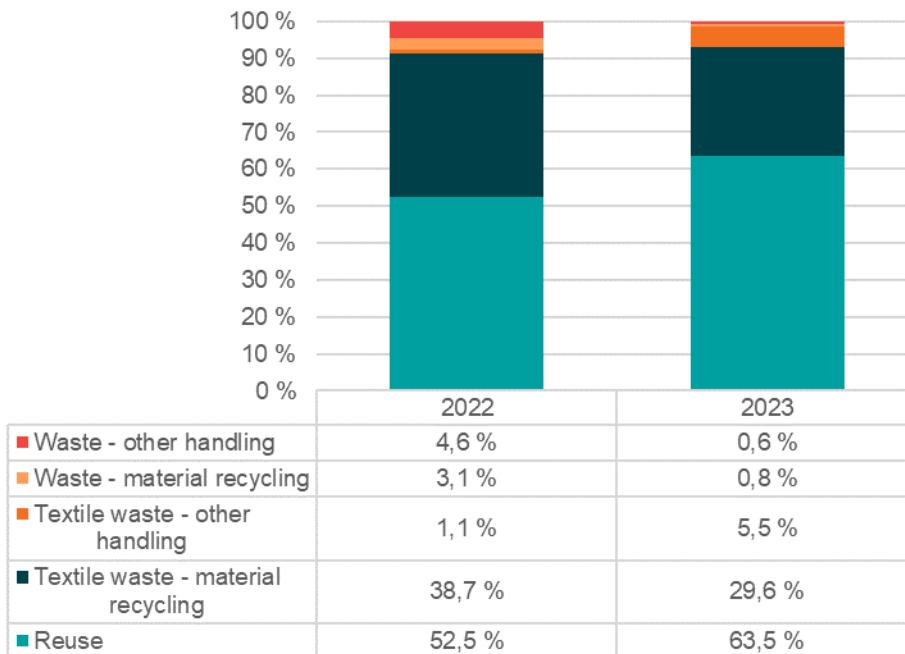


Figure 2: Utilisation of used textiles originally collected by Humana Spain in the period 2022- 2023.

Changes from year to year can be a result of changes in sales to different sorting centres. The different sorting centres' shares of reuse and recycling depend primarily on the quality of textiles they receive, but also on the markets they supply. The sorting centres must always deliver the goods which the market demands. The SHC market is dynamic, demands will change over time and the sorting centres must comply.

As textiles from Humana Spain only make up parts of the sorted textiles at all sorting centres, it is likely that textiles collected elsewhere are also affecting the share of textiles going to reuse.



Description of the qualities

An important part of the second-hand business is to handle the collected textiles in the best possible way. Sorting the textiles into several specific categories is necessary to meet the customers' needs. Most sorting centers sort the textiles into more than 100 unique categories. In order to present what happens with the textiles collected by Humana Spain requires only documentation of a few main categories which are referred to throughout this report.

- Reuse: textiles that are used again for the same purpose as originally intended
- Textile waste, material recycling: textiles processed into recycled textile fibres used for other products.
- Textile waste, other handling: 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.

3.2. Geographical distribution of sold textiles

The geographical distribution of sorted textiles and waste originally collected by Humana Spain is displayed in Figure 4 and Figure 4.

The Asian region includes Turkey and United Arab Emirates. Oceania includes Australia. The Nordic region is shown separately, and consists of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

Figure 3 shows the regions and volumes of textiles that Humana Spain sold to in 2022 and 2023. Comparing the year 2023 with 2022, it shows increased volumes sold to Africa, and a reduction in sales to Asia. The amounts of textiles sold to Europe is pretty much the same as previous year.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of the qualities that Humana Spain exported in 2023. Sorters in Europe received 23,2 % reuse, Asia 7,5 %, Africa 32,4 %, America 0,4 %, while Oceania and the Nordics received 0 %. Sorters in Asia received 24,7 % of textiles for material recycling, while European sorting companies got 3,6 %. Non-textile waste was entirely documented by European sorting companies, and textiles sold to Africa was entirely for the purpose of reuse. In Asia, textiles from Humana Spain are used both for reuse and for material recycling.



In line with the discussion in the previous chapter, the change in purpose (Figure 4) from year to year might be more strongly linked to the selection of sorting centres, which have different sets of customers for sorted textiles.

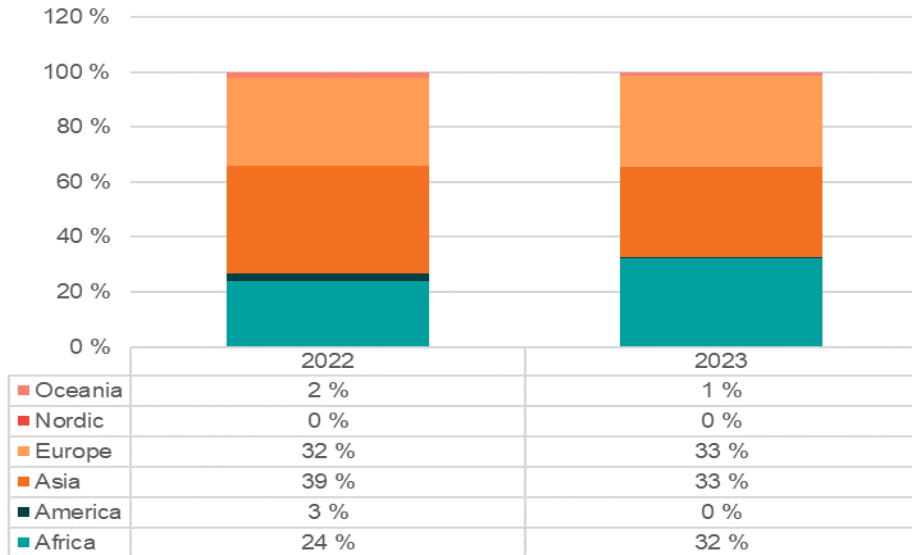


Figure 3: Recipient continents for used textiles originally collected by Humana Spain, 2022-2023.

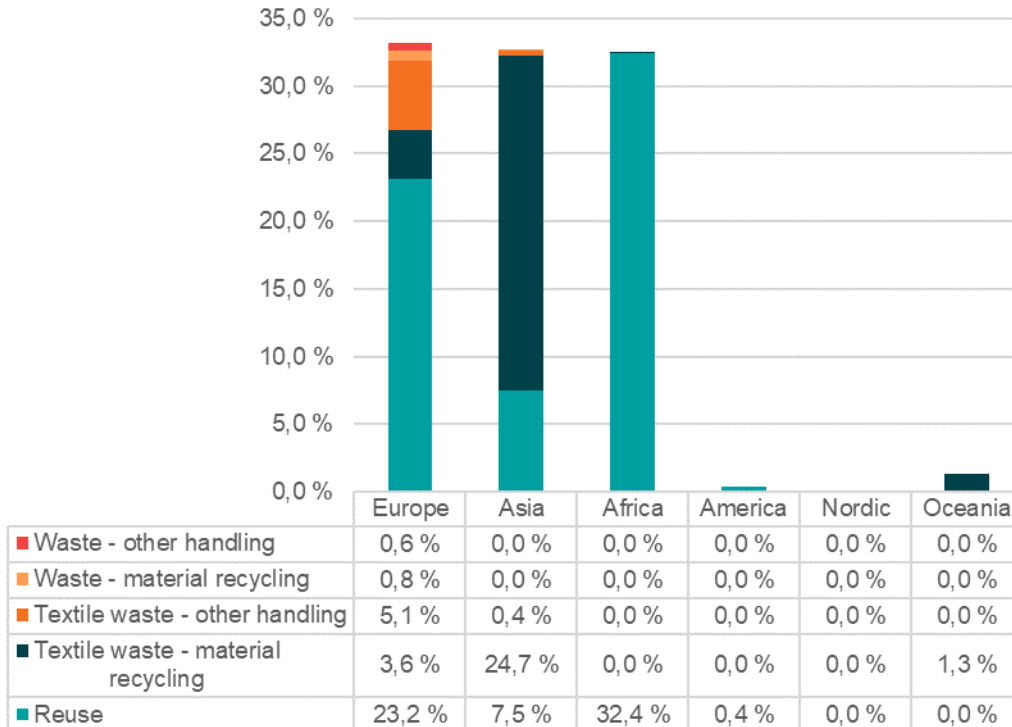


Figure 4: Continents and purpose of used textiles originally collected by Humana Spain in 2023.



4. Methodology

4.1. Data collection

This report is based on data collected from Humana Spain and data from sorting centres receiving the collected textiles from these collection organisations.

Collection organisations

Data from the collection organisations was collected through a survey in the form of a spreadsheet. Humana Spain was asked to provide quantitative information on the amounts of textiles they collected, sold, and sold to whom in 2023, as well as qualitative data on their collection system and how they register data on the textiles and waste they handle.

Sorting centres

The list of sorting centres to be contacted was established based on reports received from the collection organisations. Two forms were 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 100 and 1,000 tonnes from all participating Humana collection organisations.

The sorting centres were asked to provide data on all textiles that they have received and sorted at their location. This is required of them according to the Humana People to People Code of Conduct.

Comparison with previous results

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

Audits

As part of the quality control of reported data, each year Mepex conducts audits of selected sorting centres to ensure that their routines and practices for registration, sorting quality and reporting are credible. This year, 'on site audits' was performed at UFF Humana Bodø Sorting centre in Norway and Umana in Poland.

4.2. 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, 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 center, 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

The calculations are made based on reports from the sorting centres. Percentages are calculated in relation to the amount of textiles arriving at the sorting centres. This means that waste removed by the collector prior to export is not included in the calculation.

Textiles accounted for is calculated as the share of textiles sold from the collection organisation to sorting centres which have reported, in relation to the total amount of textiles sold by that collection organisation.

4.3. 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. We have no reason to think that these differences influence the overall results, as the quality of the original is assumed to be quite stable.

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. In 2023, the option “sold for further sorting” was added, 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.

Furthermore, 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 gone to material recycling when it is unclear whether the textiles have gone to reuse or recycling.