



# Pushing the boundaries of EPR policy for textiles: France factsheet



## EPR Status

EPR for textiles	Other EPR schemes
 <p>Entry into force: 1 January 2007<sup>1</sup></p>	 <p>DIY and gardening products, sports and leisure products, boats (sport and leisure), construction products and materials, medical devices (self-administered), furniture, household packaging and printed media, commercial packaging (restaurants), electrical and electronic equipment (EEE), oils (lubricating or industrial), toys, unused medication, batteries, tyres, chemical products (contents and containers), tobacco products, private cars, vans, motor vehicles with two or three wheels, and quadricycles<sup>2</sup></p>

## Separate collection & sorting of discarded textiles

Separate collection rate <sup>3</sup> <i>Relative to the quantity of textiles placed on the French market in 2022</i>	Share of discarded textiles sorted after collection <sup>4</sup>
31% <sup>5</sup>	72% <sup>6</sup>

## Destinations of used textiles collected in France

Reusable textiles <sup>7</sup>	
Textiles considered reusable after sorting <i>Relative to the quantity of textiles sorted after collection</i>	60% <sup>8</sup>
Reusable textiles sold on the national market <i>Relative to the quantity of textiles considered reusable after sorting</i>	5% <sup>9</sup>
Reusable textiles exported internationally <i>Relative to the quantity of textiles considered reusable after sorting</i>	95% <sup>10</sup>
Non-reusable <sup>11</sup> and waste <sup>12</sup> textiles	
Textiles considered non-reusable or waste after sorting <i>Relative to the quantity of textiles sorted after collection</i>	40% <sup>13</sup>
Recycling and downcycling <i>Relative to the quantity of textiles sorted after collection</i>	Recycling (closed and open loop): 22% <sup>14</sup>
	Downcycled into wiping cloths: 9% <sup>15</sup>
Landfill and incineration <i>Relative to the quantity of textiles sorted after collection</i>	Solid recovered fuel: 8% <sup>16</sup>
	Incineration with energy recovery: <1% <sup>17</sup>
	Incineration without energy recovery: <1% <sup>18</sup>
	Landfill: <1% <sup>19</sup>

## EPR for textiles in France – a world-first

France was the first country to implement EPR as a policy tool to manage textile flows after use. Its EPR scheme for textiles has been in place since 2007, covering clothing, footwear and household linens, and is currently managed by Refashion, France's only textile PRO. Léonard Brudieu, former Deputy Head for Circular Economy at the French Ministry for Ecological Transition, explains the legacy of France's EPR, and what is next.

## Pushing the boundaries

"The initial purpose of France's EPR scheme was to financially support the collection and sorting of discarded textiles," explains Brudieu. "However, more recently the policy has been redesigned to also ensure products are used for longer and do not end up as waste. For example, a budget of EUR 150 million has been allocated to finance the repair of shoes, garments, and other textiles. In addition, more ambitious eco-modulation fees will incentivise circular product design.

"In France, we have been working hard to transform EPR, pushing its remit beyond a financing solution for collection and sorting operations. We believe EPR can push the uptake of

circular business models. Our focus is particularly on incentivising reuse, repair and recycling. This way, EPR policy helps ensure products are used longer before being discarded."



**EPR should prevent waste, not only manage it**

**Léonard Brudieu**

One of the main challenges is how to stimulate reuse and recycling business models within France, so that there is a local market and domestic absorption capacity for discarded textiles. "We need to grow a local reuse culture in France and we need to invest in fibre-to-fibre recycling across Europe," says Brudieu. "This is why France has set the target of achieving a 15% reuse rate within 1,500 km of the collection point by 2027."

## EPR fit for the future

French policymakers believe EPR presents a significant opportunity to enhance transparency and traceability in the used textiles trade. In March 2024, France, along with Sweden and Denmark, called for new global rules for exporting textile waste under the Basel Convention, subjecting

textile waste exports to control mechanisms<sup>20</sup> to prevent the transfer of waste. "Amending the Basel Convention can help ensure that in the future, we only export products that can be reused, to markets where demand and capacity exist to reuse and manage these products after use," says Brudieu. "EPR can help to achieve this goal, as it creates a significant reporting framework and delivers solid progress in tracing products placed on the market and their destinations after consumption."



**Moving forward, EPR should continue to evolve and should address the fate of used textiles after exportation.**

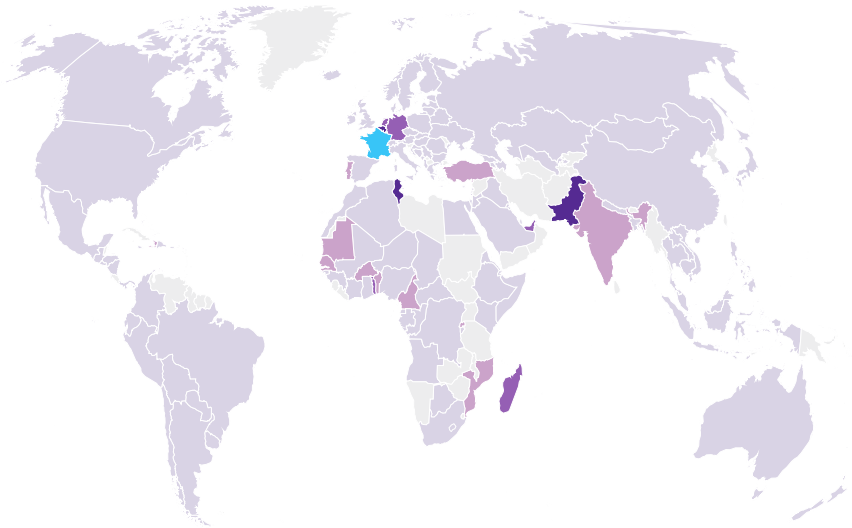
**Léonard Brudieu**



## The role of France in the used textiles trade

France is a net exporter of used textiles, and in 2021 was the 10th largest exporter, accounting for 3% of global exports. In that year, 49% of France's exports were sent to just three countries: Pakistan (19%), Belgium (15%) and Tunisia (15%).<sup>21</sup>

### Global distribution of exports from France

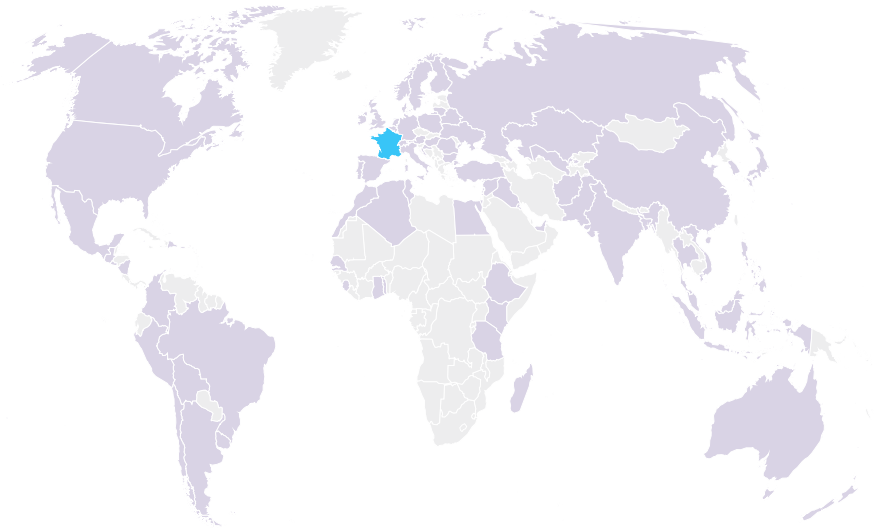


**Annual used textile exports (2021): 163kT<sup>22</sup>**



Quantity of used textiles (kT)

### Global distribution of imports to France



**Annual used textile imports (2021): 5kT<sup>23</sup>**



Quantity of used textiles (kT)

# Acknowledgements

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## Endnotes

- 1 Secrétariat Général du Gouvernement, *Avis Du Conseil d'Etat* (2009).
- 2 ADEME, *Les filières REP* (accessed on 2 July 2024)
- 3 The separate collection rate using data from Agence de la transition écologique (ADEME), *Tableau de bord - Textiles d'habillement, linge de maison et chaussures (TLC)* (2022) has been used here, computed as the percentage of textiles collected relative to the total quantity of textiles placed on the French market in 2022. An alternative datapoint is provided by the European Environment Agency, European Topic Centre, *Textile waste management in Europe's circular economy* (2024), p.35, where France's separate collection rate is computed as the percentage of collected textiles relative to the total amount of textiles discarded by households in the same year (2020), see Ellen MacArthur Foundation, *Pushing the boundaries of EPR policy for textiles* (2024), Appendix B for more details.
- 4 Ellen MacArthur Foundation's report "*Pushing the boundaries of EPR for textiles*" recommends that EPR schemes measure the absolute volumes of textiles collected separately and set targets on the relative increase of such volumes (as explained in Chapter 4 "EPR policy design: A common direction of travel"). However, in this table, separate collection rate is computed as the percentage of collected textiles relative to the total volume of textiles put on the market, based on available data sources.
- 5 According to *Refashion's 2022 activity report* there are three main reasons for the difference between the amount of textiles collected and the amount of textiles sorted: 1) Some collected textiles are entrusted to sorters who are not under contract by Refashion, resulting in the volume not being recorded; 2) Good quality textiles and footwear are sent directly for reuse in France and neighbouring countries; 3) Some collected textiles are immediately identified as waste (damaged textiles, errors when depositing textiles for collection).
- 6 Ellen MacArthur Foundation analysis based on data from Agence de la transition écologique (ADEME), *Tableau de bord - Textiles d'habillement, linge de maison et chaussures (TLC)* (2022)
- 7 Textiles that, after sorting, are considered suitable for reuse and can be sold to reuse markets, either nationally or internationally.
- 8 Agence de la transition écologique (ADEME), *Tableau de bord - Textiles d'habillement, linge de maison et chaussures (TLC)* (2022)
- 9 Ellen MacArthur Foundation analysis based on data from Refashion, *Refashion 2022 activity report* (2023), p. 44
- 10 Refashion, *Refashion 2022 activity report* (2023), p. 44.
- 11 Textiles that, after sorting, are considered unsuitable for reuse due to them being worn out, damaged, or stained, but can be sold as feedstock for downcycling into lower-value applications, such as insulation material, wiping cloths, or mattress stuffing. Feedstock for textile-to-textile recycling has not been included as this process is not yet available at scale and there is currently no cost and revenue data available for this fraction.

- 12 Textiles that, after sorting, are considered unsuitable for reuse, recycling, and downcycling. These textiles are sent to disposal through landfill or incineration.
- 13 Ellen MacArthur Foundation analysis based on data from Agence de la transition écologique (ADEME), Tableau de bord - Textiles d'habillement, linge de maison et chaussures (TLC) (2022)
- 14 Refashion, Refashion 2022 activity report (2023), p.50
- 15 *ibid.*
- 16 Agence de la transition écologique (ADEME), Tableau de bord - Textiles d'habillement, linge de maison et chaussures (TLC) (2022)
- 17 *ibid.*
- 18 *ibid.*
- 19 *ibid.*
- 20 Government Offices of Sweden, Sweden, France and Denmark calls for new global rules on exporting textile waste to developing countries (2024)
- 21 Based on analysis of the UN Comtrade data (HS-6309). See Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Pushing the boundaries of EPR policy for textiles (2024), Appendix D
- 22 *ibid.*
- 23 *ibid.*



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