

Europe's textiles sorting industry in crisis; urgent EU action needed

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The industry responsible for sorting discarded textiles for reuse and recycling is on the brink of collapse across Europe, with urgent alarms ringing from the Netherlands, Germany, and the UK. Without immediate intervention, this crisis will escalate, causing irreversible economic and environmental damage.

Rising costs, dropping sales due to intense competition and legislative gaps are putting valuable reusable textile resources and the circular economy at risk. The combination of unsold second-hand clothing due to a global drop in sales and lacking business models for recycling, discarded textiles threaten to end up directly in the incinerator without being reused or recycled.

Mariska Boer, the President of EuRIC's Textiles Branch stated:

"The prospect of incineration becoming the only remaining option if sorting discarded textiles becomes financially unviable is deeply alarming. All industry efforts to create a sustainable textile value chain in a circular economy would be in vain when textiles can no longer be collected and sorted in Europe. When second-hand clothing can no longer be supplied to countries that depend on it, this will have a massive economic impact both locally and within the EU."

EuRIC has consistently [called for urgent EU-wide action](#) to prevent the collapse of the continent's textile reuse and recycling sector. Swift action should be taken to implement **supportive EPR schemes under the revised Waste Framework Directive (WFD), while green public procurement measures, setting mandatory recycled content in textile products, and introducing recyclability criteria** through the ecodesign regulation (ESPR) are essential to stimulate demand for recycled materials, encourage sustainable practices, and ensure the viability of the textile recycling industry.