



# Study Summary:

## “An Assessment of Consumers’ Textile Product Sorting Habits”

July 2022

EU LIFE Integrated Project “Waste To Resources Latvia - boosting regional sustainability and circularity”



# Summary (1)

- **Just over a fifth of respondents buy clothing and footwear every month or more often**, around 3 in 10 every respondents every 2-3 months and just over a fifth every 4-6 months. The rest buy clothing and footwear every 7-9 months or less.
- 30-49 year-old respondents, managers, households of 4 people, households with total income over EUR 2,000 are more likely than the sample as a whole to buy footwear and clothing every month or more often. 18-29 year-olds and 40-49 year-olds buy clothing and footwear every 2-3 months. Every 7-9 months or less, clothing is purchased by seniors (60-74 years old), non-workers, households of 1-2 people, people with low net personal income (up to EUR 650) and total net household income (up to EUR 1,000), those with a mediocre family financial situation.
- **Three quarters of respondents say they buy new clothes/shoes because their existing clothes/shoes are worn or torn** (more likely than the overall sample - men); **slightly more than half point to the impact of seasonal changes** (more likely than the overall sample - women, 18-29 year olds, office workers); and the **same proportion point to large/favourable discounts** (more likely than the overall sample - women, 18-29 year olds, skilled professionals, office workers). 35% buy new things because their existing clothes/shoes no longer fit. Meanwhile, 3 out of 10 respondents indicated an emotional factor - i.e. they buy clothes/shoes because they want to please/indulge themselves.
- In the last year, the **most frequent (69%) purchases of clothing/shoes were made in specialty stores in Latvia (e.g. Reserved, H&M, Zara, Guess, etc.)**, while slightly less than a third were made in online stores available in Latvia (e.g. aboutyou.lv, 220.lv, zalando.lv). **A quarter bought second-hand clothes from a second-hand shop**, slightly less than a quarter from a foreign online shop (e.g. hm.com, asos.com, aliexpress.com) and a fifth from shops abroad.
- Women, people living in Zemgale and Vidzeme, Latvians, people with a personal net worth income of up to EUR 650/month, those with poor family finances, those who buy clothes every month or more often have bought second-hand clothing more often than others.
- **On average, people spend EUR 304.00 a year on clothes and EUR 218.10 on shoes, giving an average of EUR 518.20 a year on clothes and shoes.** The average expenditure is comparatively higher for 40-49 year-olds, managers, qualified specialists, households of 3 and more people, those with a personal net income above EUR 950 and a total household net income above EUR 1,500; and those with a very good financial situation in the family.

# Summary (2)

- **Almost half of the respondents rate their shoe/clothing buying habits as deliberate, while 7% said they mostly buy clothes and shoes spontaneously.** Overall, people's shopping habits are more likely to be considered: as the average score of 5.2 on a 7-point scale (where 7 meant that clothes and shoes are always purchased deliberately).
- Men, seniors (60-74 year-old), foreigners, households with low total net income (up to EUR 600), those who buy clothes/shoes every 7-9 months or less, those who are very concerned about quality when buying new clothes/shoes, and those who have worn their clothes for 5 years or more are more likely than the overall sample to purchase clothes and shoes with more deliberation. Meanwhile, the profile of spontaneous buyers does not differ significantly from the average survey participant.
- **Overall, the quality of clothing and footwear is important to the Latvian population.** When asked about the importance of quality when buying new clothes/shoes, **40% said that quality is very important (only buy quality clothes/shoes), 43% said that quality is important most of the time, i.e. quality is important but not always.** Another 13% said that the importance of quality depends on the type of clothing/footwear and only 3% put quality as a secondary consideration (other aspects are more important, such as price).
- Quality is very important more often for seniors (60-74 years old), those living in Pierīga, foreigners, those with a net personal income of over EUR 1,500 per month, those with a very good family financial situation, those who are more often motivated to buy clothes/footwear to please/indulge themselves, those who buy clothes from foreign shops, those who do not buy second-hand textiles.
- The survey shows that **overall, just over half (52%) of people in Latvia tend to buy second-hand textiles:** 46% said they tend to buy second-hand clothes, 18% second-hand shoes and 16% second-hand other textiles (e.g. curtains, carpets, bed covers, etc.).
- In general, women, younger people (18-29 year-old), those living in Vidzeme, those living in rural areas, workers, households of 4 or more people, those with low net personal income (up to EUR 350) and net household income of EUR 600.01 - 1,000, those with mediocre or poor family financial situation, those who buy clothes/shoes every month are more likely than others to buy at least some second-hand textiles.

# Summary (3)

- Of those who tend to buy second-hand items, the vast majority - **9 out of 10 respondents - bought second-hand clothing/shoes or textiles from a second-hand clothing shop (e.g. Humana, Kilomax, R.D.A.)**. Around a quarter mentioned classifieds sites (e.g. ss.lv, Andele Mandele, etc.) and another 16% mentioned social networks (e.g. Facebook groups, Instagram, etc.).
- **In general, people in Latvia tend to wear the clothes they buy for at least one year**. 24% said they have been wearing the clothes for 1-2 years, 25% for 3-4 years and another 19% for 5 years or more. Only 12% said that their clothes had been worn for less than 1 year. It is worth mentioning that a fifth could not give an assessment.
- **More than half (59%) of respondents review and audit their personal wardrobe - getting rid of clothes and shoes that no longer fit/worn out once a year or more often, with the majority doing so 1-2 times a year (46%)**. Only 14% of respondents audit their wardrobe 3-5 times a year. A third say they do not do a wardrobe audit more than once a year, while 8% say they do not do one at all.
- When asked about what happens to **worn, unusable or outdated clothes, more than half (6 out of 10 respondents) said that they use the clothes on the farm, e.g. as cleaning cloths, etc.**, 48% donate them to charity and 44% give them to other family members or friends. **A third of respondents put unwanted clothes in textile sorting containers, while a quarter throw them in the household waste bin**.
- Looking in more detail at the profile of people who tend to put unwanted clothes in textile sorting containers, it can be seen that this group is more likely than the sample as a whole to include people living in Riga, people with higher education, households of 4 people, those with relatively high net personal income (above EUR 1,500) and total net household income (above EUR 2,000), those who buy clothes/shoes in Latvian shops and foreign online shops. Meanwhile, the profile of those who throw away unwanted clothes in the household waste bin is not significantly different from the average survey participant. Notably, those who throw their clothes out were more likely than others to say that they did not know where they could dispose of their unusable clothes.

# Summary (4)

- Those who admitted that they do not recycle their unwanted clothes were asked to elaborate on the reasons for not doing so. The responses highlight the need to educate the public about the possibilities of clothing drop-off as such and the locations of these collection points. **43% said they did not know where to take their unwanted clothes, and 38% said collection points were far/difficult to find. It is important to mention that 10% said they did not know that there were such containers for sorting clothing textiles.** Moreover, the number of people who do not know is higher among those living in Riga than in the sample as a whole.
- When asked about sorting of used clothing and textiles if the necessary conditions were provided, i.e. textile collection containers were placed near their homes, the **absolute majority (82%) indicated that they would definitely sort or rather sort textiles.** The proportions of fully and somewhat sure that they would are similar (39% and 43%). 9% of respondents would definitely or rather not sort textiles, while another 8% are unsure - could not give an answer.
- The **main motivator for sorting for those who do not tend to put unwanted clothes in textile sorting containers is the availability of textile containers closer to their place of residence (71%),** followed by the availability of more information on what happens to handed-in textiles (30%) and the reduction of waste management costs by not throwing textiles in the waste stream (27%).
- When asked whether the **textile sorting containers currently located in Latvia are easily accessible, i.e. located in an easily accessible place, e.g. close to their place of residence or on the way to work, etc., slightly more than one fifth of respondents indicated that they were not aware of such containers, 49% considered them not easily accessible, while 29% gave a positive assessment.** Consequently, there is a need to continue to raise awareness about textile sorting containers and their availability, and to increase the availability of containers where possible.
- The lowest level of awareness is among men, 60-74 years old, Latgale residents, residents of large cities, foreigners, 1-person households.

# Summary (5)

- 35% of respondents associate textile sorting and recycling with the Red Cross and the same number with Second Breath. **23% mentioned Latvijas Zāļais punkts**, 11% Eco Baltia vide, 9% Clean R. Almost 30% could not name any organisation that they associate with textile sorting and recycling.
- Given that European Union (EU) directives require EU Member States to ensure the collection of unwanted textiles from 2025, the survey asked respondents whether they supported the introduction of such a sorting and collection system for end-of-life and unwanted textiles in Latvia. **On the positive side, 9 out of 10 indicated that they were fully in favour or rather in favour, with more than half (57%) strongly in favour of such a system.** 4% strongly disagree or somewhat disagree, and another 5% have no opinion on the matter.

People in Latvia buy new clothes/shoes in a proportionate way, i.e. they buy new things when there is a real practical need - clothes have outlived their useful life or are seasonally affected, and large discounts are offered. The lifetime of clothing is also an indicator of thoughtful purchases, with almost half indicating that they always buy clothes/shoes thoughtfully.

As regards the life cycle of textiles, half of the respondents tend to buy second-hand clothes, shoes and other textiles, while only a third put unwanted clothes in textile sorting containers. Given that a quarter of people throw away textiles in household waste containers, and taking into account the reasons given for not recycling, it would be necessary to raise public awareness about the life cycle of textiles, the opportunities for recycling and the locations of collection points, thus significantly reducing the proportion of textiles going to waste.

In general, data prove openness of population to sorting of used clothing and textiles if the necessary conditions were provided, i.e. textile collection containers were placed near their homes, the **absolute majority (82%) indicated that they would definitely sort or rather sort textiles.** Only 3 out of 10 think that containers are easily accessible. The availability of textile containers closer to home is also a key motivator for those who do not want to sort their unwanted clothes in textile sorting containers.



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