CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND GREEN TRANSITION IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

JUNE 2025

This publication has been implemented by Rilindja Gjelbër, managed by the Community Development Fund (CDF) and produced with the financial support of the Swedish Embassy in Prishtina. Its content is derived from the survey responses received up to the date specified in this report and is the sole responsibility of Rilindja Gjelbër, implementing the project "Returning Values to the Circular Economy" under the framework of the program "Empowering Environmental CSOs in Kosovo".

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ABBREVIATIONS LIST

CDF – Community Development Fund

AMMK – Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency

KMDK – Kosovo Landfill Management Company

GIZ – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit

ARBK – Kosovo Business Registration Agency

USAID – United States Agency for International Development

BE – European Union

SAA – Stabilization and Association Agreement

CEFTA – Central European Free Trade Agreement

EPR – Extended Producer Responsibility

SKZH-2030 – National Development Strategy 2030

ILO – International Labour Organization

EU4Green – EU-funded programme for sustainable development

MMPHI – Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research was developed as part of the project ***"Returning Values to the Circular Economy"***, implemented by Rilindja Gjelbër through the ***"Empowering Environmental CSOs in Kosovo"*** program managed by the ***Community Development Fund (CDF)*** and financially supported by the ***Swedish Embassy in Prishtina***.

For this purpose, Rilindja Gjelbër has contracted UBO Consulting to conduct an annual assessment of the textile industry and textile waste management in Kosovo.

The main goal of this project is to promote and facilitate the transition from the linear "take-produce-dispose" model to a circular economy that regenerates resources, with a focus on the textile sector. The project also aims to strengthen the culture of responsible consumption and raise awareness for reuse, recycling and waste reduction.

To support this goal, a combined methodology was used that includes: a review of strategic documents, legislation and additional literature, a survey of 400 citizens, interviews with 100 businesses from the textile sector from different locations in Kosovo and interviews with five (5) key policymakers. The data collected helps to understand the amount of textiles imported, produced and treated in Kosovo, while also identifying current textile waste management practices. The results of this study represent a strong basis for undertaking new policies and practices aimed at the sustainable development of the textile sector and the active inclusion of circular economy principles in Kosovo.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The textile and clothing industry in Kosovo represents a significant potential for economic development and sustainable transformation through the adoption of circular economy principles. With a long manufacturing heritage and strategic advantages such as a cost-competitive workforce and proximity to European markets, this sector has the capacity to become an important pillar of long-term and inclusive development. However, facing structural challenges such as lack of institutional support, limited access to finance, lack of reliable data and the impact of the informal economy, has limited the industry's ability to fully embrace sustainable practices and maximize existing advantages.

This report aims to address these challenges by emphasizing the transition of the textile industry towards a more sustainable economic model, based on the circular economy. Through an analysis of the sector's political, legislative and economic framework, the study examines how circular practices can be integrated into production, waste management and the textile value chain. Particular attention is paid to identifying regulatory mechanisms and government strategies that enable this transition, as well as the role of trade agreements in fostering sustainable innovation.

Beyond the analysis of the current production capacities and economic contribution of the sector, the report aims to provide actionable recommendations for improving textile waste management, promoting reuse and recycling, and strengthening the link between economic development and environmental protection. In the context of global environmental challenges and pressure for a green transition, this report positions the textile industry in Kosovo as a key actor in building a more circular, fairer and more resilient economy.

Textile waste, which usually ends up in landfills, poses a serious challenge to the environment and public health (AMMK, 2023). The lack of recycling infrastructure, low awareness of sustainable consumption, fragmented policies on waste management, and the lack of a specific policy for textile waste management make it necessary to intervene in this direction. Therefore, the study carefully examines the life cycle of textile products in Kosovo, starting from import and production, to use and post-use management, and then analyzing the existing mechanisms and gaps that hinder the development of a sustainable approach.

This report was developed for the annual assessment of the textile industry in Kosovo for 2024, within the framework of the project "Returning Values to the Circular Economy", which aims to promote the transition from the traditional linear economic model to a circular model, where waste is treated as a resource where the life of products is extended through reuse and recycling. The project is implemented by Rilindja e Gjelbër with financial support from the Swedish Embassy in Prishtina and managed by the Community Development Fund (CDF).

The research aims not only to reflect the current situation of the textile industry in Kosovo, but also to contribute to the design of evidence-based policies that support circular and sustainable economic development, the creation of new jobs, environmental protection and the promotion of a new culture of responsible and sustainable consumption. The results and recommendations of the report can serve as a starting point for strategic interventions by public institutions, the private sector, civil society, donors and investors, to build a more competitive and environmentally responsible textile industry.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to carry out the annual assessment of the textile industry and textile waste management practices in Kosovo during 2024 has been combined. The methodology has been implemented in a structured manner to enable the collection of reliable data and their analysis, in order to track and assess changes in the framework of circular economy practices in this sector. We have conducted in-depth research through the review of strategic, legislative documents and additional literature to analyze the legal framework and the economic and environmental profile of the textile industry in Kosovo. Within this phase, the following were examined:

- Policies and legal and regulatory frameworks governing production, waste management and sustainability in the textile sector
- Government strategies and incentives for the development of the textile industry
- International agreements and standards affecting this industry, including those of the European Union.

We also analyzed **data from Kosovo Customs and the Kosovo Business Registration Agency** to build a clear picture of the structure of businesses in the textile industry and the economic impact of this sector, including employment and trade turnover.

To understand citizens' attitudes and behaviors towards textile consumption and waste management, we conducted a quantitative survey with **400 citizens over the age of 18** in all municipalities of Kosovo through a research panel. The statistical error margin is ±4.9% at a confidence interval of 95%, which guarantees a good degree of reliability for the interpretation of the results. The sample was randomly selected respecting gender, age and geographical representation. The questionnaire included about 40 questions, combining closed questions for statistical analysis and some open questions to better understand individual perceptions. Data collection was carried out in February 2025.

To collect direct data from the sector, we conducted **100 interviews with businesses** operating in the textile industry in Kosovo, selected from the **ARBK Business Register**. These businesses include manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers, as well as companies engaged in other services. The interviews aimed to create a comprehensive overview of the industry by identifying key actors such as importers, exporters, producers and recyclers, as well as to collect detailed data on the quantity of textiles imported, exported, produced, processed and recycled. Special attention was paid to tracking the life cycle of materials and the way waste is treated. The interviews also helped to assess textile waste management practices, environmental impact and existing recycling initiatives within the sector.

Additionally, **5 interviews were conducted with representatives of key institutions** that influence the development of textile waste management policies. The interviews were conducted with representatives from:

- Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure – Department of Waste Management (MMPHI)
- Municipality of Prishtina – Directorate of Public Services, Protection and Rescue
- Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency (AMMK)
- GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
- Kosovo Landfill Management Company (KMDK)

These interviews have helped identify institutional challenges, strategic gaps, and opportunities for further supporting the sector towards sustainable and circular development.

2.1 REPORT LIMITATION

Despite the efforts to provide a comprehensive and reliable analysis, this report contains several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. One of the main challenges has been the lack of complete, up-to-date and standardized data on the textile industry and waste management in Kosovo. In some cases, the information was fragmented or non-existent, which has affected the depth and accuracy of some analyses.

Another limitation relates to the representativeness of the sample. Although statistical criteria have been respected in the selection of citizens and businesses surveyed, there is a risk that some important actors, especially those operating informally or outside the official registration system, have not been adequately included. This may have affected the full reflection of the reality on the ground.

Also, interviews with policymakers and representatives of institutions contain elements of subjectivity, as they are based on individual experiences and perceptions. Although these contribute to building a general picture, they cannot be considered representative of all institutional levels or official policies.

Finally, the lack of a specific policy for textile waste management has been an obstacle to building a clear analytical framework. In the absence of dedicated regulations, institutional analysis has relied mainly on general waste management legislation, which has limited the accuracy of the interpretation of the specific challenges and needs of this subsector.

3. POLICY ANALYSIS

The textile industry in Kosovo operates in an environment influenced by global dynamics such as globalization, approximation with EU standards and rapid technological developments. Although there is a lack of dedicated legislation for textiles, the sector is regulated by general industrial and trade policies that have the potential to move towards a more sustainable and circular economy.

The Kosovo Industrial Policy 2030, in line with the National Development Strategy, aims to foster economic growth, employment and environmental sustainability. It promotes the structural transformation of industries through innovation and productivity growth, while including objectives for improving energy efficiency and reducing pollution—key principles of the circular economy. However, these objectives remain general and not specific to textiles, and the lack of concrete guidelines for textile waste management constitutes a significant gap in policymaking.

Existing regulations support:

- **Production standards**: with a focus on quality and international certification, but without sufficient emphasis on the ecological footprint of products.
- **Sustainability**: through encouraging energy efficiency and CO_2 reduction, but without an integrated system for the prevention and treatment of textile waste.

Under the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU, Kosovo is obliged to approximate its legislation to EU standards, including environmental aspects and those related to the circulation of materials and waste management - key components for building a truly circular economy.

From a trade perspective, the sector benefits from a liberal regime with favorable import/export tariffs and customs exemptions for machinery and raw materials. These incentives are beneficial for industrial growth but are currently not conditional on green standards or circular practices, leaving the industry without a clear direction for its transition towards sustainability.

The Law on Waste Management (No. 04/L-060 and relevant amendments) does not specifically include textile waste, leaving this category outside an integrated framework for recycling and reuse. Current administrative instructions are focused by type of waste, but do not address the full textile value cycle.

The Kosovo Industrial Policy 2030 serves as a fundamental document for guiding industrial development. It integrates the objectives of the National Development Strategy 2030 (NDS-2030), focusing on economic growth, job creation and environmental sustainability. This policy underlines the importance of structural transformation and innovation within industries, with the aim of increasing productivity and creating a more integrated manufacturing base in the global market. (Ministria e Industrisë, Ndërmarrësisë dhe Tregtisë, 2023).

This policy promotes the adaptation of local legislation to EU standards, particularly within the framework of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, to facilitate integration into international markets. (Ministria e Industrisë, Ndërmarrësisë dhe Tregtisë, 2023).

The textile sector in Kosovo benefits from a liberal trade regime, with a flat customs tariff of 10 percent on imports and zero tariffs on exports. The government offers exemptions from customs duties for specific machinery and intermediate raw materials intended for re-export, which aim to stimulate industrial production. The legislation in the draft bill on amendments to Law No. 04/L-069 provides for additional tariff reductions for raw materials used in textile production. (Ministria e Tregtisë dhe Industrisë, 2014).

Kosovo's labor laws are flexible and in line with international standards, including those of the International Labor Organization (ILO), setting minimum employer contributions (5 percent for pension contributions). Although specific support for the textile sector is lacking, general measures such as VAT deferrals for machinery imports and export facilitation schemes (e.g., inward and outward processing) aim to boost industrial activities.

Kosovo also enjoys preferential access to major international markets through agreements such as CEFTA, the EU's Autonomous Trade Preferences, and the US GSP programs. However, businesses face challenges in meeting international quality standards, as the certification infrastructure remains underdeveloped, limiting export growth. (Ministria e Tregtisë dhe Industrisë, 2014).

USAID has supported the apparel industry in Kosovo by addressing indirect regulatory challenges and facilitating integration into international markets. One of the key initiatives was the establishment of the Kosovo Apparel Marketing Association (KAMA), which advocates for the apparel sector to the Government of Kosovo. KAMA also represents the industry in foreign markets, enabling better alignment with international standards and policies. (USAID, 2020).

Through the EMPOWER Private Sector project, USAID has worked to increase the competitiveness of Kosovo's apparel businesses, preparing them for access to global markets that are consistent with Kosovo's free trade agreements, such as duty-free access to EU and U.S. markets. These efforts are essential to overcome gaps in the regulatory and institutional framework that would otherwise limit the industry's growth. (USAID, 2020).

On the other hand, Kosovo currently does not have a specific law on textile waste. The legislation on waste management is based on Law No. 04/L-060 on Waste approved by (Kuvendi i Republikës së Kosovës, 2012), as well as amendments and supplements to the Law in 2022 and 2024. Also, there are Administrative Instructions on Waste Management, depending on their type, which determine the responsibilities of waste holders but not a specific Administrative Instruction for textile waste.

3.1 GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND INCENTIVES

The textile industry in Kosovo continues to face a lack of institutional support. The study (USAID, 2020) highlights the lack of institutional support for the textile industry. About 80 percent of businesses surveyed reported that they have no institutional support, while 13 percent of them indicated sporadic support. If institutional resources were provided, businesses would focus on investing in:

- Technology upgrading (39%)
- Hiring qualified workers from abroad (57%)
- Securing raw materials (4%)

In addition, businesses largely rely on bank loans for growth, but face challenges due to high interest rates and limited access to capital for investment.

Kosovo's strategies under the Industrial Policy are oriented to:

1. Promote innovation and digitalization within manufacturing.
2. Reduce the industrial trade deficit by promoting domestic production and export diversification.
3. Address environmental concerns by supporting the adoption of green technologies and improving recycling and reuse processes.
4. Create green industrial parks and provide financial mechanisms such as export financing facilities to support export-oriented businesses. (Ministria e Industrisë, Ndërmarrësisë dhe Tregtisë, 2023).

None of the surveyed businesses reported plans for investments in the application of waste treatment technology.

The prioritized sectors identified for strategic support include textiles, in addition to other manufacturing sub-sectors (Ministria e Industrisë, Ndërmarrësisë dhe Tregtisë, 2023).

In recent years, several concrete steps have been taken towards developing a more sustainable and circular economy. Initially, the **"Sustainable Municipal Services"** project (2017–2023), implemented by GIZ, has made efforts to improve municipal waste management services, with a focus on expanding service coverage and eliminating illegal landfills. (GIZ, 2024).

These efforts were followed by the adoption of the **Integrated Waste Management Strategy 2021–2030**, which for the first time included clear objectives for the development of the circular economy at the national level, pursuing compatibility with the efforts of the European Union. (Qeveria e Republikës së Kosovës, 2021).

Moreover, the **"SEREC" Project** (2022–2024), supported by the European Union Office in Kosovo and implemented by the organization "Green Renaissance," formerly Let's do it Peja, is an initiative that supports the development of social entrepreneurship in the municipality of Peja through the application of circular economy concepts. The project aims to increase employment of marginalized groups, mainly women and young people. One of its main activities is the collection and reprocessing of textile materials and clothing, contributing to the reduction of textile waste and the promotion of reuse and recycling. (Serec, 2024).

Further, to reinforce the strategic framework, the **"Kosovo Circular Economy Roadmap"** (2023) has been drafted and approved, a guiding document that identifies strategic sectors for development and sets the foundations for the transition towards a more sustainable economy. (Zyra e Kryeministrit, 2023).

Administrative Instruction on Packaging Waste (2023), which aims to reduce the use of plastic and establish a deposit return system for beverage packaging (Qeveria e Republikës së Kosovës, 2023). To work with this policy, there is the regional project "**EU4Green**" (from 2023 onwards an initiative financed by the EU and coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister, which aims to strengthen recycling in Kosovo, being a technical and financial tool for public and private sector enterprises (EU4Green, 2023).

To support the implementation of these policies, the regional project **"EU4Green"** has been launched (from 2023 onwards), an initiative funded by the EU and coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister, which aims to strengthen the recycling sector in Kosovo, by providing technical and financial support to relevant enterprises and institutions (EU4Green, 2023).

Meanwhile, the new **Waste Management Strategy 2024–2035** has been drafted, which significantly expands the content of the previous document and foresees major investments in recycling infrastructure, reducing waste that ends up in landfills, and achieving ambitious recycling targets. (Ministria e Mjedisit e Planifikimit Hapësinor dhe Infrastrukturës, 2025).

Another significant step is the launch of the **"Circular Urban Development – Kosovo4Green"** project (2024–2027), implemented by GIZ, which supports the practical implementation of the circular economy and paves the way for the inclusion of various waste fractions, including textiles. (Swiss Confederation, 2024).

Currently, the **New Waste Law** (2024–2025) is being drafted, which will create a strong legal basis for the implementation of sustainable mechanisms, such as **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** and the **Deposit Refund System (DRS)**, which in the future may also be applied to textiles.

Within the framework of these developments, the **piloting of the deposit refund system** is also foreseen, which is expected to begin in 2025 and will last 18 months, through which citizens will be rewarded for returning recyclable materials to shopping centers. (Qeveria e Republikës së Kosovës, 2021).

These initiatives constitute a solid foundation for building a functional circular economy in Kosovo and create real opportunities for the more structured involvement of the textile sector in this direction.

3.2 INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND STANDARDS

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the European Union is essential, providing preferential trade rules and guidelines for compliance with standards. Kosovo's alignment with (European Commision, 2020) CEFTA and other regional agreements also provides a framework for reducing trade barriers and strengthening regional cooperation (Ministria e Industrisë, Ndërmarrësisë dhe Tregtisë, 2023).

The development and implementation of national policies that are aligned with EU legislation is necessary to enable Kosovo's transition towards a circular economy, where products are designed for longevity, recycling is promoted, and waste is treated as a new resource.

In this regard, the importance of the Sofia Agreement for the Western Balkans (2020) should also be highlighted, which clearly underlines the commitment of the countries of the region, including Kosovo, to implement the circular economy as part of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. This agreement requires countries to take concrete steps in waste management, more efficient use of resources and the promotion of recycling and reuse practices, including in the textile sector (The Regional Cooperation Council, 2020).

However, Kosovo has not yet developed comprehensive national policies and standards harmonized with the main European Union documents on the circular economy, especially those related to the textile sector and its waste management. Limited involvement in recycling and extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs leaves the country behind compared to the progress being made in the EU.

The EU Circular Economy Action Plan (European Commision, 2020) and the Sustainable and Circular Textiles Strategy (European Commision, 2022) provide clear frameworks for sustainable design, recycling and waste reduction. The Waste Framework Directive (WFD) mandates that by 2025, EU Member States must set up separate collection systems for used textiles (European Commission, 2023). Likewise, the revision of the Waste Framework Directive (European Commision, 2023), which includes mandatory EPR schemes for textiles, and the Waste Shipment Regulation (European Commision, 2021) which limits exports outside the EU, are documents that countries like Kosovo should adapt to their legislation to guarantee compatibility and successful integration into the European market. The European Commission has proposed to harmonise regulations on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for textiles. This initiative aims to create an economy focused on the collection, sorting, reuse and recycling of textiles, while also ensuring that products are designed with circularity in mind (European Commission, 2023).

The lack of these standards constitutes not only an obstacle to access to international markets, but also a challenge to sustainable industrial development in the country.

4. ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

The textile industry in Kosovo represents a sector of importance in economic development and employment in the country. This section provides an analysis of the structure of the sector through the categorization of businesses and their impact on the labor market. The data for this section was taken from (Open Data Kosovo, 2023) where the data is updated only until June 2023. The analysis included all businesses that have registered at least one of the following activities, which represent the main links of the value chain in the textile industry.

- Retail sale of clothing in specialized stores
- Manufacture of other outerwear
- Wholesale of textiles
- Manufacture of other clothing n.e.c.
- Washing (dry cleaning) and drying of textiles and fur products
- Wholesale of clothing and footwear
- Manufacture of other and complementary clothing (gloves, hats, scarves, etc.)
- Final textile processing processes
- Intermediary activities for the sale of textiles, clothing, fur, footwear and leather goods
- Intermediary activities for the sale of agricultural raw materials, live animals, textile raw materials and semi-finished goods
- Retail trade in stalls and markets of textiles, clothing and footwear
- Manufacture of made-up textile articles except clothing
- Textile weaving
- Manufacture of other technical and industrial clothing
- Wholesale of industrial machinery and sewing machines and knitting
- Manufacture of fur articles
- Manufacture of machinery for the production of clothing and leather

To assess the international trade activity of the sector, data provided by Kosovo Customs for 2024 were analyzed (Dogana e Kosovës, 2024). The analysis includes the import and export of 330 tariff codes, which summarize various products of the textile industry and which for the purpose of the analysis are classified as clothing, accessories and home textiles. These data help to understand the level of trade turnover and the impact of the sector on the national economy.

4.1 BUSINESS CATEGORIZATION

According to (Open Data Kosovo, 2023), the textile sector includes **4519 active companies**, 99.2 percent of which are mikro-enterprises (less than 10 employees). Small enterprises constitute 0.7 percent, while medium enterprises constitute only 0.2 percent. Most companies have as their main activity textile retail trade (63.6%) and wholesale trade (13.9%) and the remaining 22.5 percent have other main activities such as manufacturing, brokerage activities, textile weaving, dry cleaning and similar.

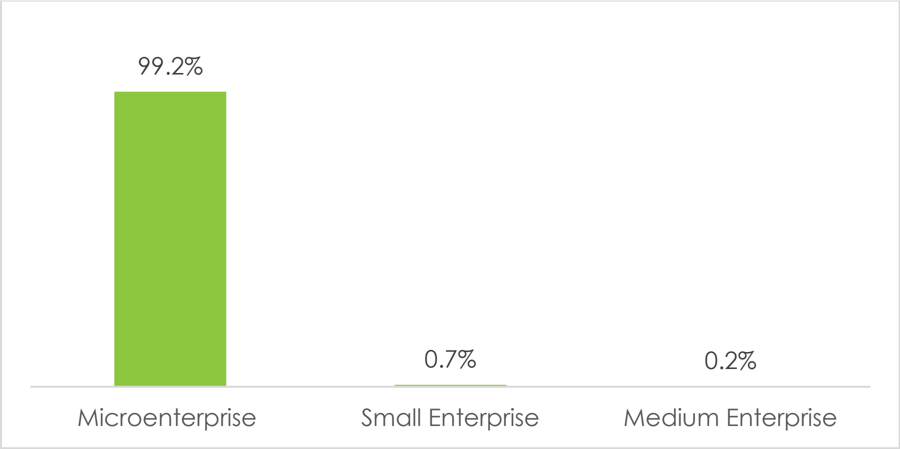

Figure 1. Businesses in the textile industry by category

The textile industry in Kosovo is dominated by trade, which represents 77.3 percent of businesses. Only 19.5 percent of them are engaged in manufacturing, reflecting limited production capacities and dependence on finished products. Meanwhile, 3.2 percent of businesses are involved in cleaning services, which occupy a small part of the sector. This structure highlights the need for more investment in manufacturing to increase value added domestically.

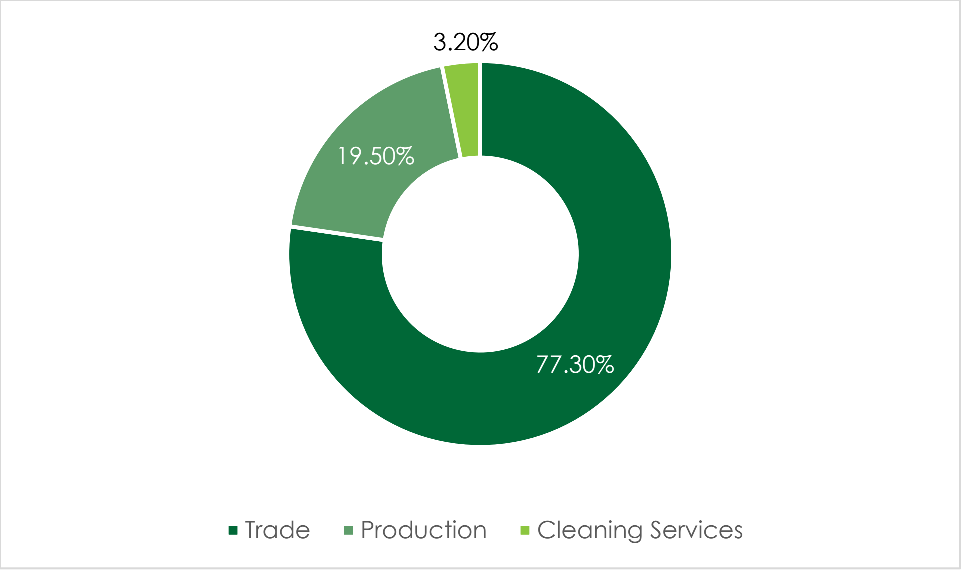

Figure 2. Businesses in the textile industry by type of activity

4.2 EMPLOYMENT

According to *(Open Data Kosovo, 2023)* the textile industry sector has a total of 7,181 registered workers, of which 28.8 percent belong to the municipality of Prishtina, 11.6 percent work in the municipality of Gjakova and 9.8 percent in the municipality of Prizren.

Table 1. Number of employees in the textile sector by municipality

Municipality	Percentage of employees
Prishtinë	28.8%
Gjakovë	11.6%
Prizren	9.8%
Ferizaj	8.4%
Gjilan	7.1%
Pejë	5.5%
Mitrovicë	3.5%
Podujevë	3.3%
Fushë Kosovë	3.0%
Vushtrri	1.8%
Graçanicë	1.5%
Viti	1.5%
Lipjan	1.4%
Rahovec	1.3%
Malishevë	1.1%
Klinë	1.0%
Skënderaj	1.0%
Deçan	0.7%
Kamenicë	0.7%
Istog	0.6%
Kaçanik	0.6%
Obiliq	0.6%
Shtime	0.6%
Dragash	0.4%
Shtërpcë	0.3%
Leposaviq	0.2%
Mamushë	0.2%
Hani i Elezit	0.1%
Junik	0.1%
Kllokot	0.1%
Novobërdë	0.0%
Zveçan	0.0%
Unknown	3.3%

Regarding company activities, about 60.9 percent of these workers work in companies whose main activity is retail trade.

4.3 IMPORT AND EXPORT

The data presented below are obtained from Kosovo Customs and refer to the year 2024. The analysis focuses on the movement of goods in the textile sector, including categories such as clothing, accessories and home textiles. The aim is to present a clear picture of the structure of imports and exports, based on the monetary value and physical quantity of goods in kilograms (kg), as well as the breakdown by partner country. This focus on movement helps to understand the potential source of textile waste in Kosovo.

The analysis of the total value of goods categorized as clothing, accessories and home textiles shows a significant dominance of imports over exports in all segments. Clothing accounts for the largest share of imports, with a value of around 190 million euros, while exports in this category are only around 18.36 million euros. Even in the accessories category, imports are significantly higher, at over 12.29 million euros, compared to exports of only 331 thousand euros. As for home textiles, although the difference is smaller, imports of around 16.92 million euros still significantly exceed exports of 3.39 million euros. This trade imbalance reflects a high level of dependence on foreign products, which after use contribute to large amounts of waste, especially in the absence of functional recycling mechanisms in the country.

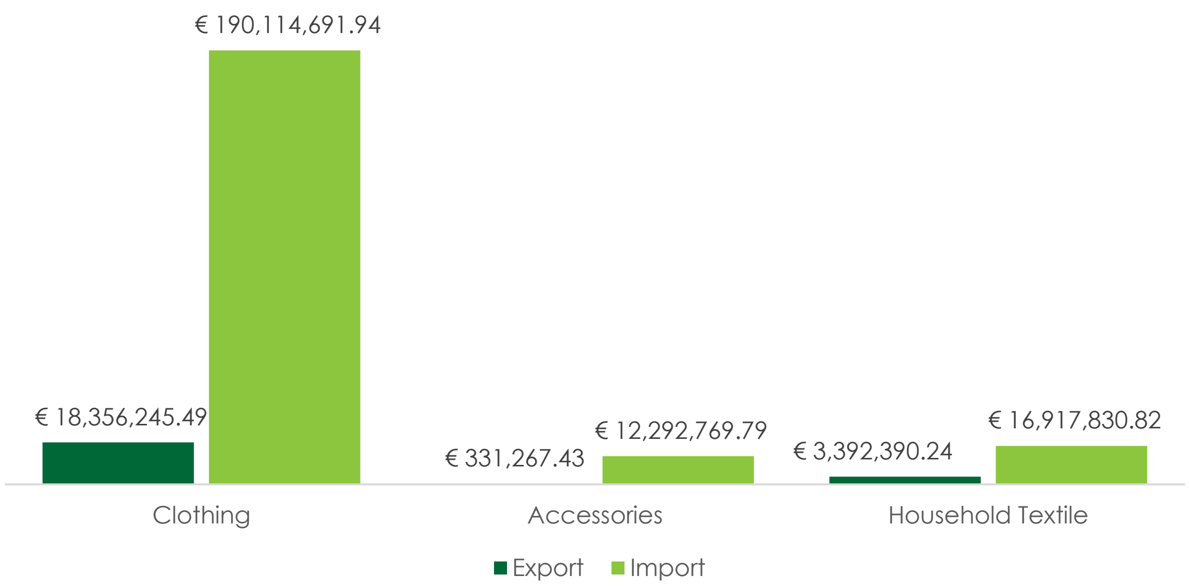

Figure 3. Value of goods by category for year 2024

From this, the value of goods for used clothing was analyzed in particular, where imports with a value of approximately 1.9 million euros were significantly higher than exports with only around 44 thousand euros.

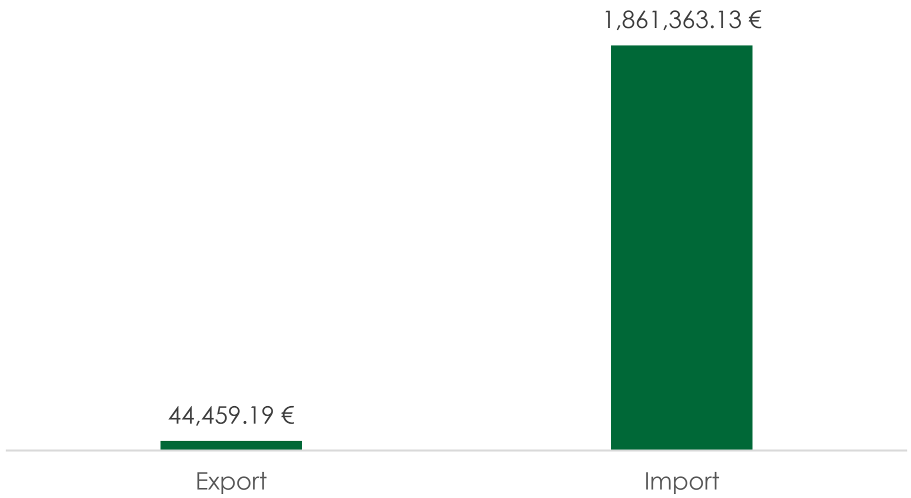

Figure 4. Value of used clothing goods for year 2024

It is noted that imports not only have a higher monetary value, but also a larger physical quantity, which indicates a clear dominance of foreign products in the local market. This large physical quantity affects a significant increase in the amount of textile waste, creating major challenges for their management, collection and processing at the local level. For example, in the clothing category, imports reach around 19.36 million kg, which corresponds to a value of over 190 million euros in the first graph. The same consistency is seen in accessories and home textiles, confirming that Kosovo's negative trade balance in this sector is present both in quantitative and financial terms. This overload with foreign products not alternated with recycling strategies or product life extension creates great environmental pressure.

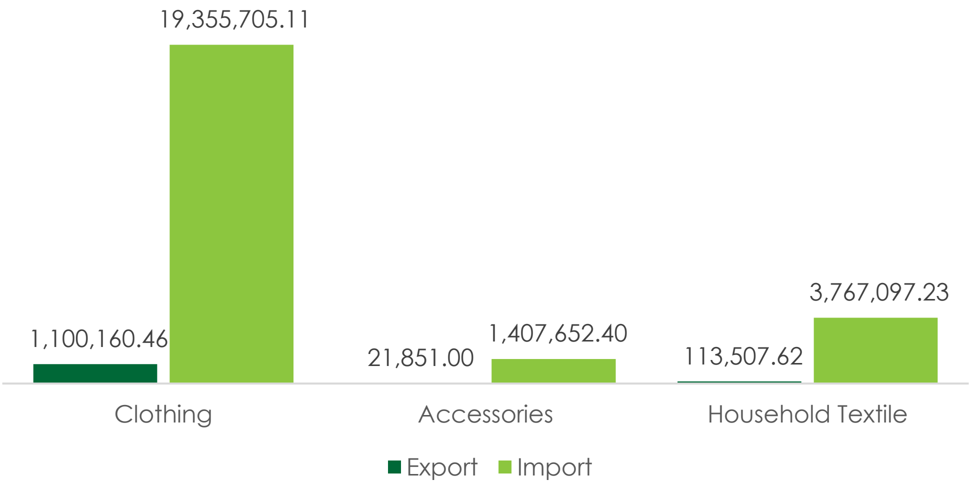

Figure 5. Quantity of goods by category for year 2024

Data shows that Kosovo imported around 24.5 million kilograms of textiles in 2024 and exported only around 1.2 million kg, resulting in a surplus of more than 23.2 million kg of textiles remaining within the country.

The majority of this negative balance comes from clothing, which accounts for approximately 77 percent of the total amount remaining in Kosovo. This large flow of textiles entering and not leaving the country is a direct indicator of the potential amount of textile waste, especially when combined with the lack of proper recycling and reuse systems.

If we analyze further, about 25 thousand kilograms of used clothing were exported during 2024, while over 1.3 million kilograms were imported. This profound disproportion makes it clear that used clothing is not included in a complete circular cycle, but rather ends up as waste, contributing to pollution and unnecessary consumption of landfill space.

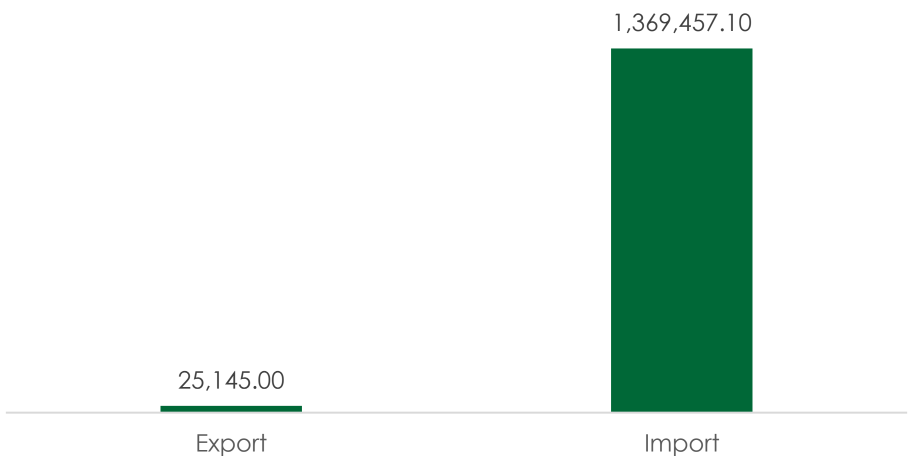

Figure 6. Quantity of used clothing goods for year 2024

During 2024, a significant discrepancy between exports and imports is observed in each quarter. Imports are consistently higher, peaking in the third quarter at over 62 million euros, while exports remain at much lower levels, ranging from 4.7 to 6.2 million euros. Despite some fluctuations, the trade deficit continues to be present throughout the year.

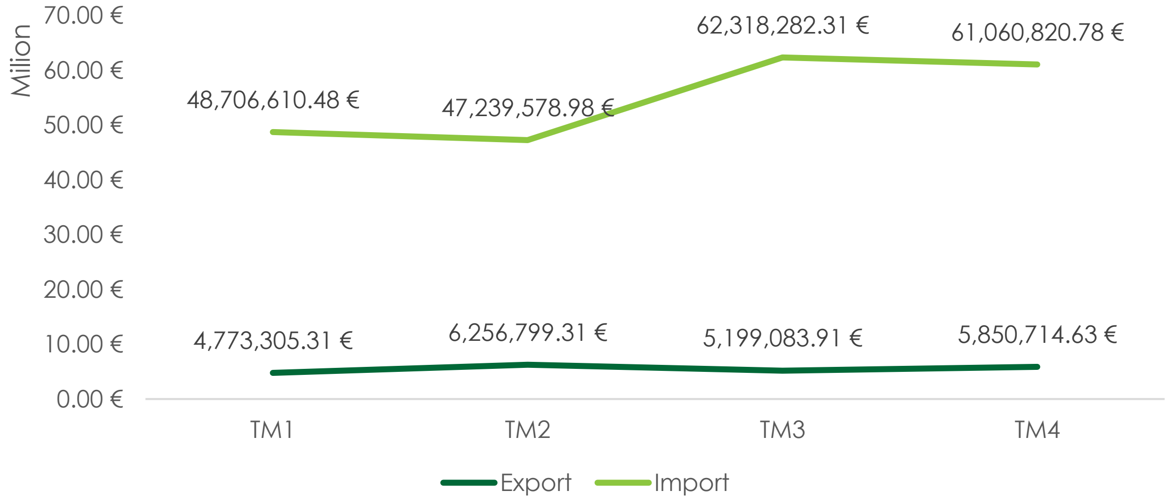

Figure 7. Value of goods by month for year 2024

This trend in the value of goods coincides with the volume, indicating that the increase in imports and exports in value is also accompanied by an increase in volume. During 2024, imports in volume have gradually increased from 5.39 million kg in the first quarter to 6.72 million kg in the fourth quarter, reflecting an increase in demand for foreign goods. Exports, however, remained at low levels, with a slight increase in the second quarter (667 thousand kg) and a continuous decline thereafter. As imports continue to increase and exports stagnate, this situation reinforces a negative environmental cycle, where waste from foreign products is not returned to circulation, but accumulates as waste.

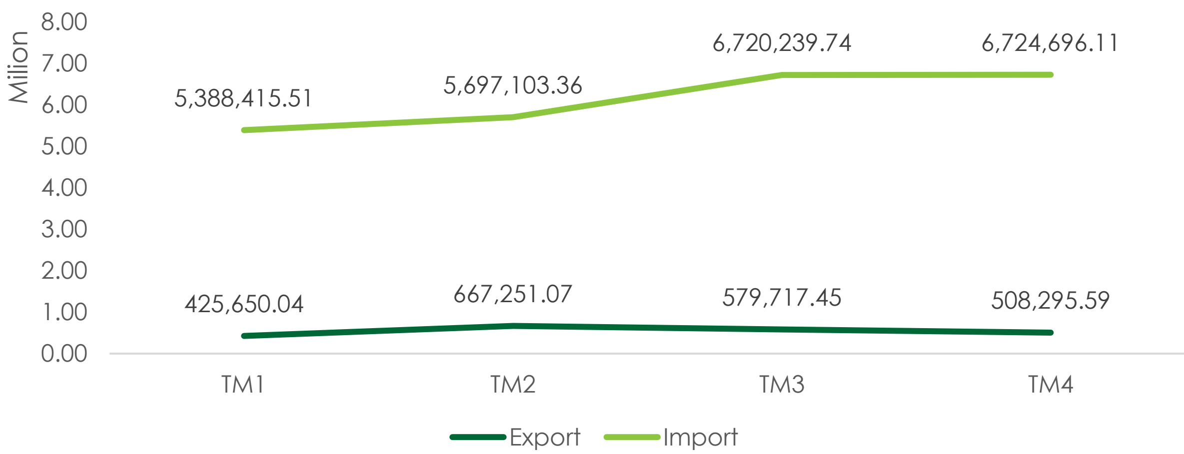

Figure 8. Quantity of goods by month for year 2024

The following is an analysis of the 10 countries with the highest import values. The main trading partners for imports were Turkey, with a total value of 84,799,302.88 euros, and China, with 59,575,796.50 euros, ranking significantly above other countries. Given that a large portion of the materials imported from these countries include products with a limited lifespan, this increases the potential for the creation of unstable and difficult-to-recycle waste in Kosovo.

Among the countries with the lowest import values are Vietnam (7.06 million euros), Cambodia, Pakistan, Morocco, and India, with imports ranging from around 4.2 to 5 million euros. Indonesia, Italy, and Croatia are ranked below, with values ranging up to 1.9 million euros.

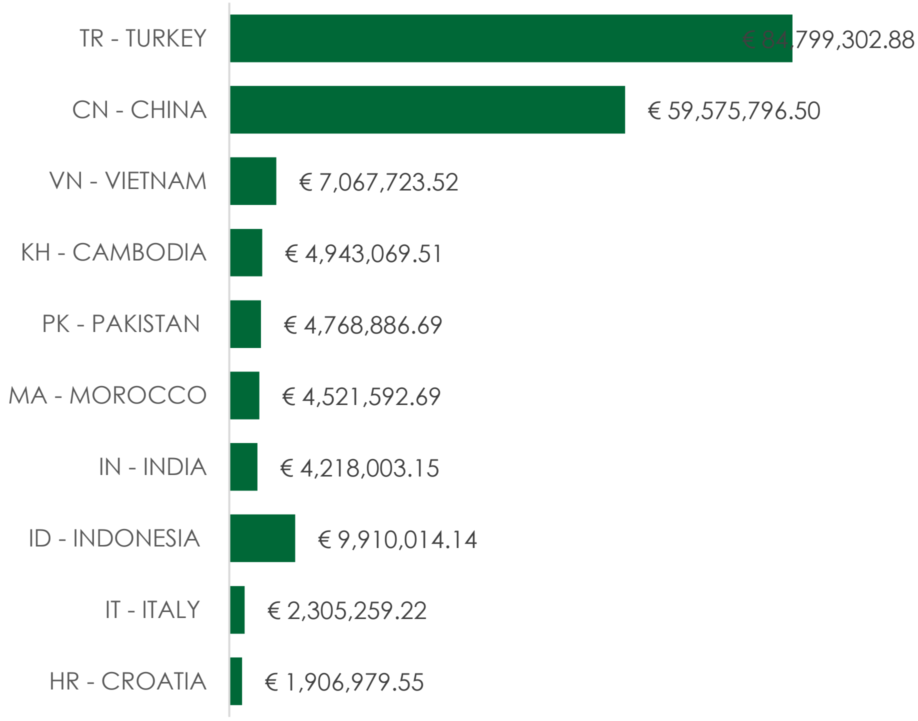

Figure 9. Value of imported goods by country for 2024

The structure of imports varies according to the nature of the goods. In 2024, the quantity of imported goods in kilograms does not fully match their value. China and Turkey remain the two main suppliers, both in terms of quantity and value, demonstrating a direct link between these two indicators.

Meanwhile, countries such as Switzerland, India and Germany have high import quantities, but do not appear in the top list in terms of value, which suggests that goods are imported at lower unit prices. Importing goods at lower prices, which are often of questionable quality, increases the risk of rapid consumption and the increase in unacceptable waste for recycling.

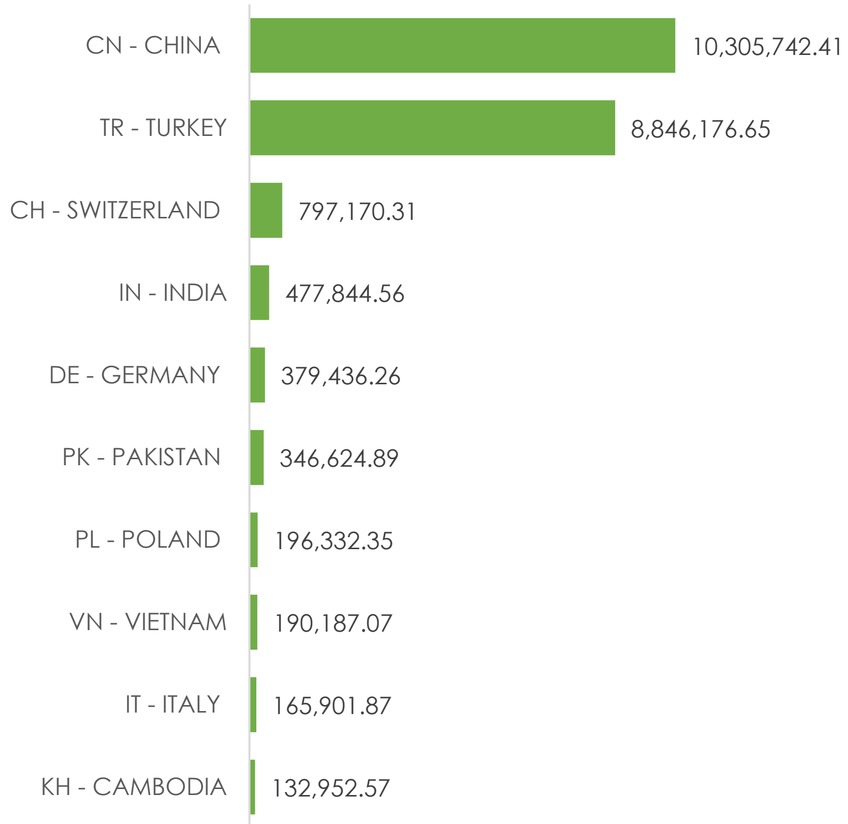

Figure 10. Quantity of imported goods by country for year 2024

These data show a clear dominance of imports over exports, both in quantitative and financial terms, throughout 2024. This imbalance is evident in all major categories of goods and in most trade relations with international partners. The discrepancies between the quantity and value of goods highlight the changes in the structure and nature of traded products, underlining the need for policies that promote the production and export of value-added goods.

In the context of the circular economy, this situation underlines the necessity for Kosovo to develop capacities for the processing, recycling and reuse of imported textiles, to minimize environmental impact and increase value added domestically and potentially increase exports.

4.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The manufacturing sector is a significant energy consumer and environmental polluter. However, initiatives are being taken to increase energy efficiency, with annual improvements in CO2 emissions intensity and a particular emphasis on the transition to low-carbon production models (Ministria e Industrisë, Ndërmarrësisë dhe Tregtisë, 2023).

These efforts are important for the textile sector, as the production of new materials and the processing of textiles require significant amounts of energy and cause large carbon emissions. Increasing energy efficiency not only helps reduce operational costs but also contributes to reducing the negative impact on the environment, supporting the objectives of the circular economy and climate sustainability.

To cope with competition, companies prioritize low prices (31%), product design (32%) and marketing efforts (21%). However, improving product quality (16%) remains an underused strategy (Hana Gashi, 2019).

The low focus on quality also impacts the environment, as less sustainable products have a shorter lifespan, increasing the demand for new production and increasing the amount of textile waste. Building strategies that favor the quality and longevity of products could contribute to reducing pollution and strengthening the circulation of materials in the sector.

5. CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The circular economy represents an economic model that aims to reduce waste and maximize the use of resources through closed cycles. This concept contracts with the linear "take-use-dispose" model, promoting strategies of reuse, recycling and regeneration of materials and products (Martin Geissdoerfer, 2017). The circular economy is based on three fundamental principles:

- Waste and pollution elimination: Preventing the creation of waste by designing efficient products and processes.
- Keeping products and materials in use: Promoting reuse, repair, and recycling.
- Regenerating natural systems: Using materials that can be recovered naturally (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013).

This model offers numerous benefits in various aspects. Economically, it contributes to reducing production costs by increasing efficiency in the use of resources and reducing dependence on raw materials. Environmentally, it helps reduce pollution and energy consumption by extending the life of products and minimizing waste. Socially, the circular economy creates new employment opportunities, especially in the sectors of repair, recycling and sustainable innovation (Ellen Macarthur Foundation, 2015).

However, despite the great benefits, the implementation of the circular economy faces several challenges. First, technological limitations make it difficult to recycle some materials, especially those with mixed or complex compositions. Second, the lack of a clear legal and supportive framework in many countries hinders the development of effective circular economy strategies. Finally, consumer behavior poses a continuing challenge, with a lack of education and awareness about sustainable consumption often slowing down the transition process (Julian Kirchherr, 2017).

Practical examples of this model are already present in the global industry. A well-known furniture and home textile retail chain has implemented a strategy for the repair and return of its products, promoting a sustainable consumption model. Meanwhile, Renault uses recycled parts in the production of vehicles and has invested in centers for the reprocessing and renovation of car components (Stahel, 2016).

The textile industry offers some successful practices of implementing circular economy principles through cross-sectoral collaboration. Two leading international fashion networks with high sales value have collaborated on a joint study to increase textile recyclability by identifying and eliminating harmful chemical substances, thus contributing to the creation of a closed loop for textiles and promoting sustainable practices in global fashion. (Inter IKEA newsroom, 2019). Another innovative initiative comes from a Dutch company specializing in clothing rental, which has implemented a unique jeans rental model: customers can rent a pair of jeans for a certain period and then return them for recycling, promoting a circular consumption model and reducing waste. (MUD Jeans, 2013).

Another successful practice is that of a Los Angeles-based clothing and accessories manufacturing company, which uses used textiles to create new products through reuse and upcycling, significantly reducing textile waste (Suay Sew Shop, 2017). Likewise, a Spanish company specializing in the production of recycled cotton fibers, a company from Spain, specializes in the production of recycled cotton fibers through mechanical processes, reducing the dependence on new raw materials and the environmental impact of the industry (Recover Textile Systems, 2020). These concrete examples prove that the circular economy is not only applicable in the textile industry, but also brings significant economic, environmental and social benefits.

In Kosovo, the implementation of circular economy principles in the textile industry is still at an early stage and fragmented, with a lack of well-structured approaches and a lack of dedicated policies for this sector. In the absence of broad institutional initiatives, circular practices in the textile industry are isolated, led by a few civil society organizations and small enterprises engaged in projects for artisanal textile reuse or recycling, often with support from international donors. However, these do not yet constitute a consolidated system that can significantly impact the current structure of the supply chain or waste management in the industry (WeBalkans.eu, 2021).

6. CHALLENGES IN THE TEXTILE SECTOR

The textile sector in Kosovo faces a number of structural and developmental challenges that affect its growth and competitiveness. The following are some of the main challenges identified:

- Reliance on low-value production adds constraints to competitiveness.
- Limited access to financing and technological resources for small businesses.
- Environmental compliance pressures require significant investments in new technologies.
- Strategic Management: Implementing comprehensive strategies, including SWOT and PEST analyses, can help businesses identify growth opportunities and mitigate risks. (Hana Gashi, 2019).
- Market positioning: Companies have expressed willingness (61%) for international cooperation, showing potential for global integration. (Hana Gashi, 2019).
- Prioritizing investments: with institutional support, a focus on technology and skilled workers can improve productivity and competitiveness. (Hana Gashi, 2019).

The sector faces strong competition from informal businesses, which undercut formal businesses with prices. Financial constraints are a major obstacle, with interest rates on new loans averaging 11.7 percent, limiting the ability of small enterprises to modernize. (Ministria e Tregtisë dhe Industrisë, 2014). Labor shortages are another critical issue, with companies highlighting a lack of specialized skills, such as production management, quality control, and other textile-specific occupations. These challenges are exacerbated by a lack of appropriate vocational training, forcing many businesses to rely on in-house skills development (Ministria e Tregtisë dhe Industrisë, 2014).

The garment sector in Kosovo faces challenges in becoming fully export-ready. Many businesses struggle to expand into international markets due to limited resources to participate in trade fairs and meet international quality standards. Although USAID interventions have improved these aspects, further support is needed to ensure long-term success. Workforce development also remains a challenge, as many companies require assistance in training employees to meet production requirements. (USAID, 2020).

Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities for the sector. The creation of KAMA has provided a unified voice for the industry, enabling businesses to advocate for better policies and collaborate on export strategies. USAID-led grants have enabled firms to invest in new equipment and select production lines, making them more internationally competitive. With increased support, apparel businesses in Kosovo can leverage their strategic location and proximity to European markets, which offer logistical advantages over competitors in Asia. The success of firms like Menakon and SSPrint demonstrates the sector's ability to grow and multiply with the right resources. (USAID, 2020).

These structural and developmental challenges facing the textile sector in Kosovo have a direct impact on the ability of businesses to apply textile reuse and recycling practices. Limited institutional support, lack of financing and modern technologies make it difficult for companies to invest in equipment and processes that enable the collection, separation and processing of textile waste efficiently.

However, the application of these practices can help solve some of these challenges: by reducing production costs, reducing dependence on imports and increasing the value of the product for international markets. In addition, they create new employment and training opportunities in areas such as sustainable design and processing of residual materials. In this way, the circular economy should not only be seen as an environmental model, but also as a development strategy for the sector, helping to overcome existing barriers and fostering the long-term growth and competitiveness of the textile industry in Kosovo.

7. RESULTS FROM CITIZEN SURVEYS

The following are the results of the survey conducted with citizens, with the aim of understanding their opinions and attitudes in various fields. Through the analysis of the collected data, it is intended to identify the main trends and preferences of the participants, enabling a clearer overview of the issues addressed.

7.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic analysis of the survey participants provides key data on their gender, age, education and socio-economic status. The participants are mainly female (54.5%), showing a slightly higher participation compared to males (45.5%). The most represented age group is 25-34 years old, followed by the 35-44 year old group, suggesting a dominance of individuals of working age and professionally active.

The majority of the participants are married (58.8%), while about 37.8 percent are single, and only a very small percentage are divorced or widowed. In terms of the number of family members, the majority (68.8%) live in families of up to 6 people, while 18 percent report larger families, with over 6 members. In economic terms, for monthly family income, the majority are in the range of 401-1200 euros (41.9%).

Participants mainly live in urban areas (55.5%), but rural areas also have a significant representation (44.5%). Regarding the level of education, almost half of the participants have completed university education (48%), while a smaller number have completed high school (21.8%) or master's studies (17.5%). Only 1.5 percent have a doctorate degree.

Regarding employment, the majority are employed in the private (25.8%) and public (23.8%) sectors. A significant proportion are unemployed looking for work (21%) or students (10.3%). The percentage of self-employed and housewives is lower, 4.8 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively.

The majority of participants have university education (48%), while the majority are employed in the private or public sector (49.6%), but a significant proportion are also unemployed (21%).

7.2 SUPPLY OF TEXTILE PRODUCTS

An important aspect of this study was the way in which citizens are supplied with textile products. This section examines the main sources of purchases, access to the market and factors that influence consumers' decisions when choosing where and how to buy these products.

From the results obtained, respondents mainly buy their own clothing, ranging from T-shirts, shirts, blouses and similar (86%), to socks (81.5%). Sportswear is among the least used type of clothing (13.6%).

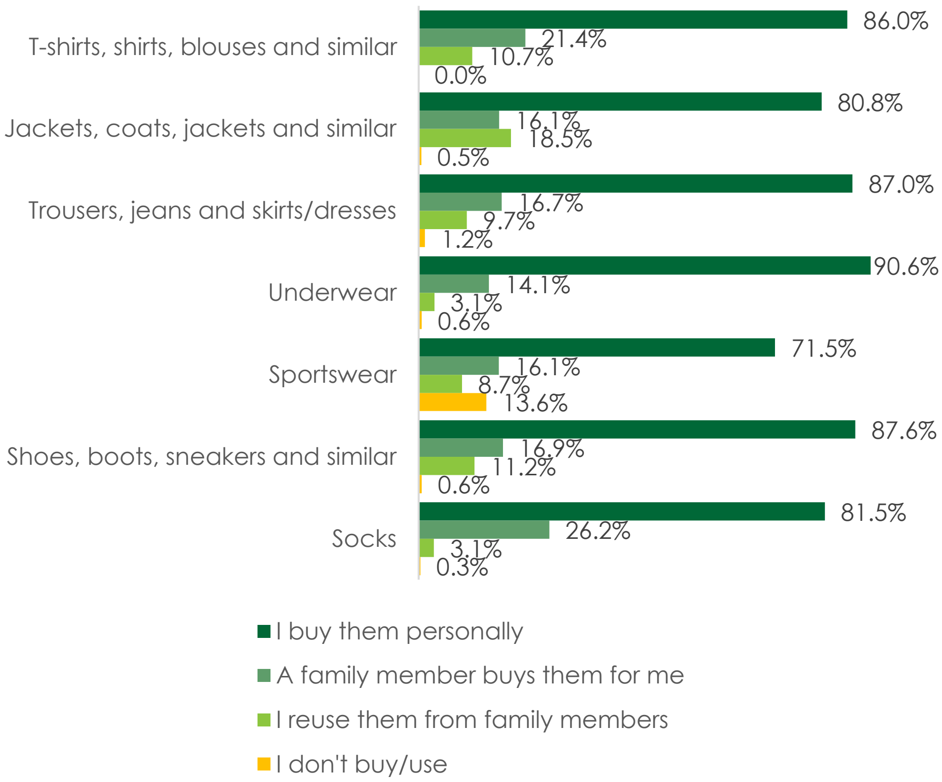

Figure 11. How are you supplied with the following textile products? – clothing (Multiple answers)

Most people personally buy bags (71.2%), hats (63.1%), and scarves/gloves (62.5%), while a smaller portion gets them from family members or does not use them at all.

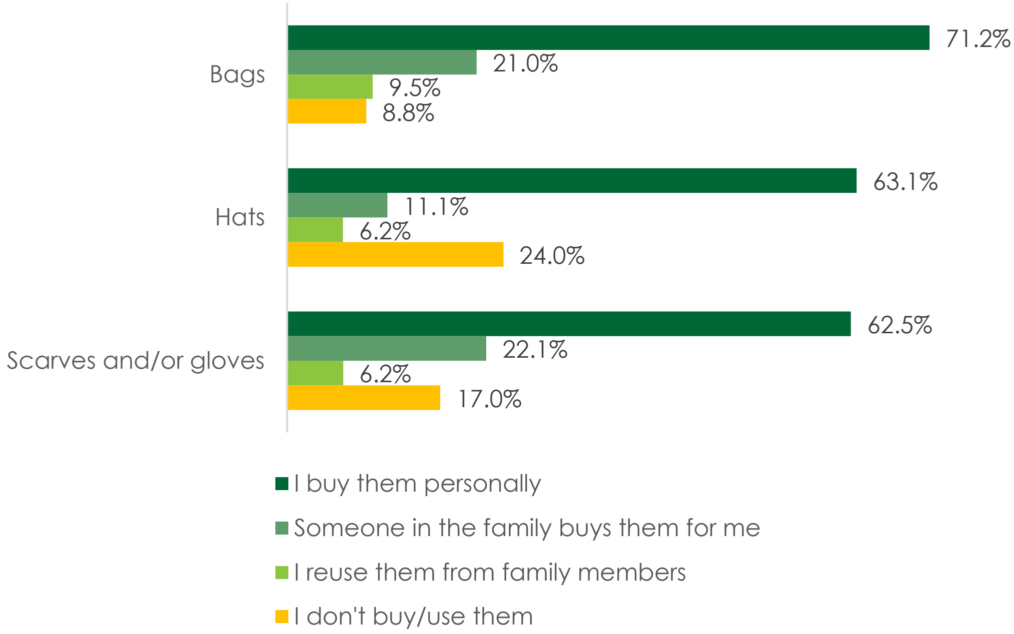

Figure 12. How are you supplied for the following textile products – accesories? (Multiple answers)

For home textile products, most respondents stated that they buy them personally, but a significant portion stated that someone in the family buys them for them, ranging from 40.1 percent for carpets to 43.5 percent for bedspreads.

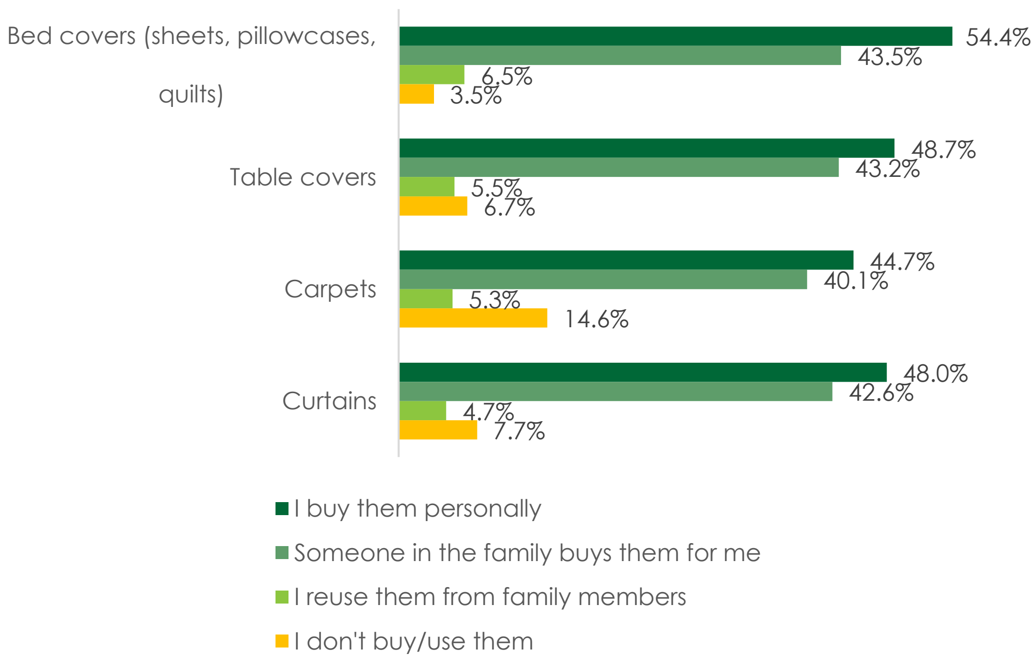

Figure 13. How are you supplied with the following textile products? – household? (Multiple answers)

In terms of purchase frequency, socks are the most frequently purchased product (54.7% at least once a month), followed by t-shirts and shirts purchased several times a month by 15.9 percent of respondents, while 35.4 percent buy them every 2-3 months. Underwear is among the most frequently purchased products, with 18 percent buying them several times a month and 24.5 percent buying them once a month. On the other hand, jackets and coats are purchased less frequently, with 46.4 percent of respondents buying them less than every 6 months. A similar trend is observed for shoes and boots, which 40.9 percent of respondents buy less than every 6 months.

Frequent purchases of cheap, everyday items (such as t-shirts and socks) contribute to a pattern of excessive consumption and the creation of more frequent waste. These products are more likely to end up in waste as they are also among the products reported to be reused very little.

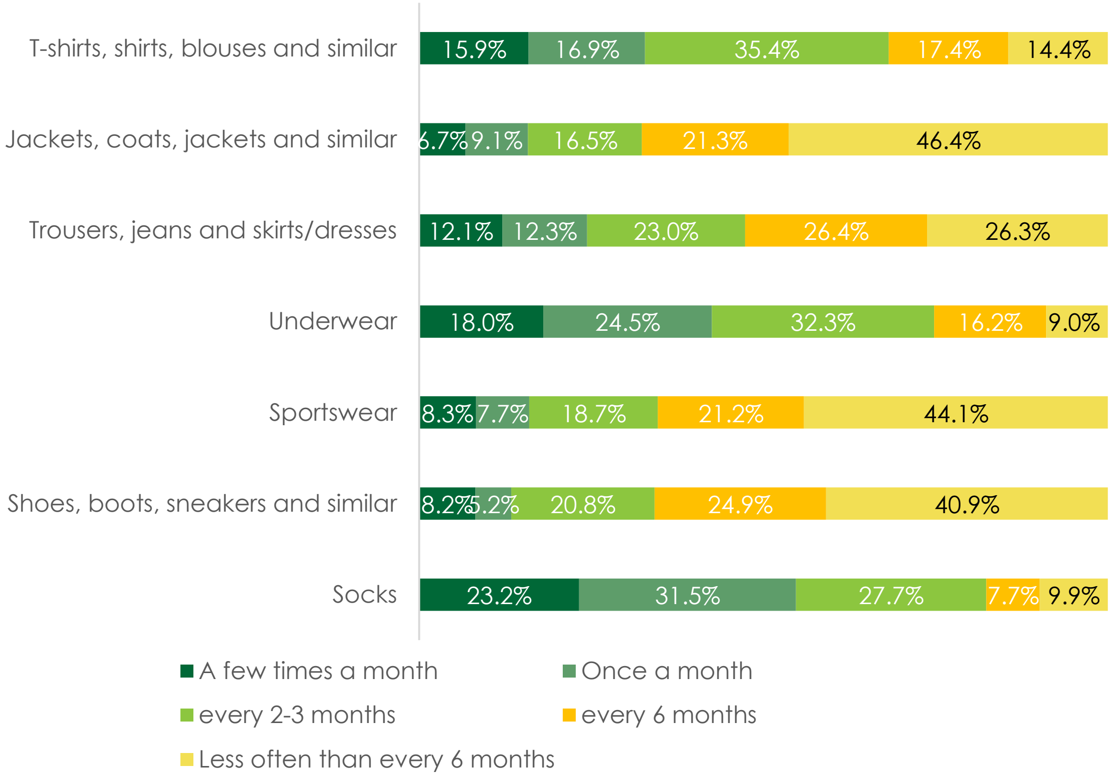

Figure 14. How often do you buy the following products - Clothing?

Accessories such as bags, hats, scarves and gloves are purchased less frequently than every 6 months by more than half of respondents.

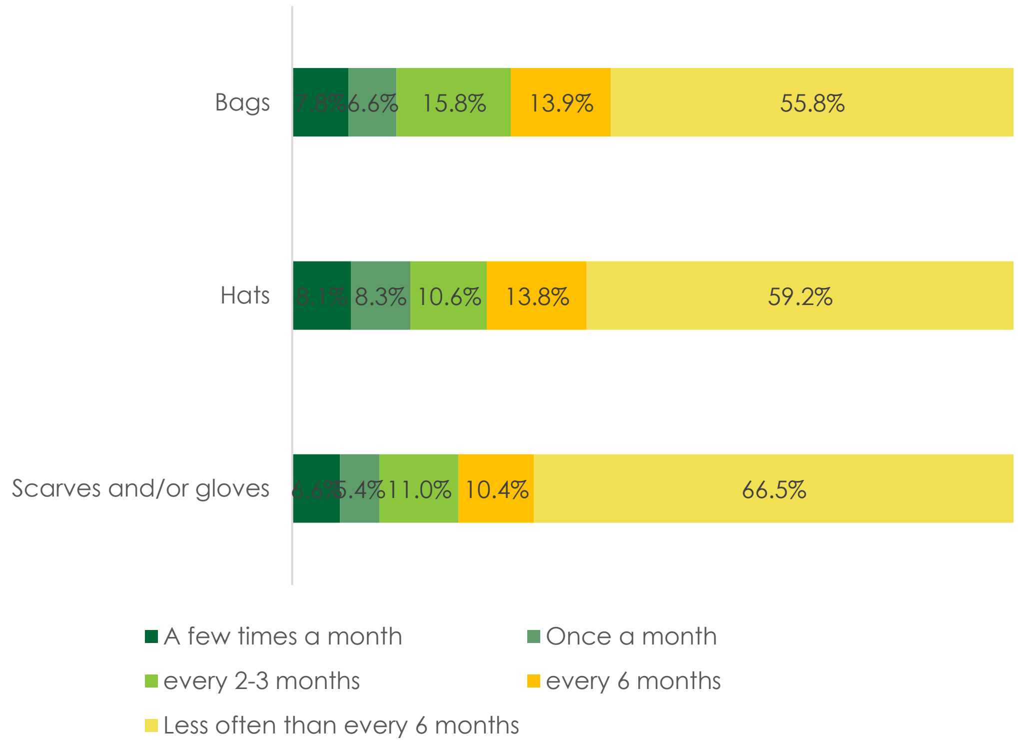

Figure 15. How often do you buy the following products- accessories?

Respondents buy bedspreads, tablecloths, rugs and curtains infrequently, mostly less than every 6 months. Curtains and rugs are purchased even less frequently compared to other products. On the other hand, bedspreads and tablecloths are purchased more frequently, usually every 2-3 months or every 6 months, while monthly or more frequent purchases are less common.

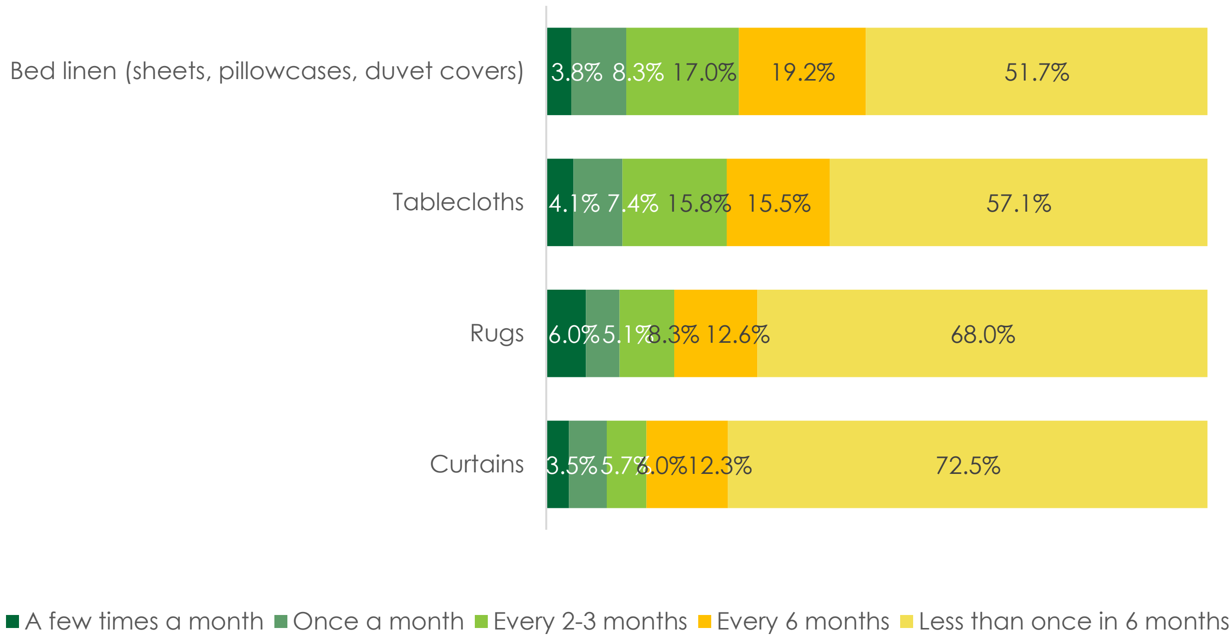

Figure 16. How often do you buy the following products?

Most respondents buy textile products within Kosovo, while only a small percentage buy them abroad. Items such as underwear and socks are mainly preferred in the local market.

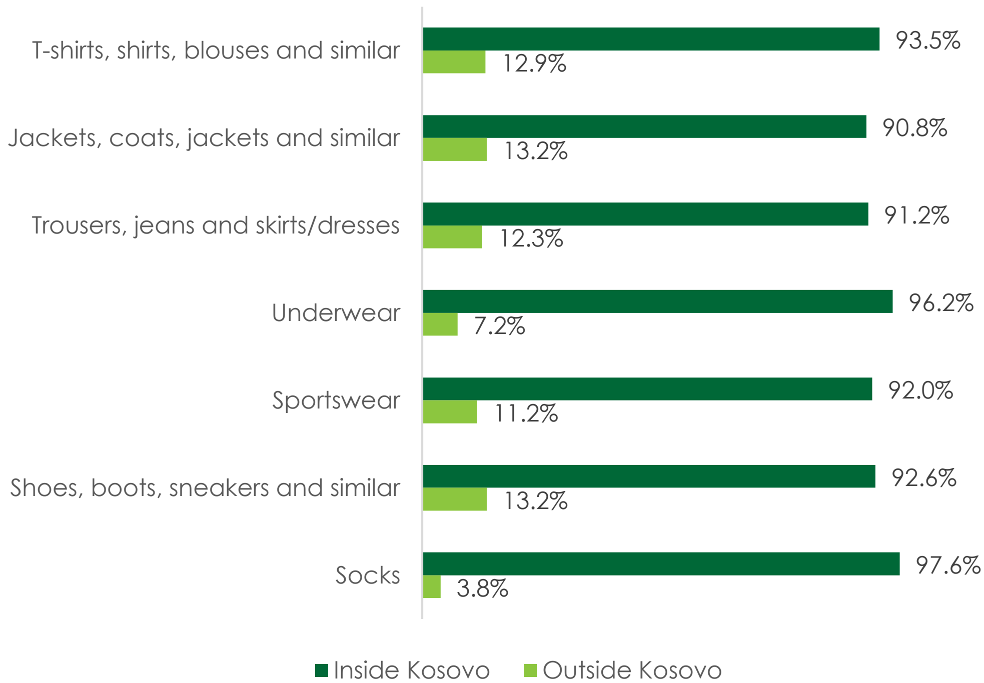

Figure 17. Where do you usually buy the following textile products - clothing? (Multiple answers)

The purchase of accessories is mostly done within Kosovo, over 92.9 percent. A smaller portion buys these products outside Kosovo.

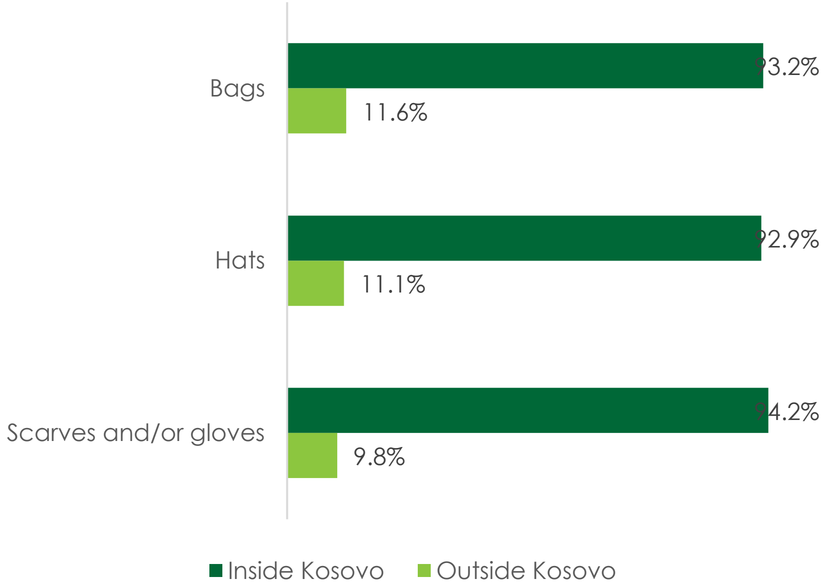

Figure 18. Where do you usually buy the following textile products - accessories? (Multiple answers)

Similarly, respondents usually purchase home textile products in stores within Kosovo, while a smaller proportion prefer to buy them abroad.

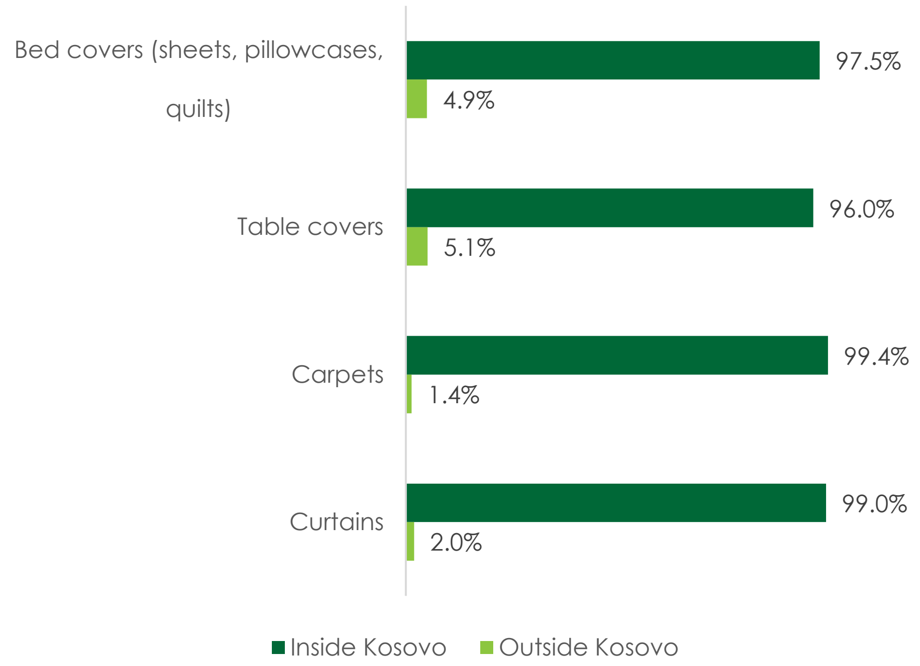

Figure 19. Where do you usually buy the following textile products - household? (Multiple answers)

Respondents who stated that they shop abroad mentioned the countries where they shop. Germany is the main destination for purchases outside Kosovo (52.4%), followed by Switzerland (26.6%) and Turkey (11.2%).

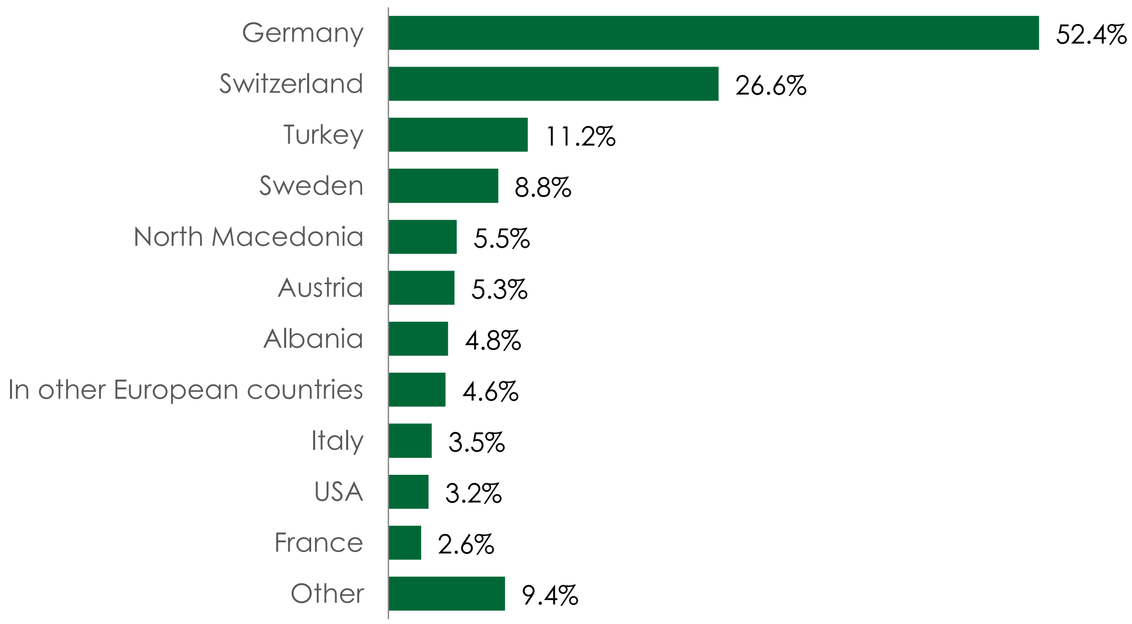

Figure 20. In which countries outside Kosovo do you make these purchases?

The main reasons why they make these purchases are because they think that the quality of products is higher abroad (57.9%), while the prices of products are more reasonable in relation to the quality (45.2%) and because they cannot find the products they are looking for in Kosovo (32.6%).

Figure 21. Why do you decide to buy these products outside of Kosovo? (Multiple answers)

The majority of respondents prefer to buy textile products in physical stores, with the percentage ranging from 86.2 percent to 98.1 percent depending on the product. Casual clothing and underwear are purchased almost exclusively in physical stores, while online purchases are more common for sportswear (25.1%), shoes, boots and similar (20.7%) and T-shirts/shirts (22.5%).

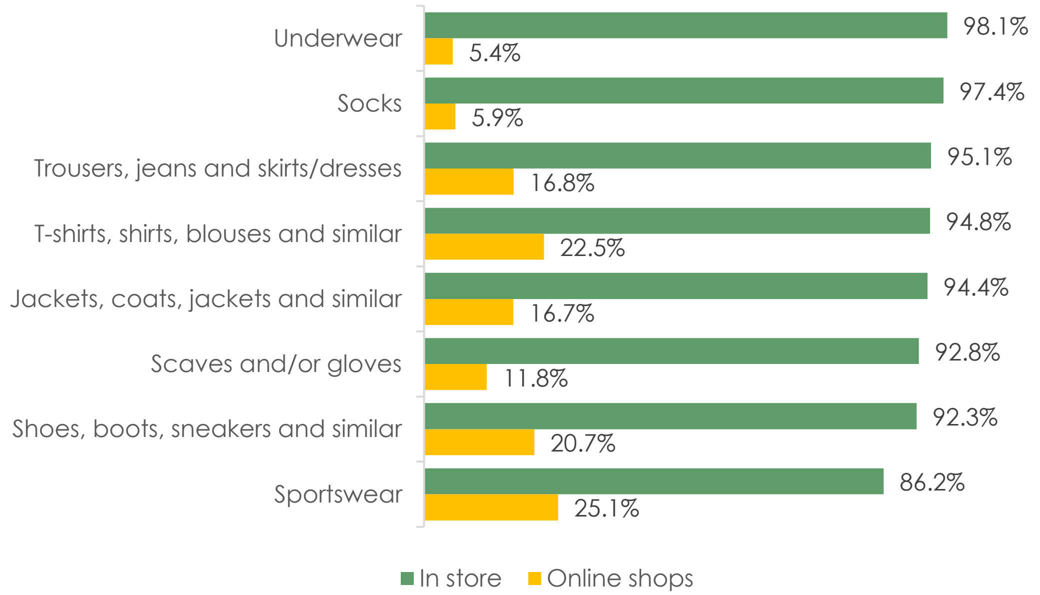

Figure 22. How do you usually buy the following textile products - clothing? (Multiple answers)

The data shows that textile accessories are mainly purchased in physical stores, with a small percentage of purchases occurring through online platforms. This shows that consumers show a strong tendency to choose direct purchases for both clothing and accessories, favoring contact with the product before purchase. Only bags are the products that are purchased more online (22.1%) compared to others.

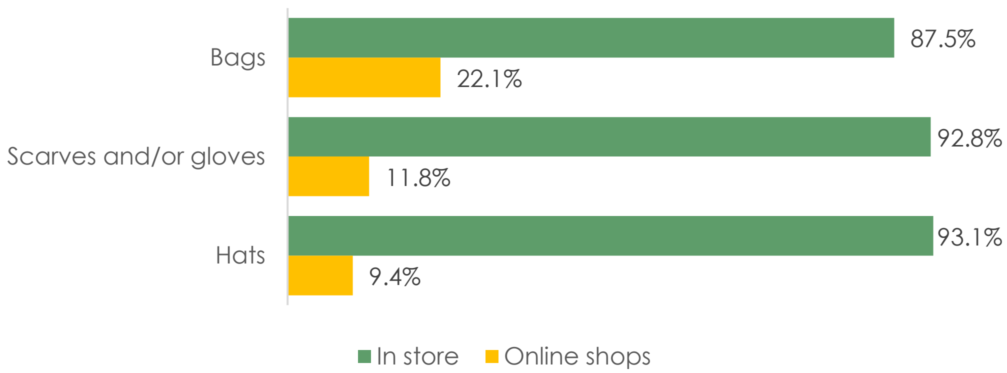

Figure 23. How do you usually buy the following textile product - Accessories? (Multiple answers)

Household textile products, such as bedspreads and rugs, are also mostly purchased in stores. A small portion of consumers prefer to buy them online, with bedspreads being the product with the highest percentage (19.5%) of online purchases compared to other textile products.

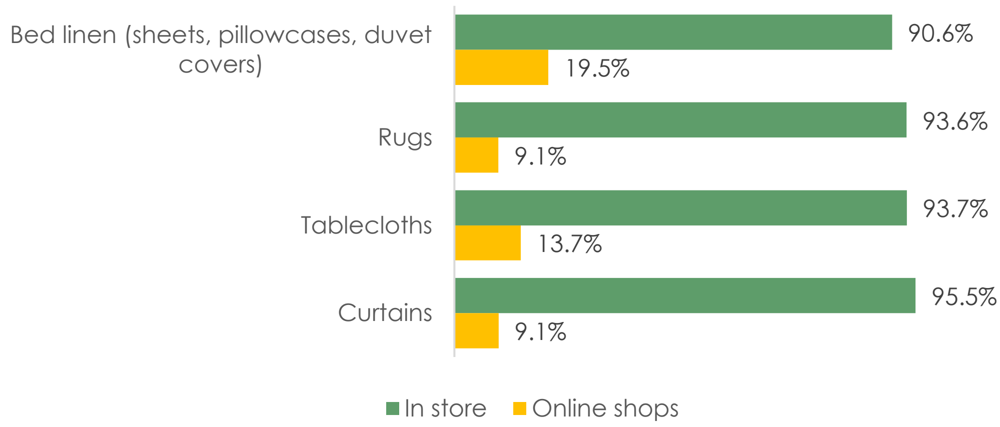

Figure 24. How do you usually buy the following textile products - household? (Multiple answers)

Respondents who shop in physical stores were asked in which types of stores they make these purchases, the majority of respondents (88%) prefer to shop in shopping malls, followed by about 39.7 percent prefer international stores. Local stores and open markets make up a smaller share of the choices (17.8 percent and 13.7 percent) and second-hand stores are used by only 11.1 percent of participants.

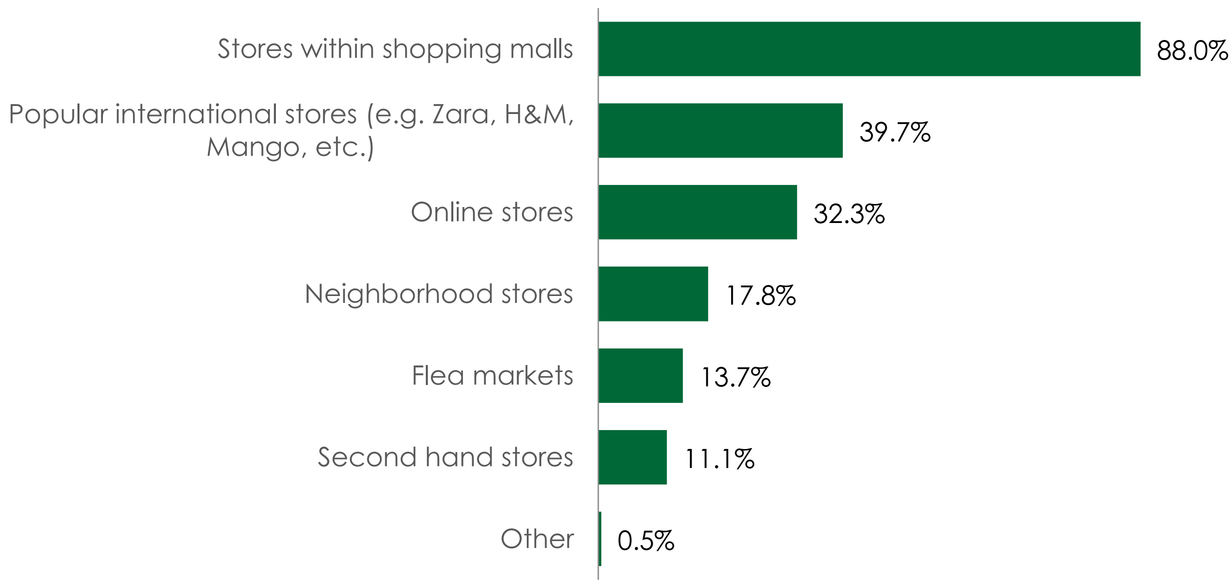

Figure 25. What kind of stores do you usually make these purchases in? (Multiple answers)

On the other hand, from the data of those who buy online we understand that franchise brands are the most preferred for online purchases, mentioned in 27.5 percent of cases. Local brands also play an important role, mentioned in 23.2 percent of cases. Social networks are also a channel used for online purchases, with Instagram used in 20.4 percent of cases, while Facebook in 16.2 percent of cases.

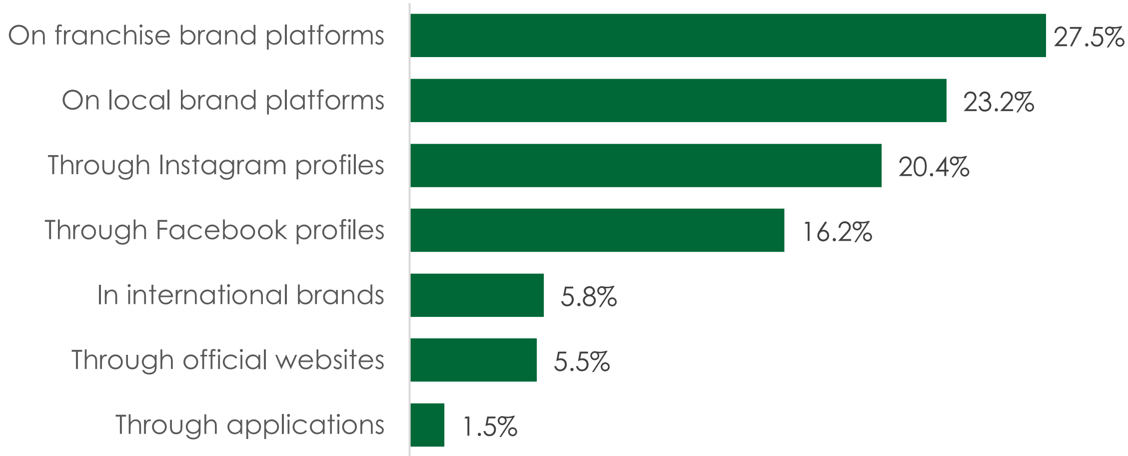

Figure 26. On which platforms do you usually make online purchases?

Most respondents prefer to buy new products in clothing, especially socks (99.2%) and underwear (99.1%). Sportswear and shoes are among the most purchased second-hand products. On the other hand, the number of participants who prefer to buy these products as recycled is very small for all products.

The high percentage of new purchases, combined with the lack of a market for reused items, contributes to increased consumption and the creation of waste that does not circulate in the economic system.

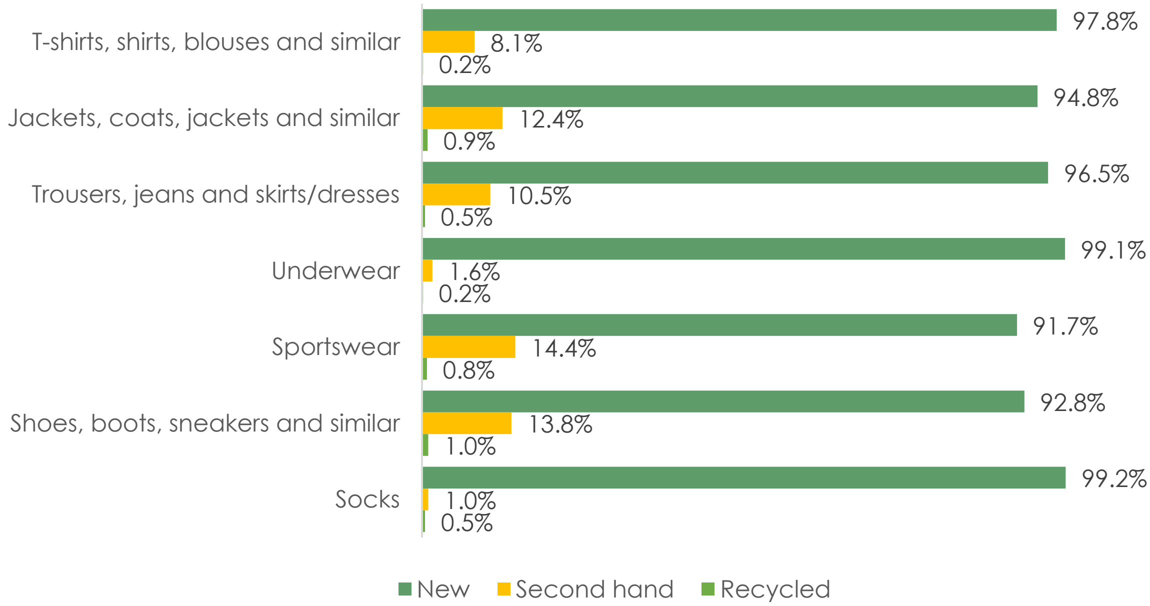

Figure 27. What type of the following textile products do you buy - clothing? (Multiple answers)

On the other hand, regarding accessories, consumers similarly prefer to buy textile accessories, such as bags, hats and scarves/gloves, mainly as new products. Purchases of recycled or reused items remain limited for all products in the accessories group.

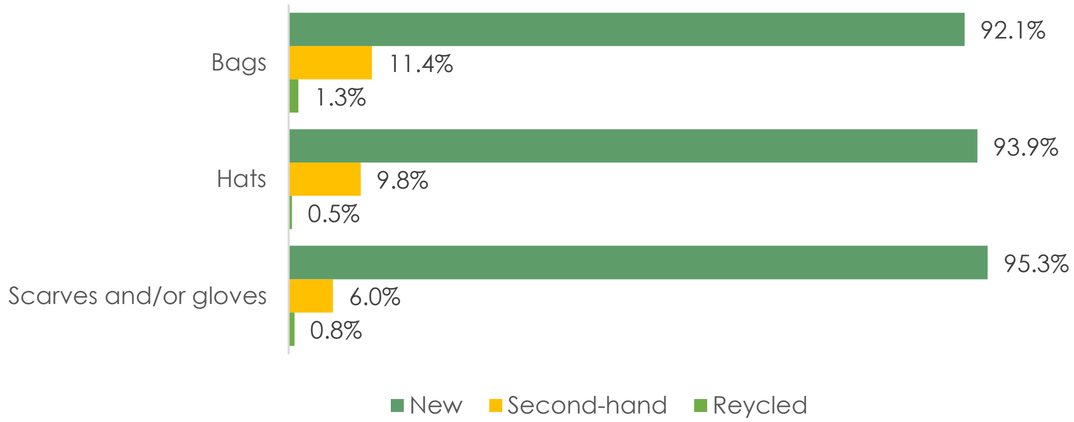

Figure 28. What type of the following textile products do you buy - accessories? (Multiple answers)

When it comes to household textiles, most shoppers opt for new products, including bedspreads, tablecloths, rugs, and curtains. Recycled or second-hand items are rarely used, following a similar trend as in clothing and textile accessories.

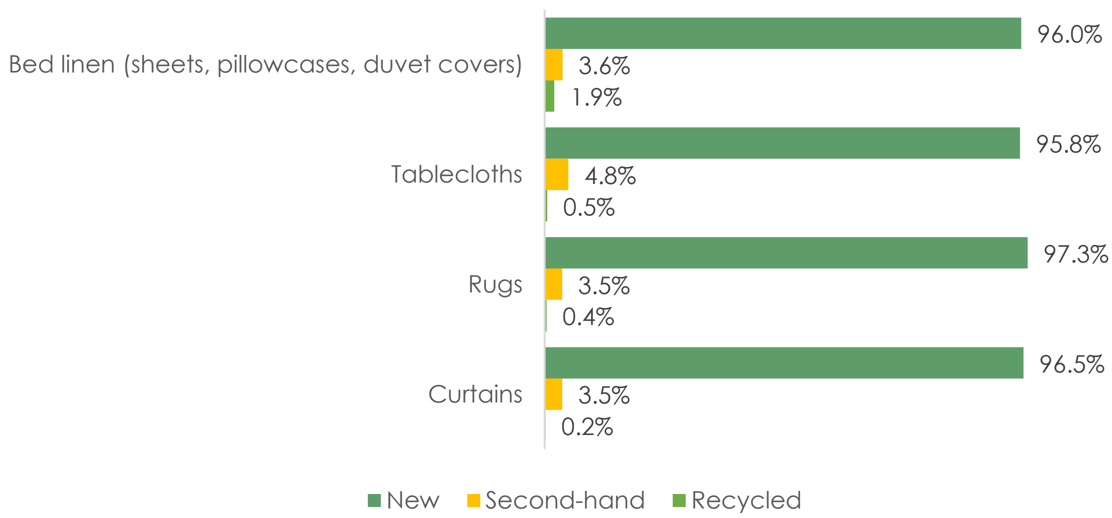

Figure 29. What type of the following textile products do you buy – household textile? (Multiple answers)

Respondents who stated that they buy second-hand products were further asked how they buy these products. The data shows that the majority of those who buy second-hand products prefer physical stores (89.1%), while a much smaller percentage (10.9%) shop online.

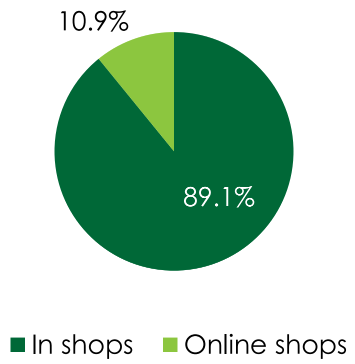

Figure 30. How do you usually buy reused products (second-hand) of textile?

Respondents who do not buy reused textile products have given their reasons regarding this issue. The main reasons are mainly related to hygiene and the idea of using something previously used by someone else. Specifically, 44 percent of cases show concerns about cleanliness and hygiene, while 43.6 percent of cases do not like the idea of using a previous product from someone else. Also, 30 percent of respondents stated that these products do not match their tastes, 25.3 percent of cases have difficulty finding suitable products, and 23.7 percent of cases doubt their quality.

Figure 31. What are the reasons you don't buy reused products? (Multiple answers)

The willingness to purchase reused products in the future turns out to be low, with respondents on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all willing and 7 very willing, rating their willingness with an average of 3.1, which is below average and does not represent genuine willingness.

Figure 32. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1-not at all willing and 7-very willing, how willing are you to buy reused products in the future?

On the other hand, there are several factors that could encourage consumers to buy reused products in the future. Lower price (65.8%) is the main reason, followed by the opportunity to find unique or historically valuable products (49.2%). Also, 45.8 percent of cases would consider this option due to access to products that are no longer available as new, while 23.6 percent see this practice as a way to reduce waste and positively impact the environment.

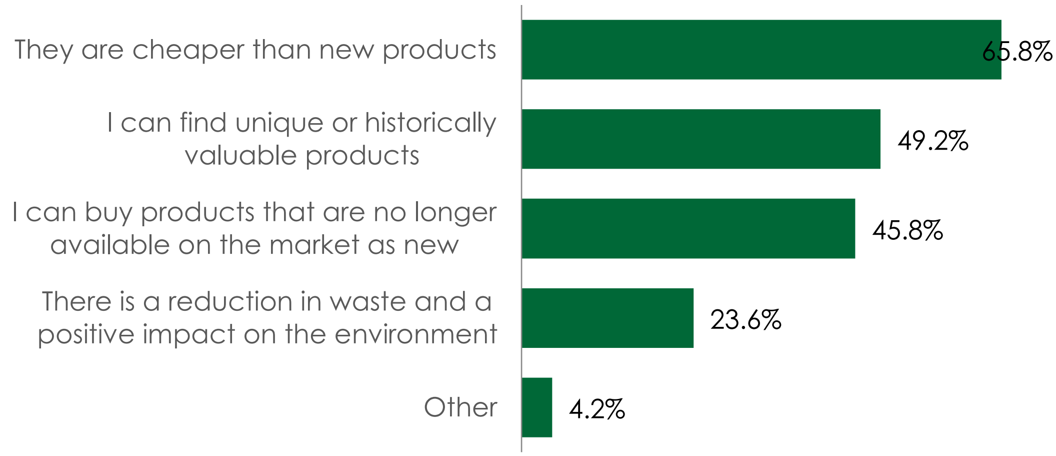

Figure 33. What are the reasons you would consider buying second-hand products in the future? (Multiple answers)

Furthermore, respondents who reuse textile clothing stated that they do so mainly because the clothes are still in good condition (64.8 percent of cases) or to save money (53.4 percent of cases). A smaller proportion of respondents do not feel the need to buy new clothes (22.3 percent of cases), while for some, reusing clothing is a family tradition (13.5 percent of cases). However, a small percentage (12%) see this practice as a way to reduce waste and contribute positively to the environment. This shows that financial reasons play an important role in both purchasing reused products and having them reused by family members.

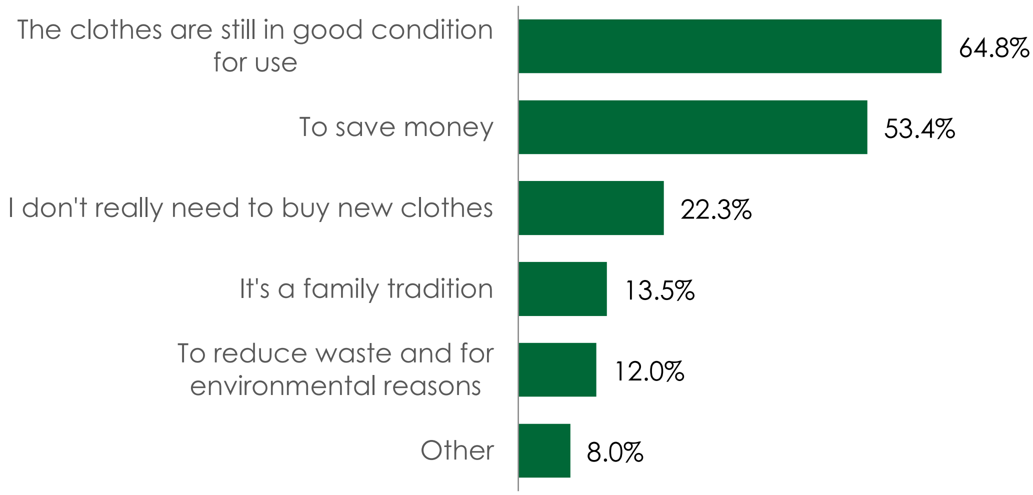

Figure 34. What are the reasons for reusing textile products from your family members? (Multiple answers)

7.3 CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES

The following part discusses citizens' preferences regarding the clothing and accessories they choose to buy. The analysis focuses on the types of products most in demand, the factors that influence their choice and the importance of brands or recent trends in consumer decision-making.

The data shows that most respondents prefer to buy casual clothing, which accounts for 76.6 percent of cases. After them, sportswear is the second most popular choice, at 27.3 percent of cases, while formal clothing accounts for 23.4 percent of cases. Clothing for parties or special events represents about 15.5 percent of cases. These results suggest that consumers prioritize comfort and practicality in their clothing purchases.

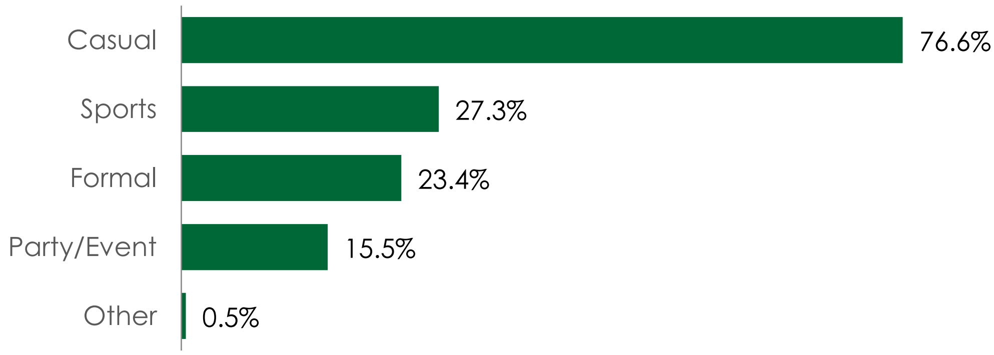

Figure 35. What type of clothing and accessories do you prefer to buy the most? (Multiple answers)

In the decision-making process for purchasing clothing and accessories, the most important factor for most respondents is price (80.9 percent of cases), followed by quality (51.5 percent of cases) and material (44.2 percent of cases). Other factors such as design (24 percent of cases) and brand (18.3 percent of cases) also have an impact, but to a lesser extent. Trend and country of manufacture are the least important factors in this choice, 11.7 percent and 8.1 percent of cases, respectively. These results show that consumers mainly base their choice on the ratio between price and quality when purchasing clothing and accessories.

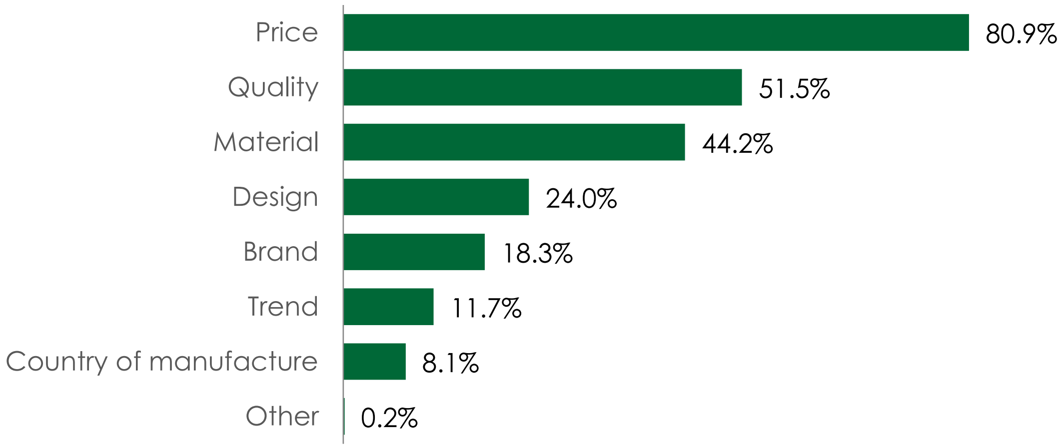

Figure 36. What are the three factors that most influence your decision to choose the clothing or accessories you buy? (Multiple answers)

Although trend accounted for only 11.7 percent of cases as a factor in clothing and accessory selection, awareness of the concept of fast fashion and its impact are higher. Fast fashion is a model of clothing production and consumption characterized by rapid, low-cost production and the rapid pursuit of fashion trends, often to the detriment of the environment and work ethics (Niinimäki, 2020).

Knowledge about the concept of Fast Fashion is somewhat limited among respondents. About 33.5 percent of respondents are slightly informed, 31.2 percent are somewhat informed, while 30.5 percent have no knowledge at all about this phenomenon. Only 4.8 percent of them report being very informed.

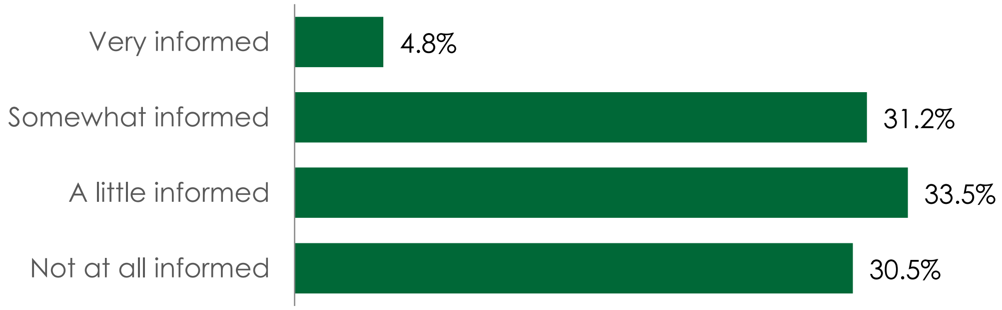

Figure 37. How informed are you about the concept of fast fashion?

Regarding the impact of Fast Fashion on purchasing behavior, the majority of respondents (53.7%) believe that this phenomenon does not affect how often they buy clothing or accessories. A significant portion (25.1%) say that because of Fast Fashion they buy a little more often, while 16 percent claim that they buy less often. Only a small percentage, 5.2 percent, declare that they buy much more often due to the influence of Fast Fashion. This data suggest that, although Fast Fashion has a certain impact on some individuals, the majority of respondents do not see it as a decisive factor in their purchasing behavior.

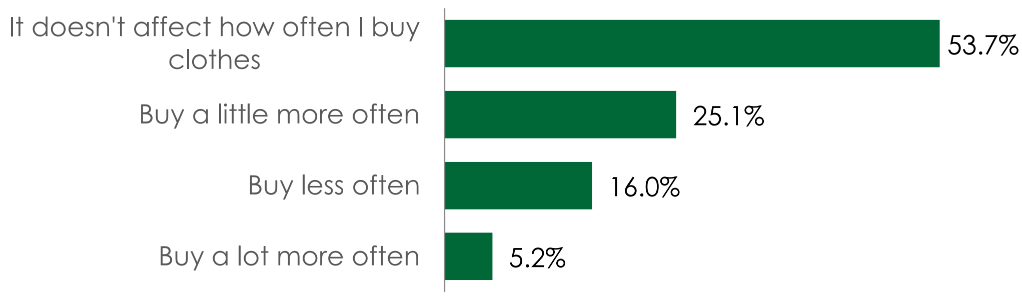

Figure 38. How often do you think you buy clothes or accessories because of the influence of fast fashion?

Regarding the way unused clothing and accessories are managed, donating them to family members is the most common option, selected by 62.8 percent of respondents. A large proportion of them (37.9%) choose to donate them to families in need, while 23.8 percent save them for future reuse. Throwing them away as waste is a practice followed by 19.9 percent of participants, while only a small percentage sell them in second-hand markets (2%). The least selected option is donating for recycling, with only 0.5 percent of responses. These data suggest that most people try to find useful ways to manage unused clothing by donating or saving them for future use, while a smaller percentage treats them as waste.

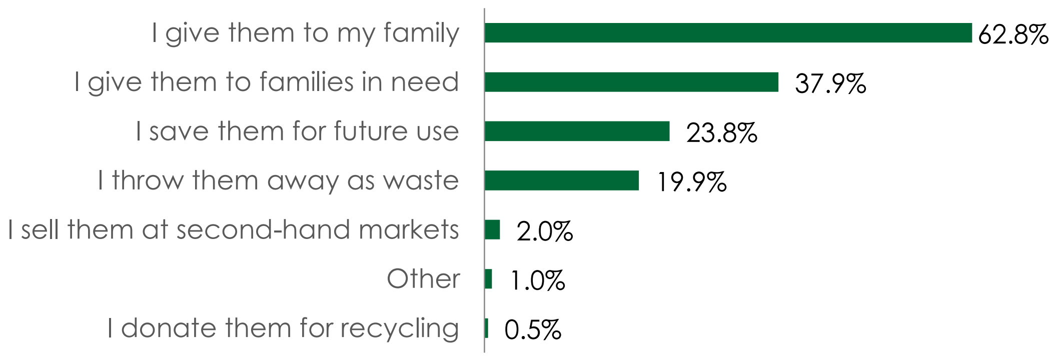

Figure 39. How do you manage clothes and accessories that you no longer use? (Multiple answers)

It seems that very few people (0.5%) choose to donate clothing or accessories for recycling. Only two respondents gave a clear answer on this issue: one sends the accessories to iron recycling centers, while the other donated to an association in Prishtina.

When it comes to donating clothing to families in need, the majority of respondents choose to give them directly to families they know and who are in need (35.3%). The Red Cross is also a popular option (34.9%), while donations through humanitarian organizations (8.5%), mosques (7.3%) and neighbors (5.8%) make up a smaller percentage. A small number choose alternative methods such as youth centers, social networks or direct assistance to people in need.

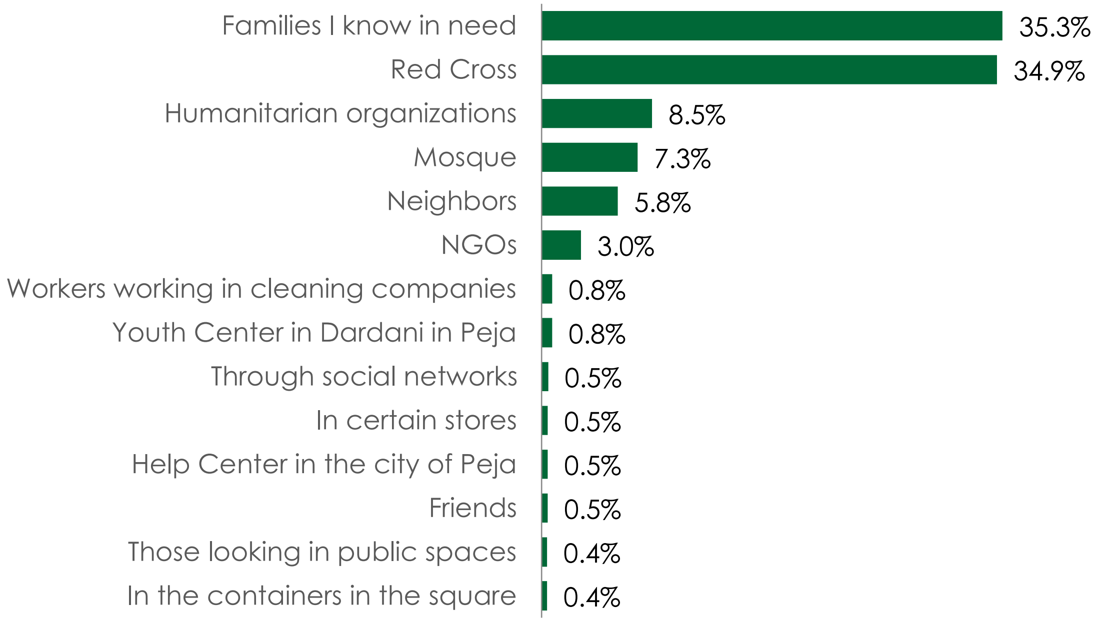

Figure 40. Specify where do you donate to families in need? – clothing and accessories (Multiple answers)

Regarding the sale of used clothing and accessories in second-hand markets, four respondents reported selling through social networks, two others in local markets, while the rest mentioned other places such as selling in neighborhood stores, and specialized stores for second-hand products.

Table 2. Specify the location and if you have a store? (I sell clothes and accessories at second-hand markets)

Place	Frequency
On social media	4
Local market	2
In neighborhood shop	1
In Second-Hand shops	1

Regarding the disposal of used clothing as waste, the majority of respondents declare that they throw their clothes in household waste (56.6%) or in city waste containers (42.6%). Only a small percentage (0.8%) send them to landfill. This behavior indicates a lack of mechanisms for separating textile waste from the usual waste streams. Their ending up in mixed waste affects the loss of the possibility of reuse or recycling and contributes to long-term environmental pollution.

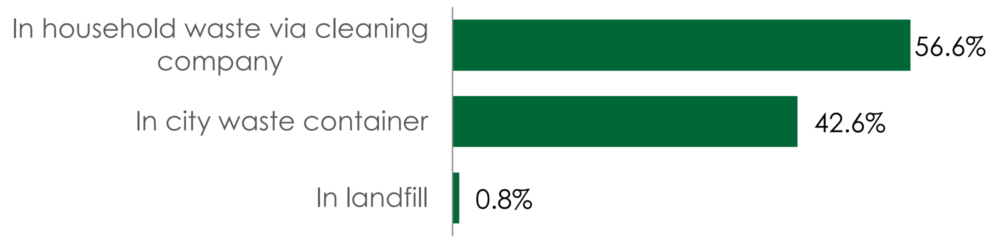

Figure 41. Specify the place where? (Throw away clothes and accessories.)

Regarding the amount of clothing thrown away in a year, most respondents (44.7%) report that they throw away a very small amount of such waste, approximately 1-5 kg of clothing per year. A smaller proportion (21.8%) states that they throw away 11-15 kg, while 18.1 percent report that they throw away 6-10 kg. Only 6.8 percent say that they throw away 15-30 kg, and a small percentage (8.6%) are not sure about the amount. In total, these citizens reported throwing away about 1,137 kg of clothing as waste in a year.

Based on these data, a calculation was performed to estimate the amount of textile waste generated by citizens. Of the respondents, 19.9% declared that they throw away clothing, reporting a total of 1137 kg per year. This corresponds to an average of approximately **16.01 kg per person per year** within this group. Applying this average to the population representing this behavior, it is estimated that citizens in Kosovo generate approximately **5,132.56 tons of textile waste per year** from clothing.

This average is consistent with the level reported by (European Environment Agency, 2024), where the average textile waste per year in Europe is around 16 kilograms per person. However, it is important to note that this is a **rough estimate** and not an official figure, due to the lack of real and structured data at the national level.

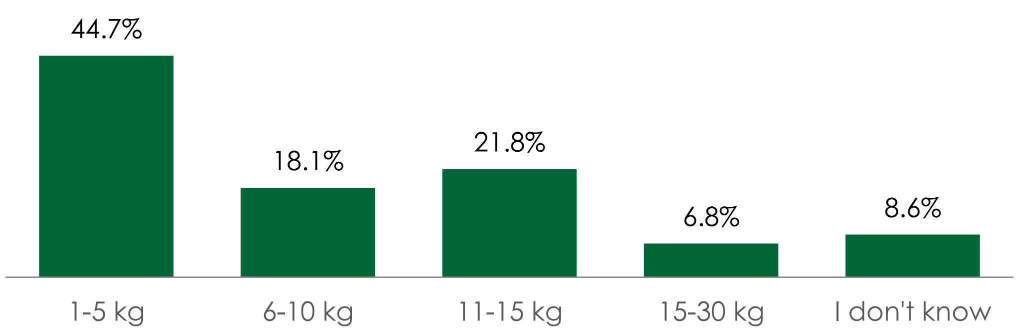

Figure 42. Approximately how many kilograms of clothing do you throw away in a year?

7.4 HOUSEHOLD TEXTILE

In addition to clothing, part of the survey focuses on home textiles. This section explores preferences for bedspreads, curtains, rugs and other similar products, providing insight into the criteria that influence their purchase.

Most respondents purchase household textile products when they need replacement (67.1%) or during seasonal offers (37.9%). Also, a significant portion of respondents (30.7%) purchase home textile products when they want to update their home decor, while 17.9 percent do so during holidays or special events. These data suggest that most purchases are motivated by need and financial benefits, while aesthetic and festive aspects play a smaller role.

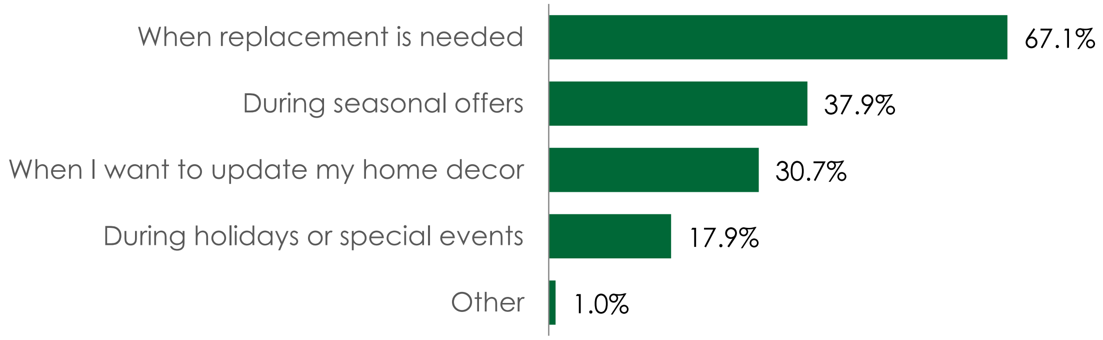

Figure 43. On what occasions do you usually buy new household textile products? (Multiple answers)

In the process of choosing home textile products, similar to clothing and accessories, price is the most important factor for the majority of respondents (67.1%), followed by product quality (53.7%). The material used is also an important criterion for 47.6 percent of respondents, while other factors such as durability (35.7%), design (29.8%) and country of manufacture (7.7%) have a lesser impact. Brand and trends seem to play the most insignificant role in this decision-making process.

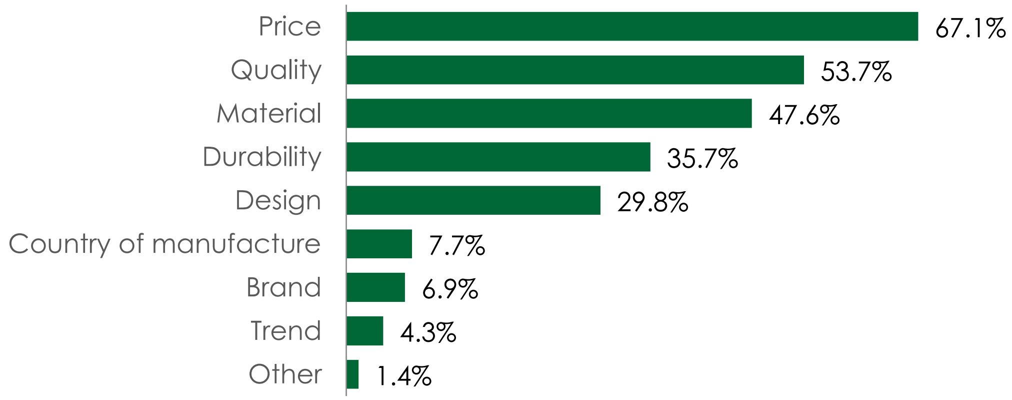

Figure 44. What are the three factors that most influence your decision to choose the home textile products you buy? (Multiple answers)

Changes in consumer purchasing behavior for home textile products over the past few years are evident. According to the data, 45.9 percent of respondents say their purchasing habits have not changed, while 33.2 percent report buying less frequently and 20.9 percent say they buy more frequently.

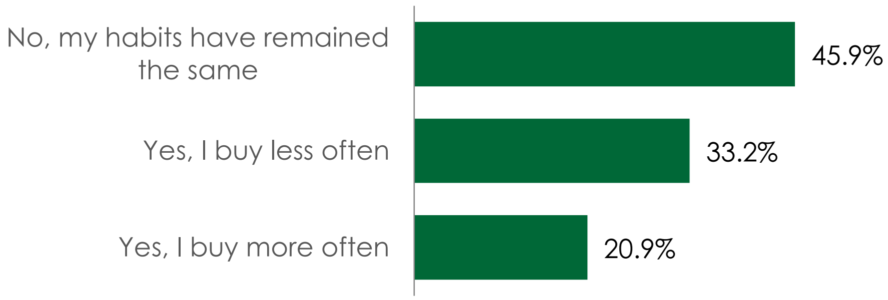

Figure 45. Have you changed your household product purchasing habits in recent years?

Regarding the management of household textile products that are no longer used, most respondents donate them to family members (47.5%) or families in need (28.9%). A significant proportion (27.7%) discard them as waste, while a smaller percentage (17.9%) save them for future reuse. The practices of selling in second-hand markets (1.4%) and donating for recycling (1.2%) remain very limited. These data show that most consumers prefer to give these products a second chance through donation or saving for later use, while a portion still chooses to eliminate them as waste, which is greater compared to those who throw away clothing and accessories. Donation is a positive practice for extending the life of the product, but the high percentage of disposal as waste indicates a lack of structured options for collection and recycling.

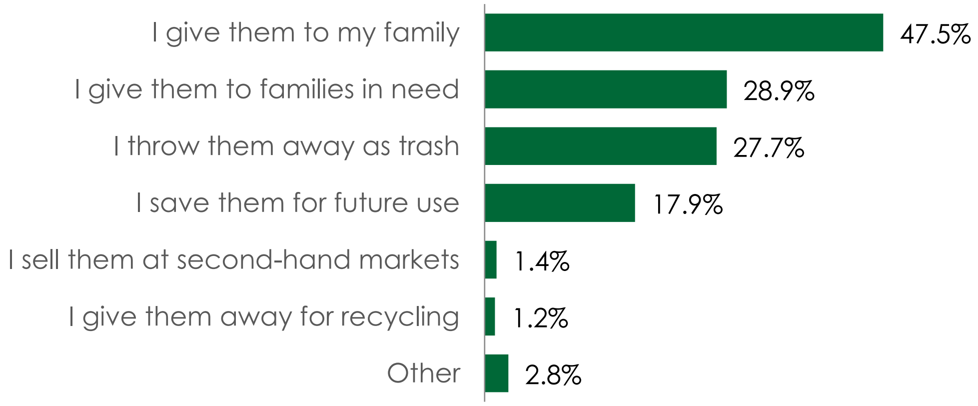

Figure 46. How do you manage home textile products that you no longer use? (Multiple answers)

The practice of recycling home textiles remains very limited, accounting for only 1.2 percent of cases. Among those who do, the places they mention are donation to designated sites and second-hand stores.

Home textiles are often large and have a long lifespan. Their disposal represents a significant loss of potential for reuse or functional transformation, negatively impacting the capacity to reduce waste in the environment.

Table 3. Specify the location? (I donate household textiles for recycling)

Places	Frequency
In places where they are accepted	3
Second-hand shops	1

When it comes to donating home textile products to families in need, most respondents choose to give them directly to families they know and who are in need (35.8%). A large number prefer to donate them through the Red Cross (29.5%), while neighbors and local communities represent 10.3 percent of cases. Donating through mosques (8.2%) or humanitarian organizations (7.2%) is also present, but to a lesser extent.

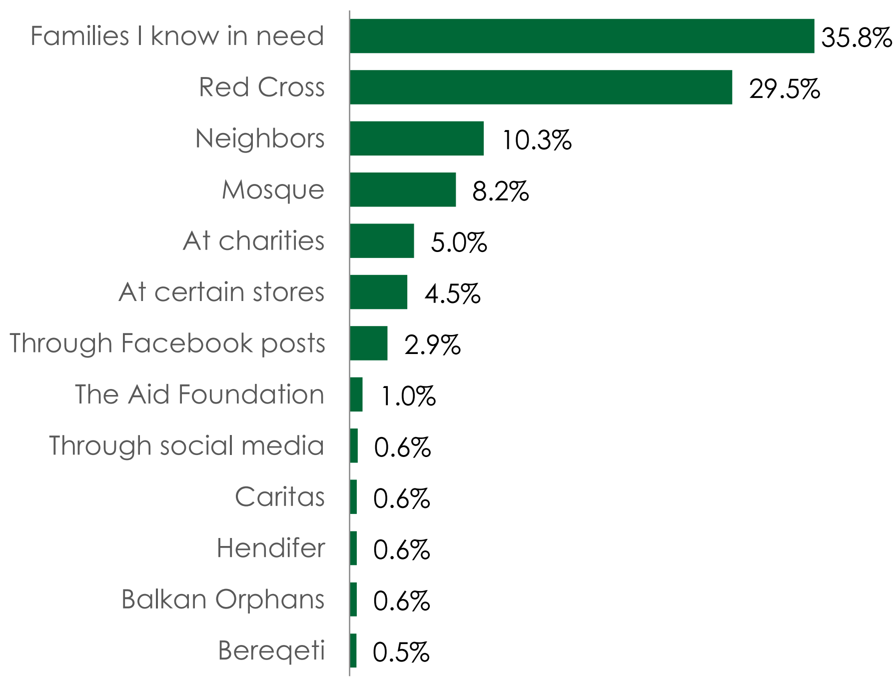

Figure 47. Specify the place where? (I donate household textiles to families in need)

Selling used household textile products is not a common practice among the respondents. Only 1.4 percent report having sold such products, mainly in the neighborhood, at the bazaar, through a company, etc.

Table 4. Specify the location and if you have a store? (I sell home textiles at second-hand markets)

Place	Frequency
I don't have a specific place	2
In the neighborhood	1
Bazaar	1
Through friends	1
Thrift store	1
Mosque	1

Disposing of used textiles as waste remains a common option for a significant portion of respondents (27.7%). Of those who do dispose of them, the majority (73.8%) place them in household waste managed by the waste management company, 20 percent send them to city landfills, while 6.2 percent stated that they burn them.

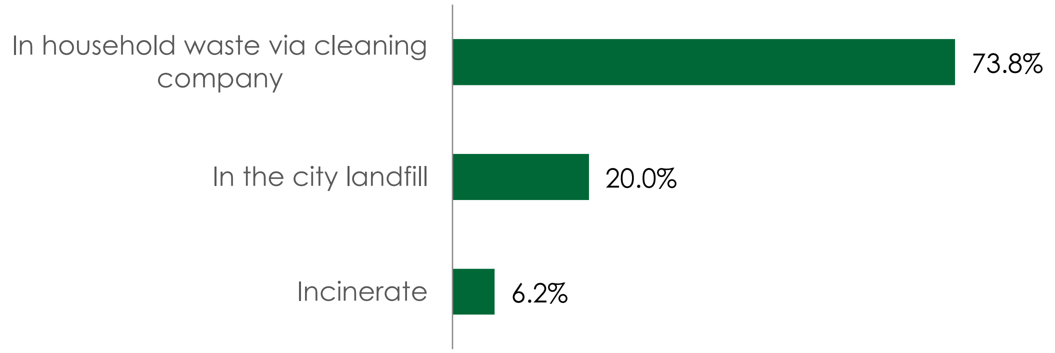

Figure 48. Specify the place where? (Throw away household textiles as waste)

7.5 REUSE AND RECYCLING PRACTICES

With increasing awareness of the environmental impact of the textile industry, this section examines how and to what extent citizens engage in the reuse and recycling of textile products. The results help to understand the level of awareness and the main barriers that influence these practices.

According to the results, more than half of the respondents (53.9%) stated that they are aware of the environmental impact of the production and disposal of textile products, however, a significant portion (46.1%) lack this information, which also affects the low number of respondents who practice the reuse and recycling of textile products.

The lack of reuse and recycling practices indicates a gap between awareness and action. Without concrete mechanisms that make this practice easy and motivating, textiles end up as waste and lose their potential value within a sustainable economic cycle.

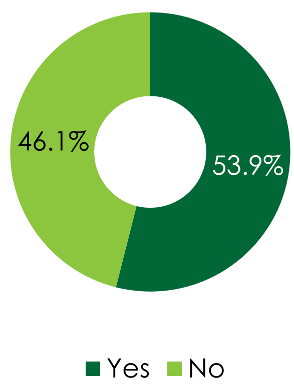

Figure 49. Do you have knowledge about the environmental impact of the production and disposal of textile products?

Most respondents consider the impact of the textile industry on the environment to be an important problem. Specifically, 67.6 percent assess this issue as very important, while 30.6 percent see it as important. On the other hand, a very small percentage (about 1.5 percent) consider this problem to be of little or no importance. These results suggest that among those who have information on the impact of textiles on the environment, the majority are aware of the seriousness of this problem.

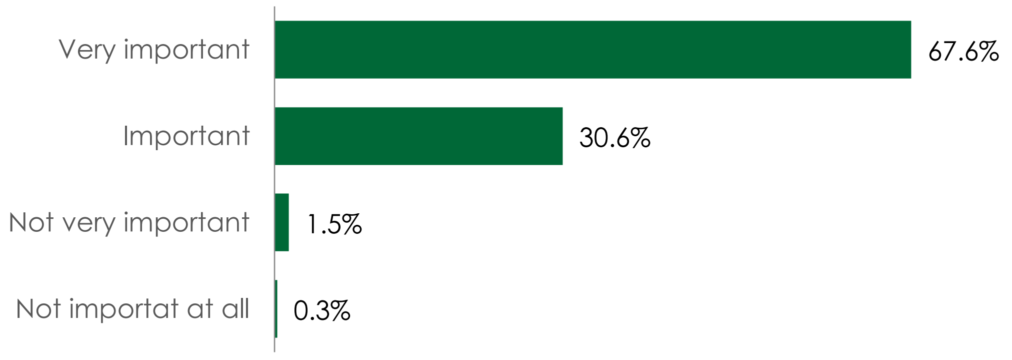

Figure 50. How important do you think this problem is?

The lack of information in the media is the main factor influencing the lack of public awareness on this issue, with 66.2 percent of respondents citing this as the main reason. Another important factor is the lack of awareness campaigns, which is mentioned in 32.4 percent of cases.

Furthermore, in 23.7 percent of cases, respondents admit that they have not had any interest in this topic, while in 9.7 percent of cases they do not consider the impact of textiles on the environment to be a significant problem. These results indicate the need for more information and awareness on this issue through the media and relevant institutions.

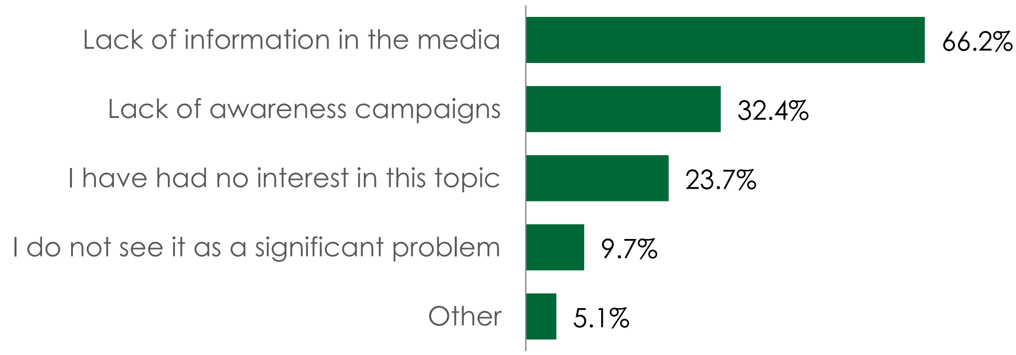

Figure 51. What do you think is the main reason for your lack of information on this issue? (Multiple answers)

Regarding the frequency of reuse and recycling of textile products, the data shows that most respondents do not practice this regularly. Specifically, 34.2 percent of participants declare that they never reuse or recycle textile products, while 28.4 percent do so rarely. On the other hand, 27.4 percent of respondents report that they reuse or recycle sometimes, while only 9.9 percent do so often. These data suggest that reuse and recycling of textiles is still not a common practice for most people. The low percentage of reuse and recycling puts textile products at risk of immediately becoming waste.

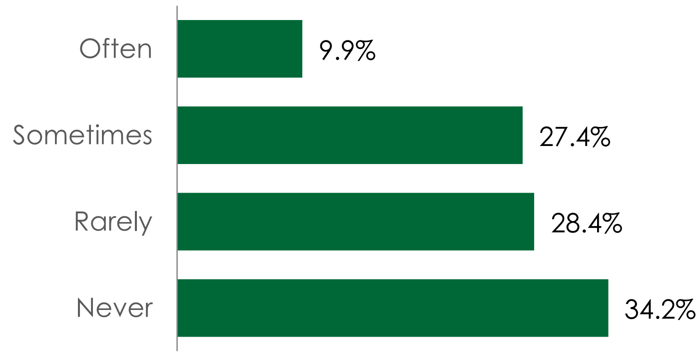

Figure 52. How often do you reuse and recycle your textile products?

A large portion of respondents face difficulties during the process of reusing and recycling textiles. Specifically, 34.7 percent of participants report that they have had difficulties, while 34.3 percent have had difficulties at some point. On the other hand, 31 percent say that they have not encountered any particular difficulties.

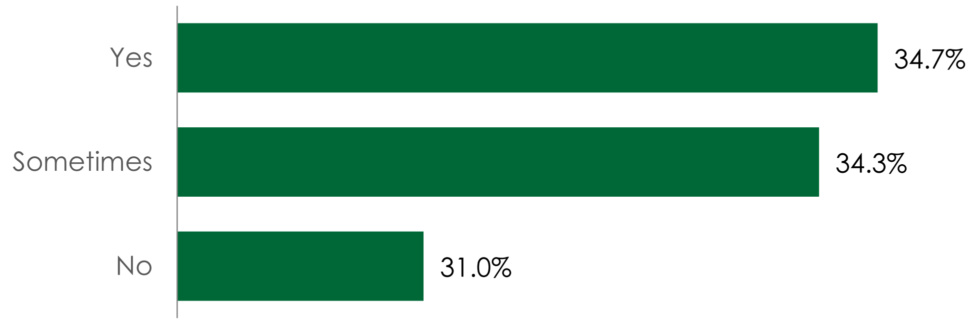

Figure 53. Do you face difficulties during the process of reusing and recycling textile products?

The factors that would encourage respondents to reuse and recycle textile products more often are mainly related to improving infrastructure and increasing awareness. In more than a third of cases (39.9%), respondents would prefer dedicated points for recycling clothes, while in 34.2 percent of cases they require more information on the reuse and recycling process. Also, in 30.8 percent of cases they suggest that more options for donating clothes to people in need would help increase this process. In addition, in 27.2 percent of cases participants would feel more motivated if there were discounts or rewards for recycling textiles. Meanwhile, in 16.4 percent of cases they think that awareness campaigns on the importance of recycling would have a positive impact. These findings suggest that structural and informational interventions can play a key role in promoting more sustainable practices for textile management. There is a basic willingness to recycle, but it is hindered by a lack of infrastructure and information. This reinforces the need to build textile collection systems and provide opportunities for sustainable behavior.

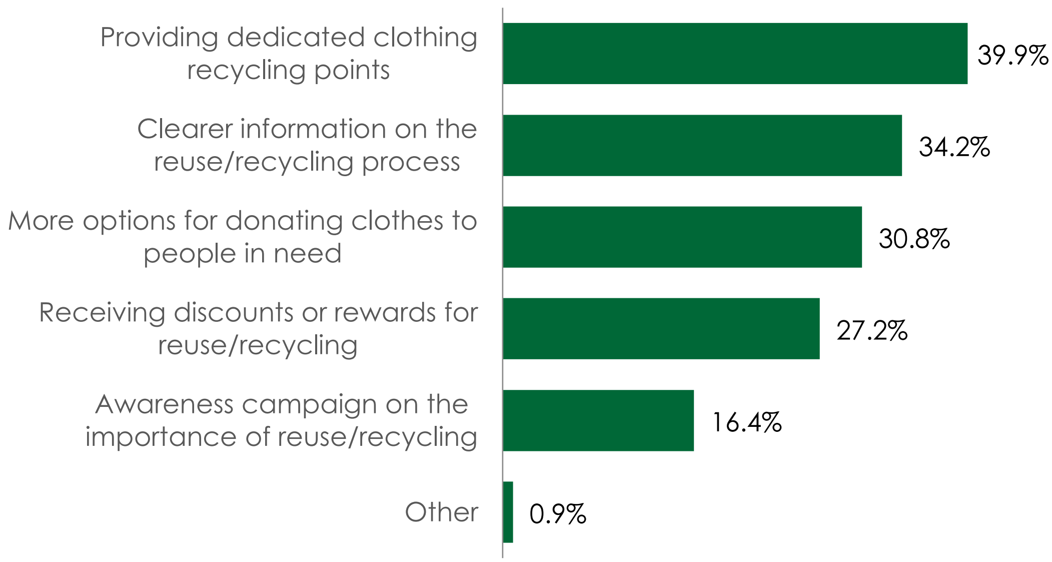

Figure 54. What changes would encourage you to reuse and recycle textile products more often? (Multiple answers)

Many of the respondents express interest in receiving more information on textile reuse and recycling. The most important thing for them is to have knowledge about the location and centers dedicated to these processes, which is mentioned by 47.6 percent of the cases. A significant part (39.9 percent of the cases) wants to learn more about identifying materials that can be reused or recycled. The environmental benefits of these practices are another aspect of interest mentioned in 30 percent of the cases. Also, in 29.5 percent of cases they express the need for instructions on caring for clothes before reuse or recycling, while in 23.9 percent of cases they want to learn more about the textile reuse and recycling processes themselves. These data show the importance of education and information to increase awareness and participation in more sustainable textile management practices.

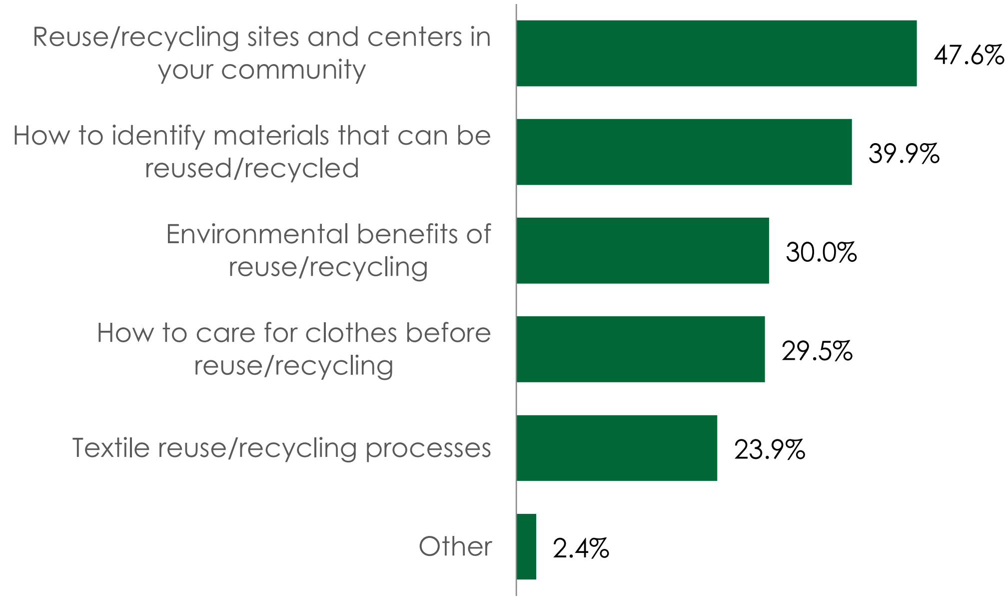

Figure 55. What aspects regarding the reuse and recycling of textile products would you like to receive more information on? (Multiple answers)

A significant lack of information on textile product recycling initiatives was observed among the respondents. Only 2 percent of them are aware of any such initiative, while 98 percent have no information on these initiatives. This indicates the need for more awareness and information campaigns to promote reuse and recycling practices in the textile industry.

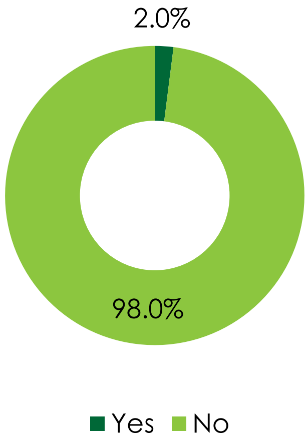

Figure 56. Do you have information about any textile product recycling initiatives?

Furthermore, respondents who have this information have mentioned several textile recycling initiatives. The municipality of Suhareka has been mentioned as one of the places where there is a clothing collection program. Also, some are aware of the possibility of donating clothes to international stores. Another initiative has been the installation of containers for classifying items that can be reused.

However, the willingness to get involved in textile product recycling processes is above average, with an average of 4.4, where respondents have given their assessment on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all willing and 7 means very willing. This shows that despite the lack of information, citizens are willing to be active and involved in these processes, but that there is room for improvement and increasing this willingness to a higher degree. It is necessary for institutions and enterprises to create infrastructure and practical mechanisms that make this involvement possible and easy for citizens.

Figure 57. On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1-not at all willing and 7-very willing, how willing would you be to be involved in the recycling process of textile products?

7.6 CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The circular economy is an economic model that aims to reduce waste and maximize resource use by keeping products, materials, and resources in use for as long as possible. It is based on the principles of reuse, repair, recycling, and waste reduction, creating a more sustainable and efficient system compared to the traditional linear model of "take, make, use, and dispose." (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013).

This segment addresses the concept of the circular economy and its impact on consumer behavior. The analysis includes citizens' perceptions of the importance of product circulation and their willingness to adopt sustainable consumption patterns.

Knowledge of the concept of the circular economy is limited among respondents. According to the data, 56 percent of participants are not familiar with this concept at all, while 38.4 percent have heard of it but do not have detailed knowledge. Only a small percentage (5.6%) claim that they are familiar with the circular economy. These results indicate a widespread lack of information on this concept, suggesting the need for greater awareness and education in this area.

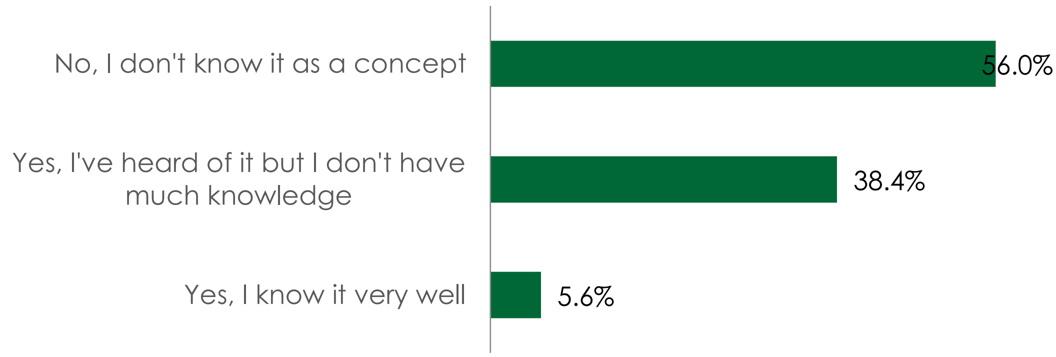

Figure 58. How much do you know about the concept of circular economy?

Regarding people's willingness to change their textile sourcing habits to contribute to the circular economy, 28.9 percent of respondents are completely willing to make changes in their behavior, while 67 percent say they are somewhat willing. Only a small percentage (4.1%) are not at all willing to change their habits. These results suggest that awareness and education about the circular economy can drive greater changes in consumer behavior.

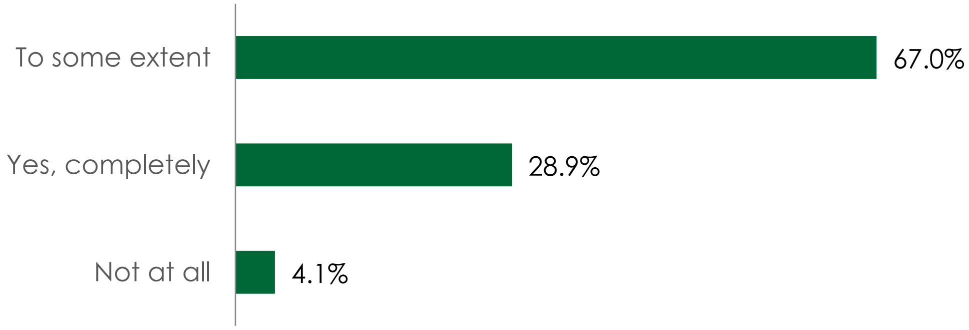

Figure 59. Would you be willing to change your textile sourcing habits to contribute to the circular economy?

Interest in participating in clothes swapping events is also moderate. According to the data, 24.8 percent of respondents are very willing to participate in these events, while 49.9 percent are somewhat willing. On the other hand, 25.2 percent have no desire to participate in such initiatives at all. The cumulative percentage shows that 74.8 percent of participants are at least somewhat interested in these events, reflecting a moderate level of willingness to benefit from circular economy practices.

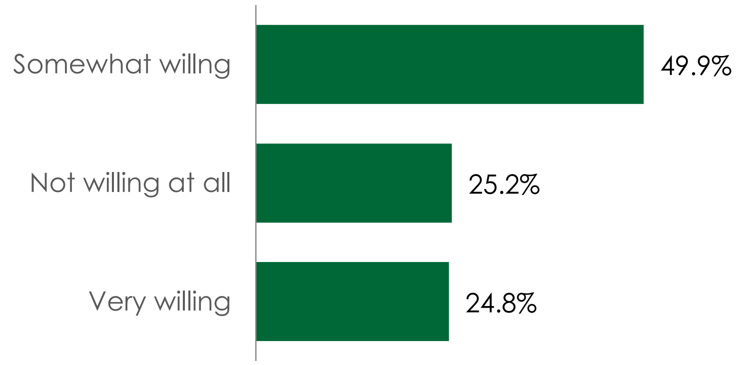

Figure 60. How willing are you to participate in clothes swapping events?

Regarding the factors that motivate people to participate in such initiatives, the main reasons are related to financial benefits. Specifically, 48.3 percent of respondents state that financial savings are the main factor that drives them to participate in clothing exchange events. In addition, social impact is also an important reason, mentioned by 41.1 percent of respondents. Another part (37.8%) sees this as an opportunity to win or exchange new products, while 26.6 percent value this practice for improving lifestyle. Only 11.2 percent of respondents consider environmental benefits as the main reason for participating in these initiatives. Although environmental benefits are not the main factor for most, the potential exists to influence through education and economic benefits. Practices that combine financial incentives with environmental goals may be more successful in promoting behavioral change.

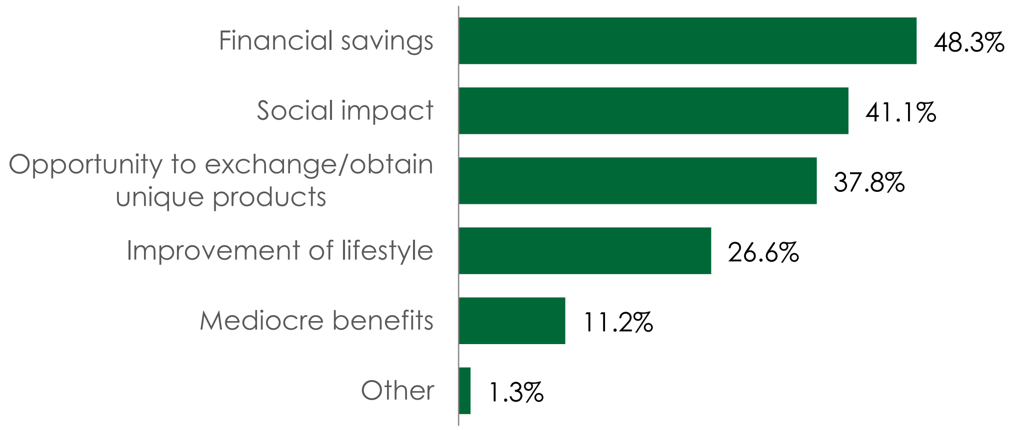

Figure 61. What motivates you most to be part of such initiatives? (Multiple answers)

7.7 INFORMATION SOURCES

Another key aspect of the report is the identification of the main sources from which citizens obtain information on textile products. This section explores the role of social networks, traditional media and personal recommendations in the purchasing decision-making process.

The sources of information on textiles and the purchase of textile products are mainly social networks, which are used in 61.2 percent of cases. After them, websites are another important source of information, used in 52.9 percent of cases. Conversations with family and friends also play an important role, serving as a source of information for 37.2 percent of cases. Compared to digital media, television has a smaller impact (24.8 percent of cases), while leaflets and brochures are used by only 13.5 percent of cases. Radio has a minimal impact, in only 3.2 percent of cases of participants using it as a source of information. These data show that information on textiles and textile product purchases is spread mainly through digital channels and interpersonal communication, while traditional media play a smaller role.

The dominance of social media as a source of information creates great opportunities for targeted campaigns that promote recycling and reuse. If environmental information is channeled to these platforms, the potential impact on consumer behavior would be significant.

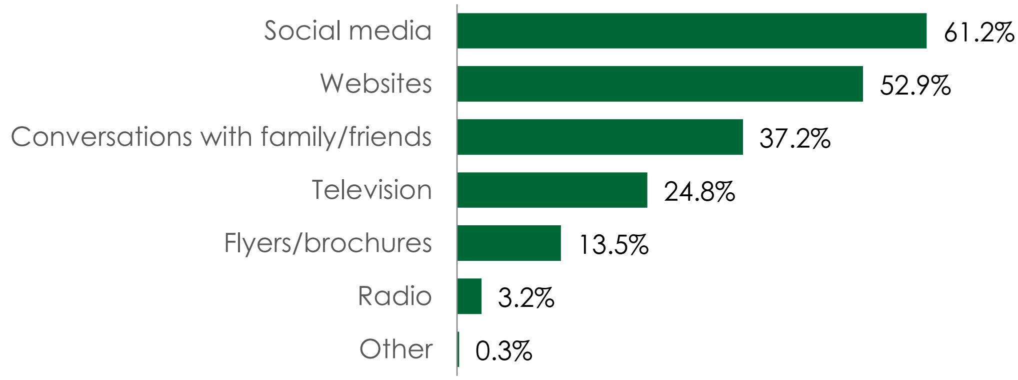

Figure 62. What sources of information do you use to obtain information about textiles and purchasing textile products? (Multiple answers)

Regarding the social networks most frequently used for information and purchase of textile products, Facebook is the most used platform, chosen in 77 percent of cases, followed by Instagram with 71.7 percent of cases. TikTok is also a well-known platform, but its use is more limited (22.9 percent of cases). YouTube also has a modest role in this process, in 15.6 percent of cases that use it to obtain information on textiles. Meanwhile, other platforms such as Snapchat (4.5 percent of cases), Twitter (3.4 percent of cases) and LinkedIn (3.1 percent of cases) have a small impact. These data show that Facebook and Instagram remain the most preferred platforms for information and purchase of textile products.

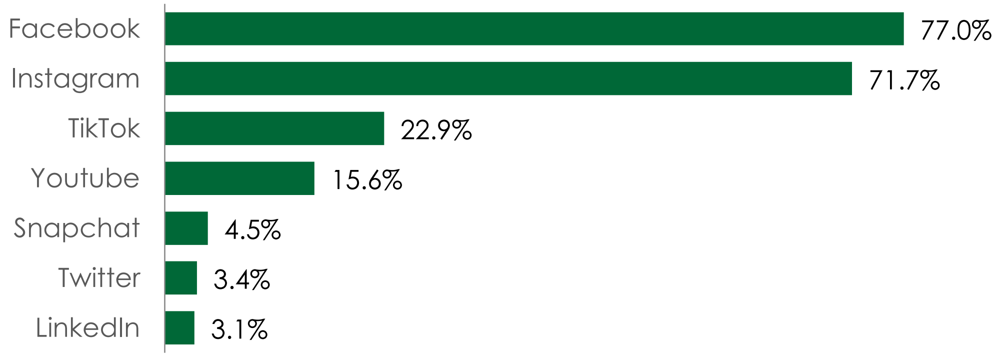

Figure 63. Which social networks do you use most often for information and purchasing textile products? (Multiple answers)

8. RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH BUSINESSES

This section will include the analysis of data collected through a survey conducted with companies operating in the apparel and home textile sector in Kosovo. The data will help identify current practices, challenges and potential for improvement in terms of waste management, recycling and circular economy in this sector.

8.1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPANY

The following is a basic profile of the interviewed companies, including economic activity, ownership structure and workforce. This information is important to understand the operational context and the capacity of the sector to incorporate circular economy practices.

The companies interviewed for the business study have diverse activities, with the largest number of them having as their main activity the production of textile clothing (47%), followed by sewing of clothing with 18 percent of the companies and wholesale and retail trade (12%). Among these companies, those that are only supplied with textiles, about 11 percent of them, are also included, because they are a necessary group to research how businesses of this type manage textile waste.

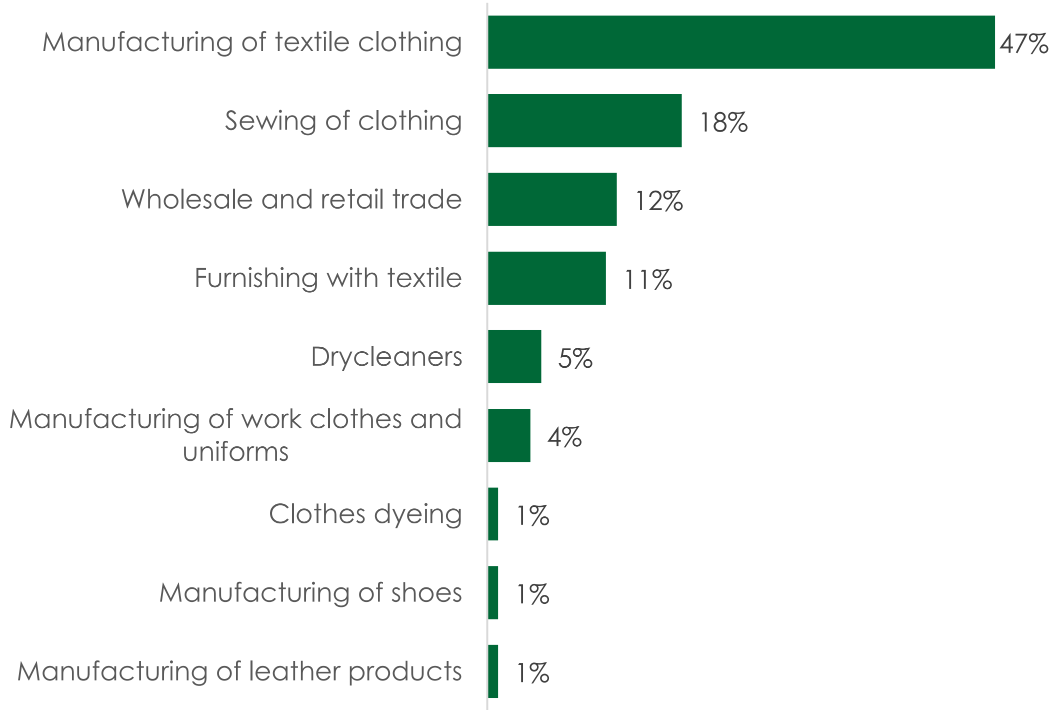

Figure 64. Company activity

Regarding the gender of the company owner, in 58 percent of cases these companies have male owners, while in 48 percent of cases they have female owners. This also includes cases where companies have more than one owner.

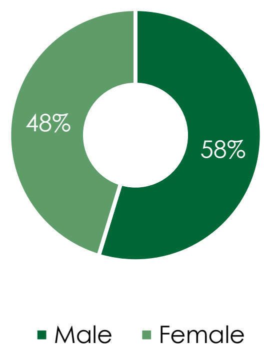

Figure 65. Gender of company owners

These companies have declared a total of 2,114 employees, of which 1,642 employees (or 77.7% of them) are female while only 472 are male (22.3%).

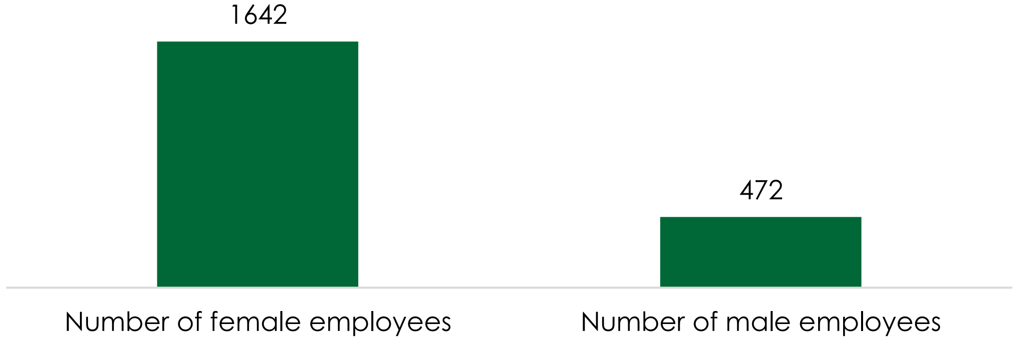

Figure 66. Number of employees in the company by gender

Only 43 percent of companies have agreed to declare their annual turnover for 2024. In total, these companies have an annual turnover of around 109.6 million euros. Overall, around 21 percent of these companies have declared that they exported in 2024, and the total value of these exports is 21.4 million euros. On the other hand, around 29 percent of companies have declared that they imported in this period, and the total value of imports is around 46.1 million euros. This coincides with the data of the entire industry where the value of imports is higher than that of exports.

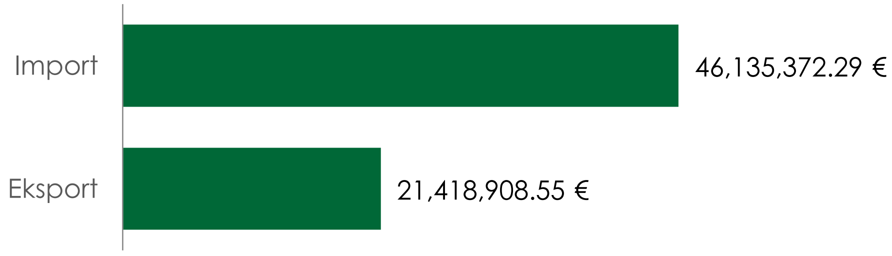

Figure 67. Declared export and import values of companies

Of those who declared that they exported in 2024, the country with the largest export quantity is Turkey with about 300 tons of exports, followed by Serbia with about 265 tons of exports and Albania with about 157 tons of exports.

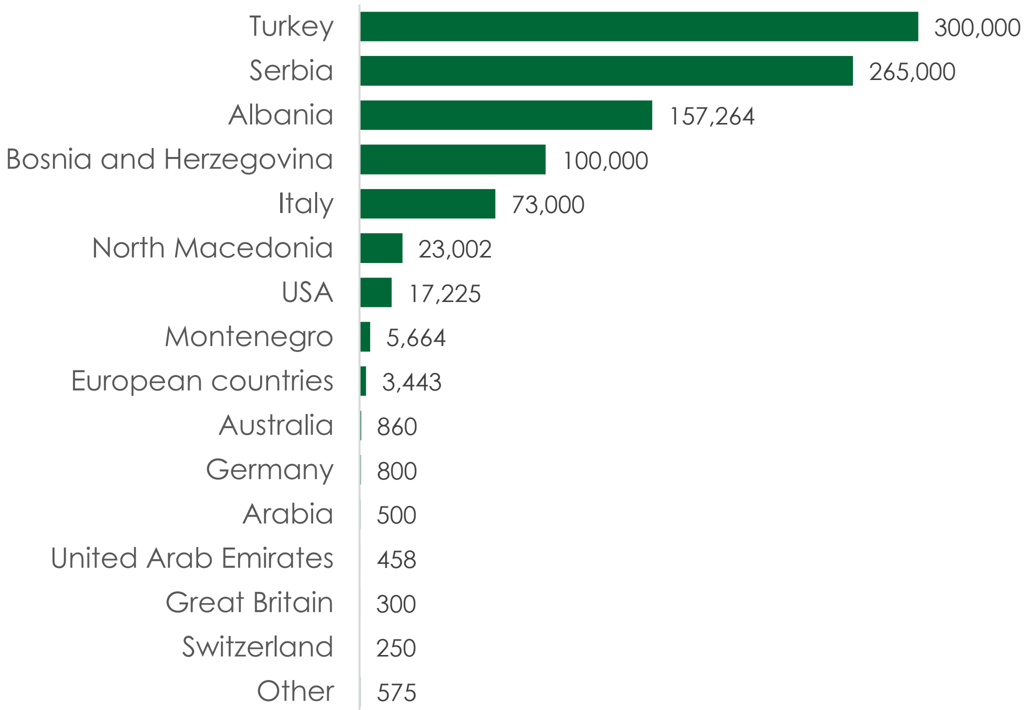

Figure 68. Which countries did you export to in 2024?

On the other hand, the country where these companies have imported the most is China, with about 2.6 thousand tons, followed by Turkey with about 1.7 thousand tons. In other countries in the row, such as Romania and Lithuania, the imported quantity is significantly lower (46 tons and 40 tons respectively).

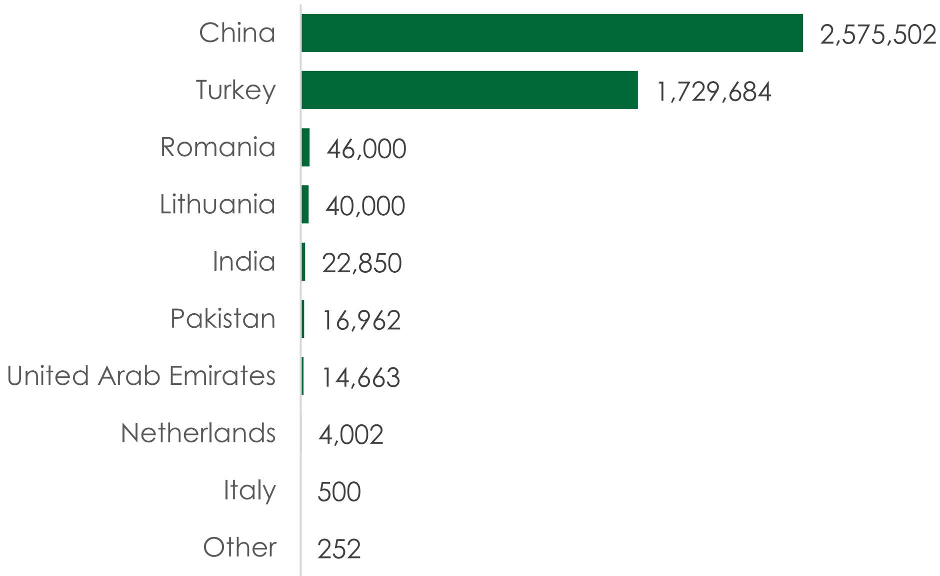

Figure 69. Which countries did you import to in 2024?

Most companies (68%) source their raw materials from Kosovo, while the remaining part is sourced from outside Kosovo (32%). In this part, raw materials also include finished products that are received from companies that then only sell them wholesale or retail.

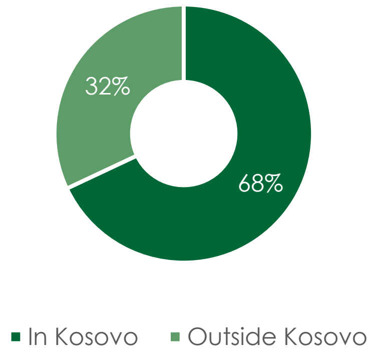

Figure 70. Where does your company source its raw materials?

Of those companies that have declared that they source from outside Kosovo, about 69 percent have declared that the country from which they source most is Turkey. China and India are the other most chosen countries, with 24.1 percent of them in both cases. These countries are known for exporting non-biodegradable textile materials, such as polyester, nylon and elastane, which pose an environmental risk due to the difficulty in recycling and the very long duration of decomposition in nature.

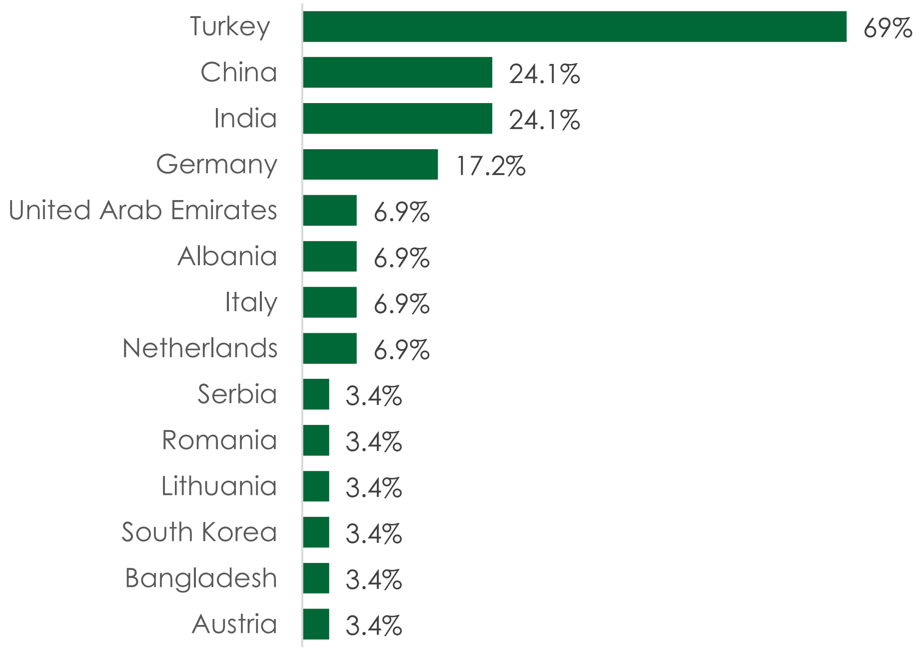

Figure 71. Specify the country outside Kosovo?

More than half of companies (53%) reported that their primary form of sales in 2024 was retail. About 27 percent of them sold wholesale, while the rest (20%) sold in both formats. The dominance of retail sales indicates an orientation towards individual consumers, which typically involves higher production of packaging and more products distributed in small units. This increases the potential for waste generation, both from packaging and from the products themselves at the end of their use.

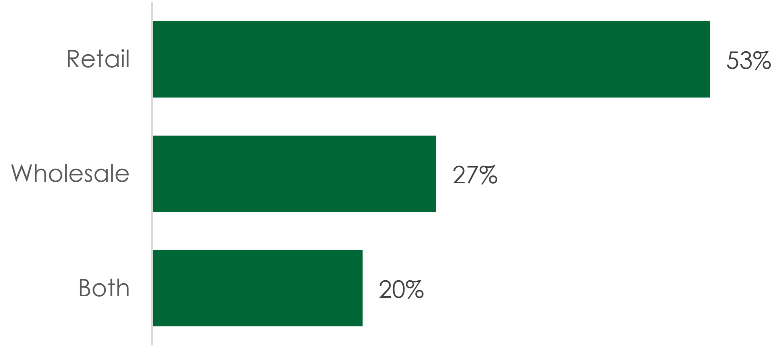

Figure 72. What was the main form of sales in your company in 2024?

8.2 USE OF RAW MATERIALS FOR PRODUCTION

The choice of materials for textile products directly affects the environment. For this reason, this section analyzes which raw materials are used most by companies, as well as the consumer preferences that shape this demand.

Most companies (42%) have production as their main activity, about 23 percent have services such as design, textile adjustment, textile adaptation and similar. Only 6 percent of them have declared that their main activity is textile reprocessing. Since most companies focus on new production, this has a direct impact on the increase in the amount of textile waste, as there is no closed circulation of materials.

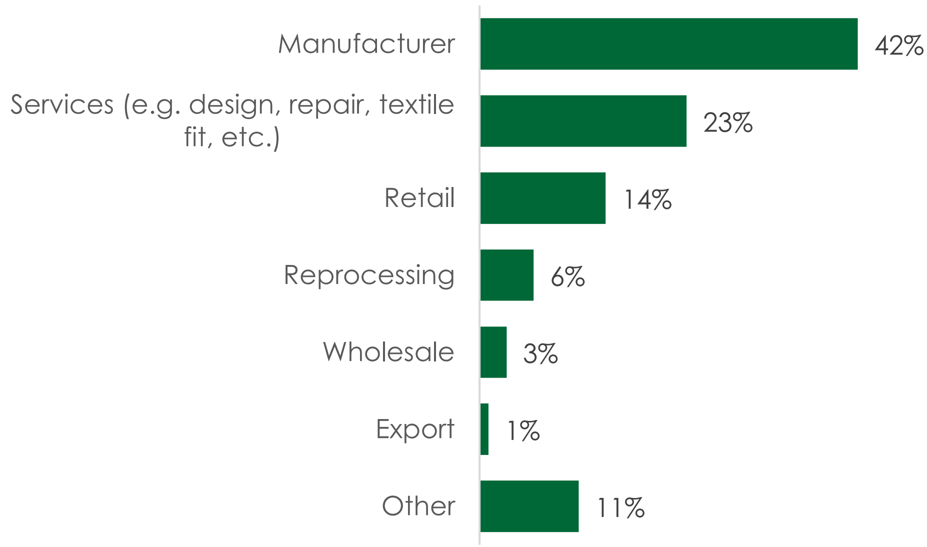

Figure 73. What is the main activity of your company?

Manufacturers in 42.7 percent of cases stated that they produce wedding and event clothing. A lower percentage (16%) mentioned home textiles, while 14.7 percent reported that they produce work uniforms. Other products such as suits, sportswear, underwear and children's clothing are the next products in line but are less frequently produced by these companies.

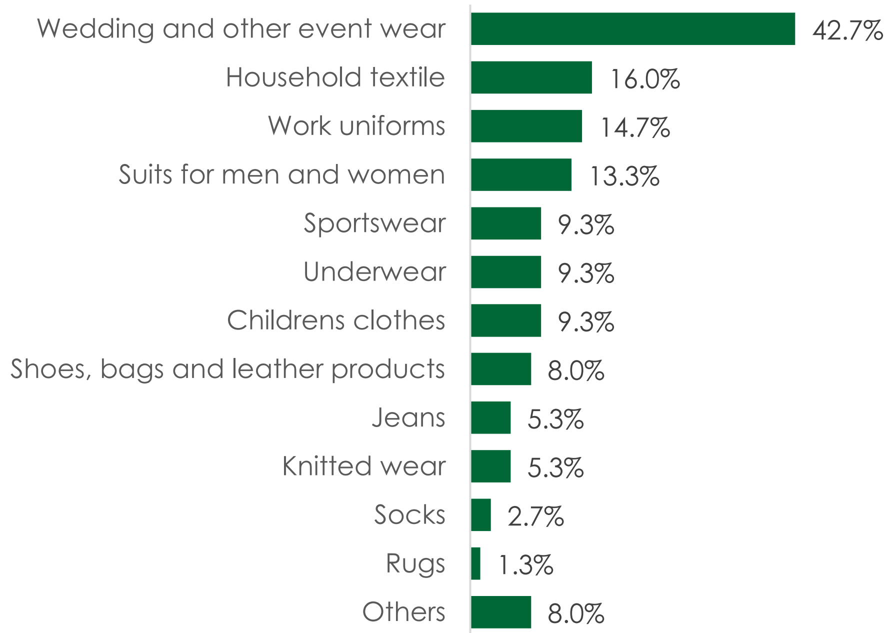

Figure 74. If your company is a manufacturer, what products do you produce? (Multiple answers)

On the other hand, service providers have declared in 48.6 percent of cases that they offer textile design as a service, then in 23 percent of cases clothing repair is mentioned and in a slightly lower percentage (18.9%) is product customization such as embroidery, printing, etc. Fashion or textile consultancy is the service that is offered the least, with only 6.8 percent of cases.

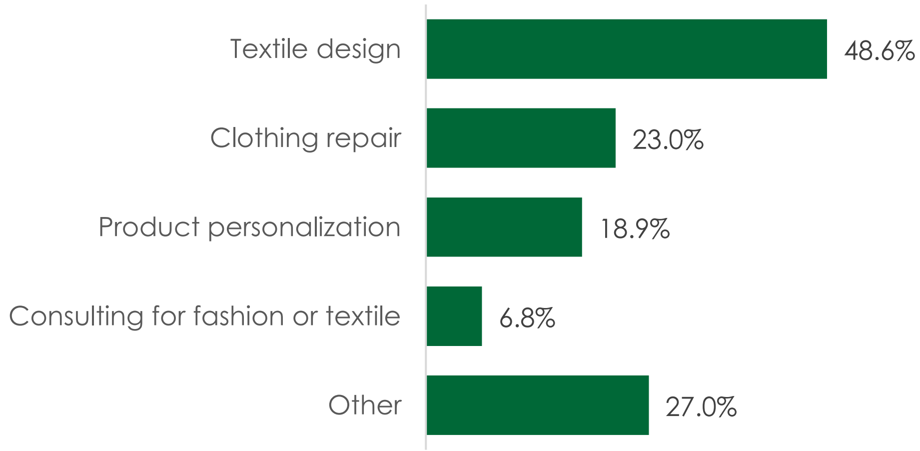

Figure 75. If your company offers services, what are the main services you offer? (Multiple answers)

Retailers/wholesalers stated that they sell the most wedding and event clothing, chosen in 40.8 percent of cases, followed by work uniforms (19.7% of cases) and underwear and home textiles (14.5% of cases).

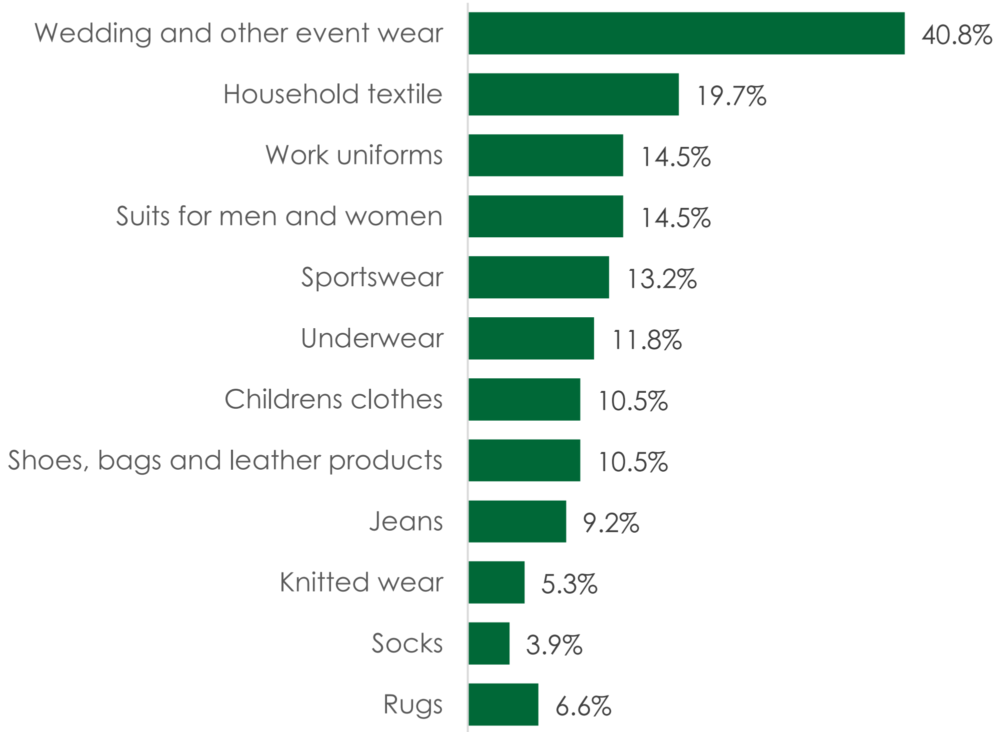

Figure 76. If your company is a retailer/wholesaler, what main products do you sell? (Multiple answers)

Regarding the materials used for the products manufactured, in 63.3 percent of cases companies use cotton. In about 48.3 percent of cases, they use polyester and in 38.3 percent of cases they use synthetic materials such as nylon, elastane, etc. The high use of cotton has a positive impact on the environment since it is a natural and biodegradable material. While polyester and synthetic materials such as nylon and elastane are non-biodegradable and contribute significantly to environmental pollution, especially as plastic waste that does not degrade easily.

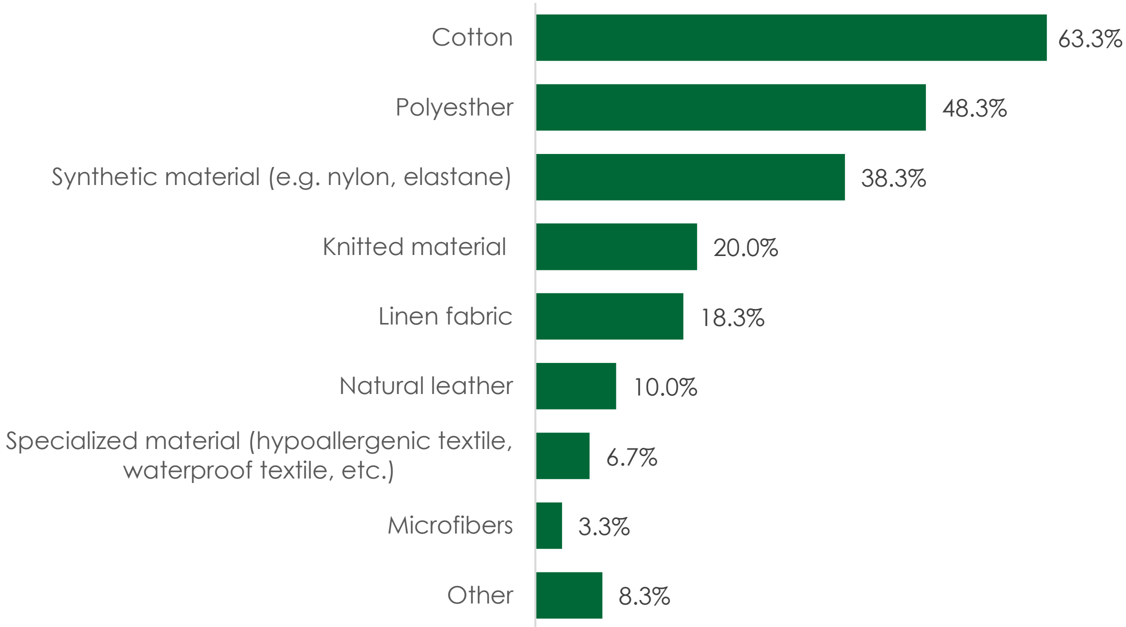

Figure 77. What is the raw material you use for the products you manufacture?

Similarly, the materials most requested by customers and with the highest sales are cotton (61% of cases), polyester (46% of cases) and synthetic materials (28% of cases). The high demand for non-biodegradable materials such as polyester and synthetic fibers and given that 20 percent of citizens throw their clothing directly as waste, contribute to a significant increase in the amount of textile waste remaining in the environment.

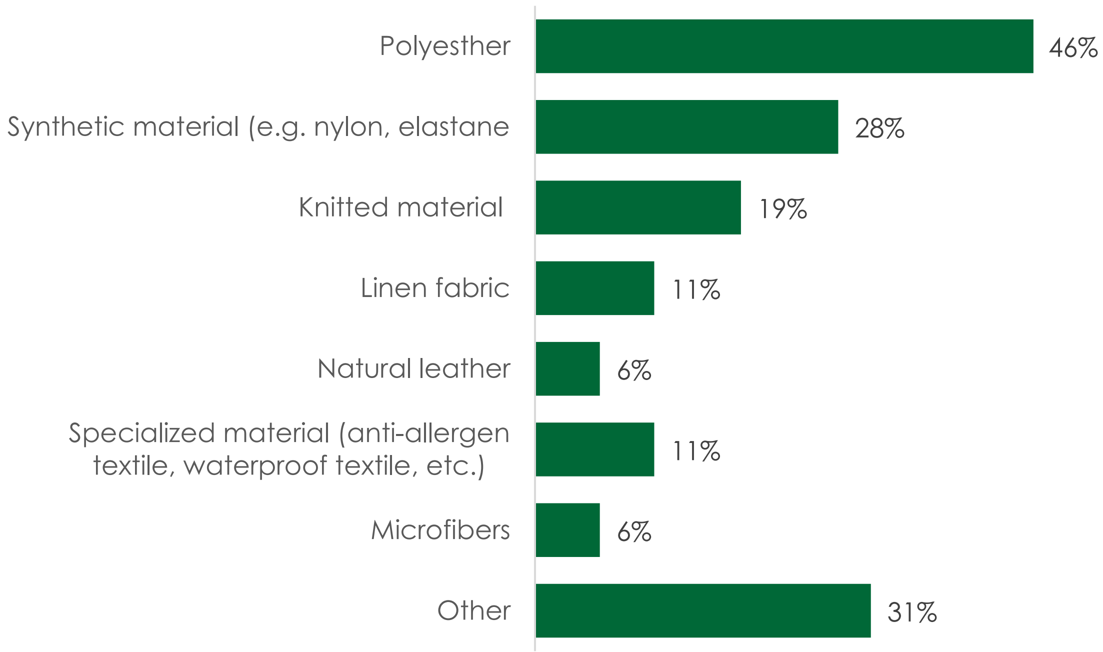

Figure 78. What are the materials that are most requested by your customers and that have the most sales? (Multiple answers)

8.3 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The way companies manage their waste is key to assessing the environmental impact and potential for reuse and recycling. The following analyses current practices and areas for improvement in this regard.

In most cases (61%) companies manage material waste from the production process through collection from municipal landfills. In 37 percent of cases, they use these remaining materials, while in only 10 percent of cases they have stated that they cooperate with initiatives for material reuse and in 6 percent of cases they recycle them. In about 18 percent of cases, they have mentioned other practices such as disposal, donation, use for the production of accessories, etc.

This result shows that the management of textile waste by companies remains largely passive, as most companies depend on municipal landfills, which often ends up in landfills without effective recycling or reuse and a negative impact on the environment. These companies have stated that they pay an average of around 185.42 euros per year for this service.

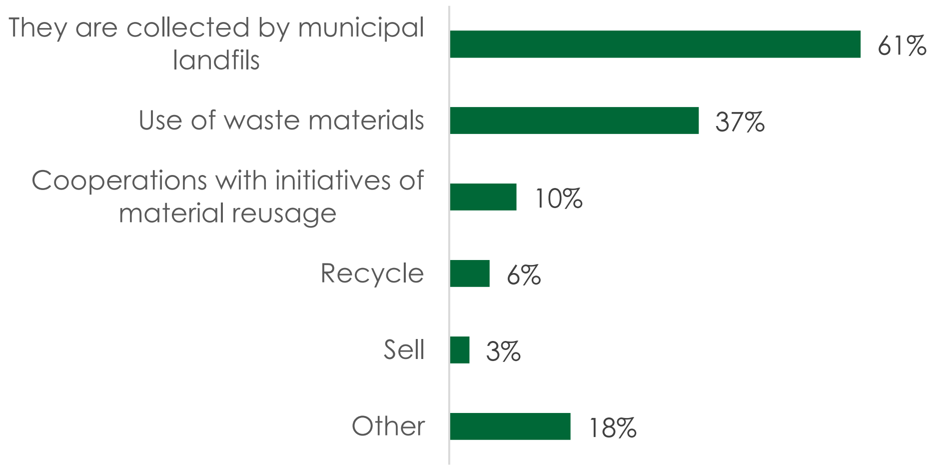

Figure 79. Waste management practices: How does your company manage material waste in the production process? (Multiple answers)

More than half of the companies (60.3%) that manage waste through municipal landfills stated that their collection is done daily. About 31 percent stated that they carry out this practice once a week, while the remainder stated that the practice is carried out less often than once a week. The daily collection of waste from municipal landfills by most companies indicates a high rate of waste generation, which is especially concerning if this waste contains non-biodegradable materials.

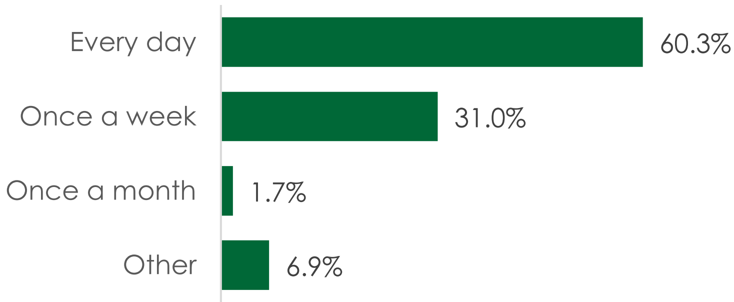

Figure 80. If so, how often do they collect the material waste??

In most cases, companies generate textile waste as scraps, waste from cutting and similar (73%). This is also closely related to the fact that the most commonly used materials by companies are cotton, polyester and other synthetic fibers. Textile waste resulting from the cutting and production process consists mainly of these materials, of which synthetic fibers such as polyester and elastane are particularly problematic for the environment,

Waste from raw material packaging and paper or cardboard are less common (20% and 19% respectively), while the rarest are waste from the packaging of final products (8%) and plastic (5%).

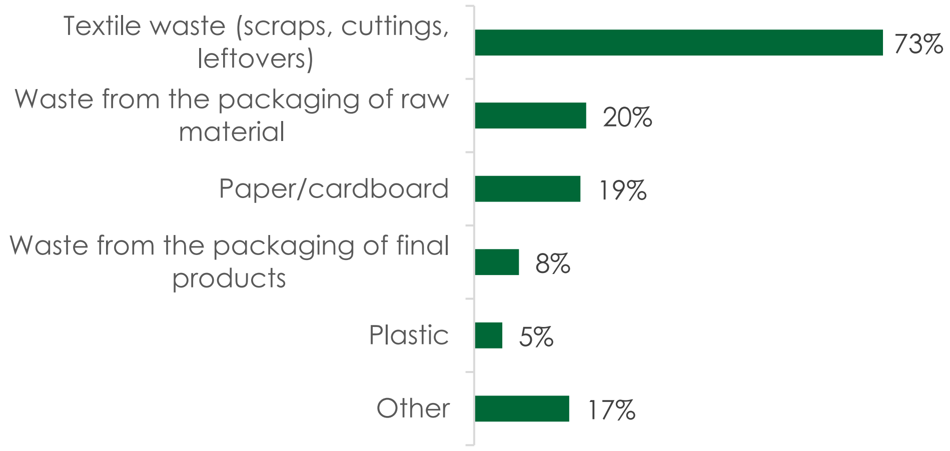

Figure 81. What are the main types of waste you generate during the work process?

About 56 percent of companies have stated that they do not know how many tons of textile waste their company generates per year, since they do not make any measurements in this regard. While from the other companies (43%) that have provided information, a total of about 22.8 tons of textile waste have been reported during a year.

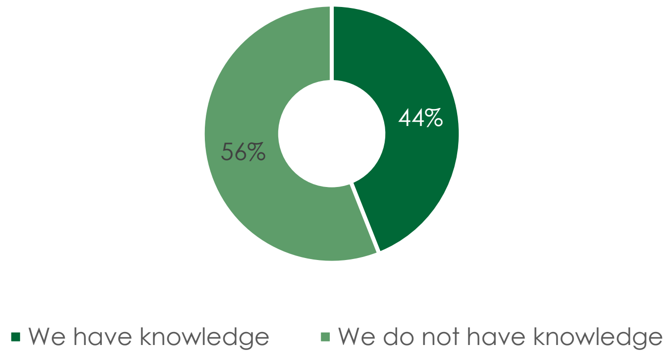

Figure 82. How many tons of textile waste does your company generate per year?

From this data for the textile business sector, the total generation of textile waste has been roughly calculated. Taking the declared averages for the relevant sectors (trade, manufacturing and other categories) with the current distribution of active businesses in Kosovo and scaling it up over the 61% of them that declare that they produce waste, it is estimated that businesses generate around **13,832.84 tons of textile waste per year**.

This calculation represents an **indicative estimate**, given the lack of systematic and official data on textile waste management in the private sector in Kosovo.

An even smaller number (27%) reported having a system for reusing leftover materials within the production process.

This indicates a significant lack of waste monitoring and management in most companies, sustainable practices are not yet institutionalized, and that there is significant room for improvement in terms of circular economy, recycling, and reducing waste going to landfill.

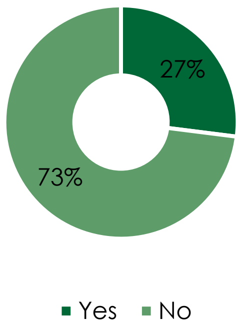

Figure 83. Does your company have a system for reusing leftover materials within the production process?

More than half of the companies (59.3%) stated that the system they have is for the reuse of remaining materials for other new products or textile accessories. About 33.3% said that they constantly optimize the use of the material and its judicious use. While only 7.4 percent stated that they cooperate with third parties such as companies, schools or other institutions that use their textile waste.

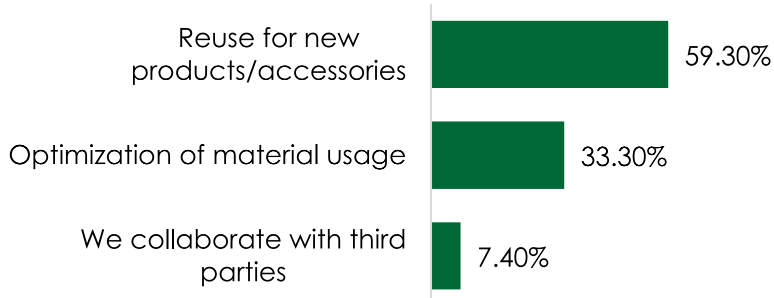

Figure 84. Please briefly describe the system for reusing leftover materials within the production process?

8.4 CIRCULAR ECONOMY

To understand the sector's readiness to move towards sustainable models, it is important to assess companies' knowledge and interest in the circular economy. Regarding knowledge about the circular economy, only 18 percent of companies said they had heard of the concept of the circular economy. Of these companies, 88.9 percent (or 16 companies) expressed interest in applying circular economy principles in their company. This shows that the low level of knowledge about the circular economy hinders the adoption of these practices by companies.

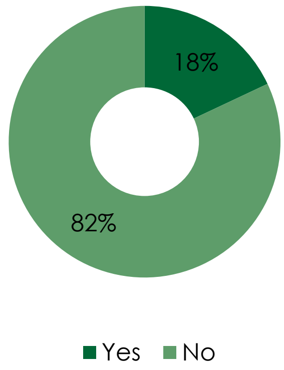

Figure 85. Have you heard of the concept of circular economy?

Of the companies that have knowledge about the circular economy, ten (out of 18) of them stated that they are interested but have not yet started implementing these practices. While six of them said that they do not have priority at the moment or are not sure yet. Only two companies reported that they have already started recycling and implementing them.

Table 5. Is your company ready to start recycling and implement circular economy practices?

Answers	Frequency
Yes, we are interested, but we haven't started yet	10
No, it's not a priority at the moment	3
I'm not sure	3
Yes, we have already started	2

Circular economy training for businesses was considered necessary, with eight (out of 18) companies saying that such training was needed for management staff and production workers, while six said that this training was only necessary for their management staff and two said it was only necessary for production workers. Only two companies said they were not interested.

Table 6. Would you be interested in participating in circular economy training for your business and employees?

Answers	Frequency
Yes, for both categories	8
Yes, for management staff	6

Yes, for production workers	2
No, we are not interested.	2

8.5 CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON TRACING

The study also examines how aware companies are of the impact they cause and how willing they are to take action to reduce their carbon footprint.

When asked about their concern about the environmental impact of their activities, only 10 percent of companies said they were very concerned, and 20 percent were concerned. The majority, 35 percent, held a neutral position, while 13 percent said they were not very concerned, and 22 percent were not at all concerned. This distribution shows that environmental issues are not yet a priority for most companies, reflecting the need for greater awareness and support for the implementation of sustainable practices.

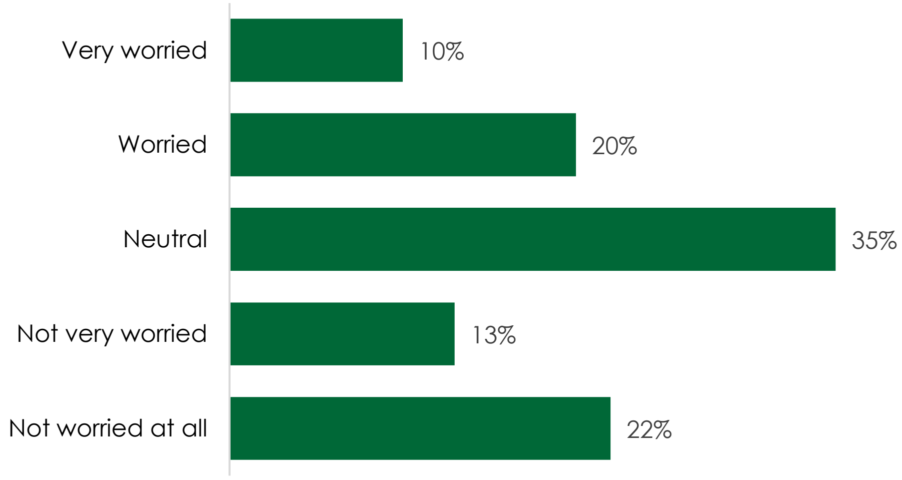

Figure 86. How concerned are you about the pollution that your company's activities cause in the environment?

Around 70 percent of companies are willing to invest in improving their practices to reduce their environmental impact and carbon footprint, while 30 percent have not expressed such a willingness. This shows a positive trend towards sustainability, with most businesses showing a willingness to take concrete steps in this direction. However, the fact that a third of them are not willing to invest highlights the need for additional incentives and awareness of the long-term benefits of environmental investments.

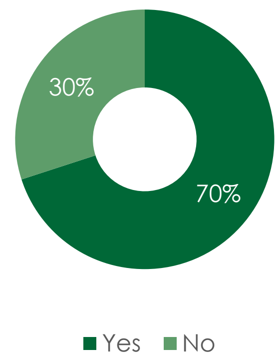

Figure 87. Are you willing to invest in improving practices to reduce environmental impact and carbon footprint?

8.6 ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS FOR EXPORTS

Increasing environmental standards in international markets require exporting companies to meet clear sustainability criteria. This subsection assesses the degree of preparation of Kosovar businesses to operate in this new framework.

Companies exporting to the EU showed a very positive approach to investing in meeting the environmental criteria required for export, with 66.7 percent of them indicating a willingness to do so, while 23.8 percent stated that they do not have sufficient information on this issue.

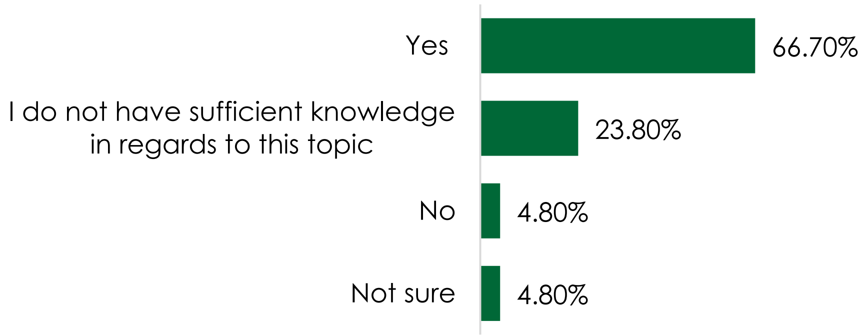

Figure 88. For companies exporting to the EU: Are you willing to invest to meet the environmental criteria required for export?

8.7 INTEREST AND CHALLENGES FOR RECYCLING

Companies operating in the textile sector have an important role in the development of the recycling chain. This section analyses the main obstacles and the current level of their engagement in waste reuse and recycling practices.

Only 4 percent of companies are involved in reuse and recycling initiatives, while the majority (60%) are not engaged at all. A significant percentage (36%) are not sure, indicating a lack of information. Of the companies that have reported engagement, initiatives include donating production waste to training schools, reusing scraps to create new products and participating in local fairs, as well as small-scale recycling initiatives developed within the company. This indicates isolated efforts but highlights the need for broader support and policies that encourage greater involvement in sustainable practices.

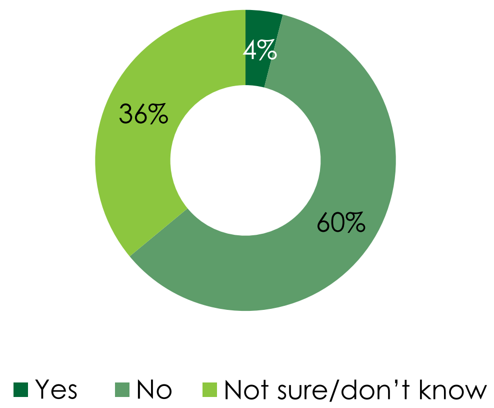

Figure 89. Is your company currently involved in any reuse and recycling initiatives for post-production waste?

The most common reasons why companies are not involved in recycling and reuse initiatives are mainly related to the lack of information, with 53.3 percent of them stating that they have no information about any recycling initiatives. Meanwhile, 18.3 percent are not interested, and 13.3 percent consider themselves small businesses that do not generate much waste. Others cite obstacles such as high costs (1.7%), lack of opportunities to recycle their materials in Kosovo (3.3%) or not knowing the reason for non-involvement (5.0%). Only 3.3% stated that they are considering involvement in the future, while one company (1.7%) stated that it recycles its own waste. These data highlight the need for education, information and technical support, especially for small businesses, in order to increase involvement in sustainable environmental practices.

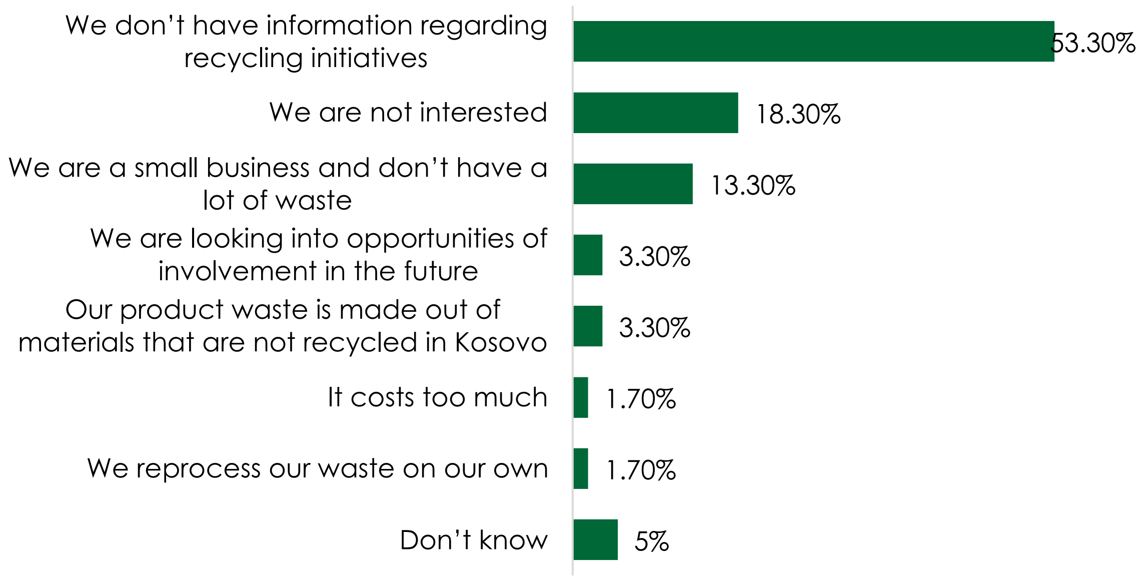

Figure 90. If not, why aren't you involved?

The data shows that only 2 percent of companies currently cooperate with recycling companies for textile waste management. The vast majority, 62 percent, do not have any form of cooperation, while 18 percent are interested but not yet committed. Also, 18 percent of companies are not informed whether such recycling companies exist.

This result reflects a significant lack of connection between producers and the recycling chain, and at the same time indicates a lack of information and access to sustainable waste management solutions.

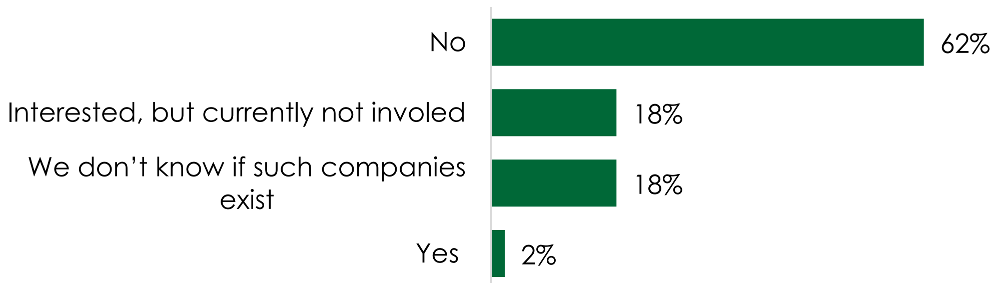

Figure 91. Does your company collaborate with any recycling companies for textile waste management?

Despite the current low level of cooperation with recycling companies, textile companies show a high potential interest in such cooperation in the future. Specifically, 67% of companies are interested or very interested in cooperating with recycling companies that specialize in managing clothing waste. This shows that there is a willingness and readiness to engage in sustainable practices, if the right opportunities and relevant information are provided. However, 17% of companies do not express interest, and 16% are unsure, suggesting that barriers such as lack of knowledge, costs or lack of a clear offer in the market continue to be present.

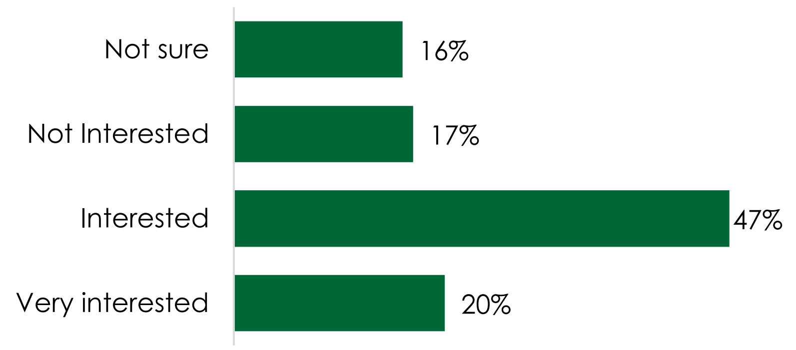

Figure 92. Would your company be interested in collaborating with a recycling company that specializes in clothing waste management?

The high interest of companies in cooperating with recycling companies, reflected in the previous question, faces some clear obstacles that limit concrete action. According to the data, the main obstacle is the lack of information about available recycling services, which is mentioned by 77 percent of companies. This shows that many companies simply do not know where to turn or what options exist. In addition, 17 percent of companies consider the costs to be unaffordable, while 8 percent cite logistical challenges as an obstacle to cooperation.

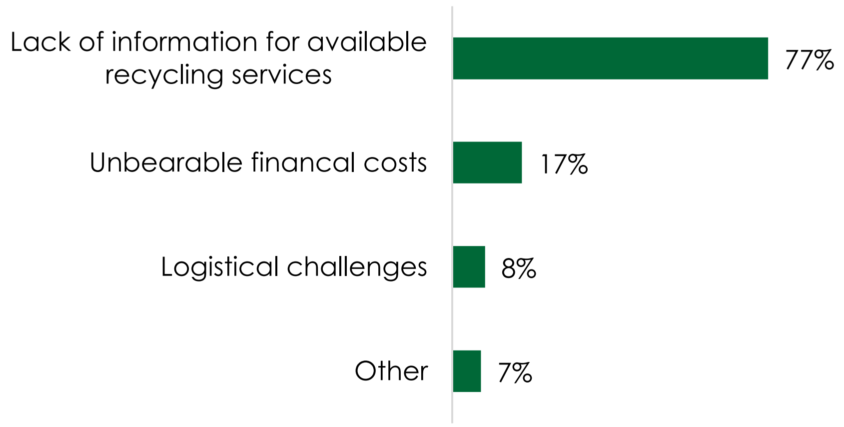

Figure 93. Please specify the main obstacles your company faces in terms of cooperating with a recycling company.

Companies are evenly split in their preferences for waste management: 66 percent of respondents would prefer to develop waste reduction programs within the company, while an equal number (66 percent) would prefer to collaborate with external recycling companies. This balance shows that companies see both internal management and external collaboration as important in their efforts to reduce waste. This is a good opportunity to develop combined strategies that include optimizing internal processes and creating recycling partnerships.

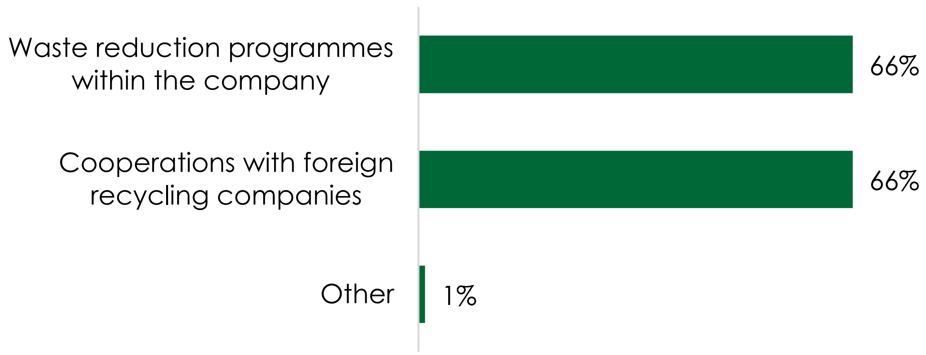

Figure 94. Which waste management solutions would your company prefer? (Multiple answers)

Almost all company representatives (95%) considered environmental maintenance in their company to be very important. However, only one of them said that they plan to implement new initiatives to improve waste management and environmental maintenance, and this plan was to invest in recycling machinery.

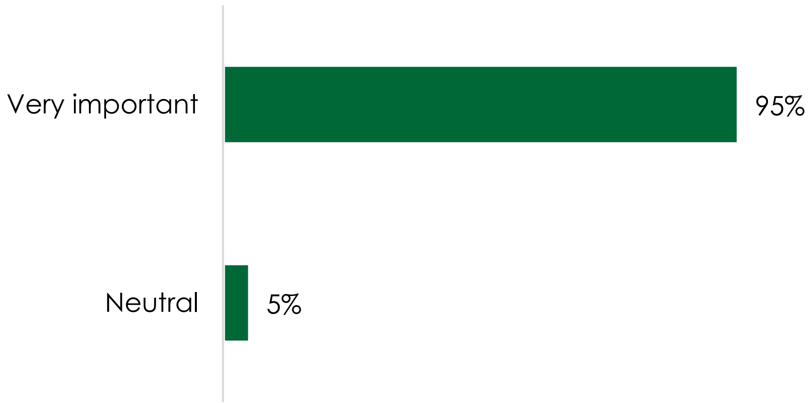

Figure 95. How important is environmental maintenance in your company?

Only one of the companies (1%) stated that it has plans for new initiatives to improve waste management and environmental maintenance. The rest (99%) do not have such plans.

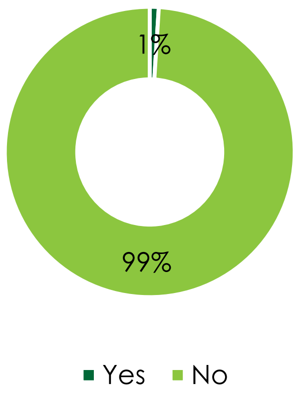

Figure 96. Does your company plan to implement any new initiatives to improve waste management and environmental maintenance?

The results show a high level of interest in further developing and improving environmental practices, with the majority of companies (84%) being open to receiving more information or participating in further discussions on waste management and recycling initiatives within the company.

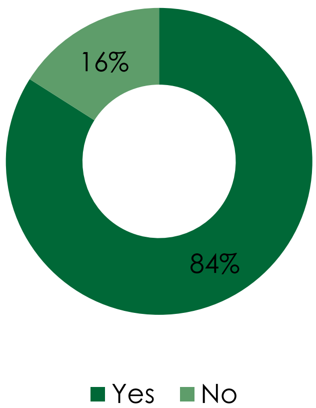

Figure 97. Would you be open to providing additional information or participating in further discussions regarding waste management and recycling initiatives in your company?

Regarding participation in textile and textile technology fairs, 45 percent of companies participate occasionally, while only 11 percent participate regularly. Meanwhile, 44 percent do not participate at all. This shows that, although there is a moderate level of involvement, participation is still not institutionalized for most of them, and there is room for further incentives for companies to stay connected with technological developments in the industry.

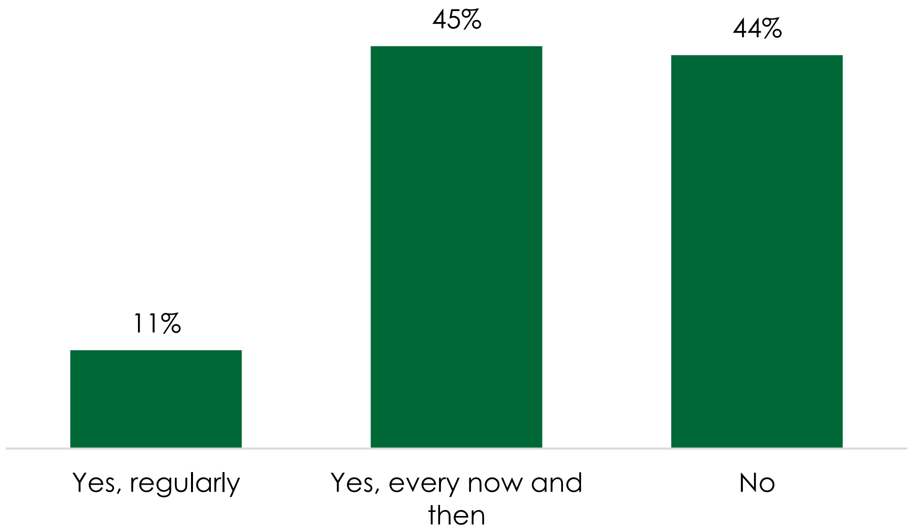

Figure 98. Does your company participate in textile and textile technology fairs?

Regarding participation in conferences and fairs, 90 percent of companies are interested in receiving information, which shows a strong willingness to follow developments and opportunities in their sector. This interest can be used to spread sustainable practices and build cooperation networks between different industry actors.

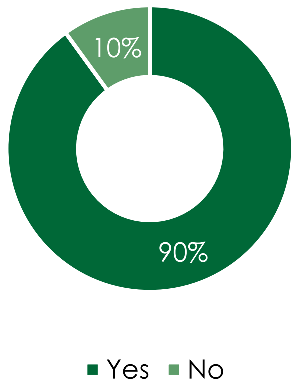

Figure 99. Would you be interested in receiving information about fairs and conferences related to your activity?

When it comes to training staff in textile recycling, 62 percent of companies express interest in getting involved, while 14 percent are not interested and 24 percent are unsure. This suggests that, while there is a positive basis for engaging in training, more information and motivation are needed to convince even those who are undecided or hesitant of the benefits of such training.

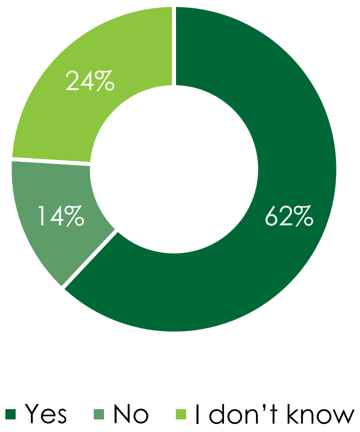

Figure 100. Would you be interested in engaging your staff in textile recycling training?

9. RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH POLICYMAKERS

To better understand the challenges, gaps and opportunities in textile waste management and the implementation of the circular economy in Kosovo, five (5) interviews were conducted with representatives from state institutions and international organizations that play a key role in this field. The interviews were conducted with the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, the Kosovo Landfill Management Company (KMDK), the Municipality of Pristina, the Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency (AMMK), and GIZ. The following are the main findings from each interview as well as a general comparative summary.

9.1 MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT – WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

The interview with the representative of the Department of Waste Management within the Ministry of Environment has helped to gain a deeper understanding of the current legal and institutional situation related to textile waste management in Kosovo. Currently, there is no specific law that directly regulates textile waste management. The legal framework in force consists of Law No. 04/L-060 on Waste and several relevant sub-legal acts, which do not treat textiles as a separate category. Although it is mentioned that the European Union directives and regulations serve as a reference, they are not yet integrated in a structured manner into the relevant legislation.

The process for amending or updating the legal framework follows an institutional procedure where the initiation is usually made by the department responsible. This process may also involve higher levels such as the Ministry, the Government or the Assembly of Kosovo, depending on the nature of the change. For cases requiring harmonisation with European Union standards, Member States' practices are considered, but there is currently no well-defined mechanism for this harmonisation. The main challenges identified in the implementation of existing regulations are numerous and include:

- Lack of staff and technical capacities in relevant departments, which affects the quality of policy development and implementation.
- Lack of a clear legal basis for textile waste management.
- Weak customs control of imported textile goods, especially second-hand clothing.
- Low awareness of citizens and businesses about the responsibilities related to textile waste.

The Ministry has initiated the drafting of a new Law on Waste, in which the possibility of including textiles as a specific category is being considered. Also, the drafting of a special law on textile waste, which would be aligned with the circular economy approach, is being considered. However, the circular economy in Kosovo is still in its early stages. So far, several pilot projects have been undertaken in cooperation with private enterprises, and a guideline for this concept has been published, but a comprehensive and integrated plan for textile waste management is missing.

Regarding strategies for reducing textile waste, there is currently no dedicated strategy at the government level. Some sporadic cases of interest from textile industry companies to cooperate with institutions have been reported, but these have been isolated and without a sustainable institutional approach.

The institutional representative mentioned several European Union practices that are considered important to implement in Kosovo, but which are still missing in the current reality:

- Creation of special centers for the collection of textile waste where citizens can hand in their used clothes.
- Establishment of the extended producer responsibility (EPR) system, to engage producers/importers in the financial support of waste management.
- Development of a controlled system for the disposal of unusable textiles, which currently end up in regular landfills.

In terms of cooperation with the private sector, there are several licensed companies that deal with textile waste management. However, this cooperation is not structured at the national level and usually occurs on the basis of individual agreements between institutions and authorized private operators. In cases where suspicious or counterfeit goods are detained by customs, the procedures for their disposal depend on the possibility of cooperation with these companies.

9.2 MUNICIPALITY OF PRISHTINA – DIRECTORATE OF PUBLIC SERVICES, PROTECTION AND RESCUE

Interviews with representatives of the Municipality of Prishtina have highlighted a lack of dedicated policies for textile waste management at the local level. According to representatives of the DSHPMSH, to date no specific policy or strategic document has been developed that addresses textile waste as a separate category. This shows that this issue is not yet institutionalized at the municipal level and is currently not being addressed as a priority.

The municipality has had experience with previous projects aimed at recycling textile waste, but according to statements, they have not functioned and have not had continuity. Currently, there is no active project or concrete program aimed at recycling textiles or improving the treatment of this type of waste.

Also, the Municipality of Prishtina has not yet provided specific assistance or support to businesses interested in recycling, whether through subsidies, partnerships, or other forms of cooperation. This reinforces the lack of a structured approach to involving the private sector in sustainable textile waste management. Regarding the implementation of the circular economy, the municipality representatives confirmed that the term has been introduced in documents and discussions, but in practice its application has only just begun. One of the concrete efforts mentioned is a composting project, which, although not directly related to textiles, shows an effort towards more sustainable approaches to waste management in general.

The Municipality has shown a willingness to involve and consult with the community and the private sector during the drafting of the waste management regulation and plan documents. According to representatives, public consultations have been organized, and opinions have been collected from businesses to provide their contribution to the process. This form of cooperation is still developing and needs further deepening, especially in relation to textile waste management. Unlike recycling, where concrete actions are lacking, the Municipality is more focused on textile reuse, as an alternative way to mitigate environmental impact. This shows a greater focus on avoiding waste generation by extending the product life cycle, although this practice is still at initial levels.

9.3 KOSOVO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (AMMK)

The interview was conducted with representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency of Kosovo (AMMK), with a focus on evaluating the institutional progress in the implementation of the circular economy and waste management in Kosovo, including the textile fraction.

The circular economy in Kosovo is an ongoing process and has begun to take concrete shape since 2021, with the adoption of the first Integrated Waste Management Strategy (2021–2030). This document sets out four main objectives, one of which is the development of the circular economy, which includes nine detailed sub-objectives. The strategy is in line with the efforts of the European Union, where the circular economy has officially started functioning since 2015.

In 2023, the "*Roadmap for the Circular Economy*" was drafted and approved, which includes six strategic development sectors. In the same year, the Ministry of Environment also approved an administrative instruction on packaging waste, which aims to reduce the use of plastic bags and establish a deposit return system for plastic bottles, cans and glass. Although the process has encountered delays due to administrative challenges, it is now in the final stages, with a proposal submitted by an NGO for the implementation of the system. The system is expected to be piloted in the next 18 months, including recycling machines in shopping malls and rewards for citizens who return bottles.

In addition, in 2024, the new Waste Management Strategy (2024–2035) was adopted, which significantly expands the content of the previous document and includes ambitious targets for recycling and waste reduction. The strategy foresees:

- Investment of 40 million euros for recycling infrastructure,
- Investment of 400 million euros for the waste management system,
- Achieving a recycling rate of 50 percent by 2045, and
- Reducing waste that ends up in landfills to only 10 percent.

In relation to textiles, the sector is still in the early stages of development. There is still no functional textile recycling system at the national level. However, a promising initiative is the "*Serec*" project, which has opened offices in Prishtina and Peja, and has set up booths for collecting used clothes, which are cleaned, redesigned and then reused. Although this is a positive step, the main challenge remains the awareness of citizens, who often mix clothes with other waste in these booths, making the process ineffective.

Recycling in Kosovo is generally dominated by private companies, which operate independently and often export recyclable waste abroad. There is still no consolidated system of institutional support for these companies. Meanwhile, the EU4Green project, a regional initiative supported by the EU and the Office of the Prime Minister, aims to provide financial and logistical assistance to the recycling sector. One of the biggest challenges is the lack of waste separation at source, which causes a lot of potentially recyclable waste to end up in the same landfills. The lack of full municipal coverage for waste services also has a negative impact. The increase in the number of illegal landfills (from 2,500 to over 7,000) indicates a serious problem in the implementation of the existing system.

In this context, cooperation between AMMK and municipalities is essential. AMMK is in constant communication with municipalities through meetings and reports, supporting the distribution of equipment, baskets and machinery according to needs. This cooperation is part of efforts to strengthen the implementation of the circular economy at the local level.

9.4 GIZ (DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT)

Interviews with GIZ representatives provided a clear insight into the organization's role in supporting the waste management sector in Kosovo, as well as the prospects for further development of the circular economy. Since 2017, GIZ has been implementing the "Sustainable Municipal Services" project, co-financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Union.

This project aimed to improve basic waste management services, with a focus on expanding the service to the national level, eliminating illegal landfills and improving the charging and collection system. Although the main focus has been on mixed municipal waste, pilot projects have also been developed for construction and demolition waste. Meanwhile, from 2024, GIZ has launched the new project "*Circular Urban Development – Kosovo4Green*", which supports the implementation of the circular economy and the further development of integrated waste management. Although there have been no concrete activities on textile waste so far, the new project aims to address this fraction as part of the overall objectives of material flow and waste reduction.

Regarding textile waste, GIZ stressed that there is currently no functional system for the effective recycling of this fraction in Kosovo. However, according to the revised Integrated Waste Management Strategy, which was adopted in December 2024 with the support of GIZ, the basis has been laid for the development of systems that encourage the reuse and recycling of textiles. The strategy foresees the setting of new targets for separate collection and preparation for recycling, including the textile fraction.

GIZ has also played a key role in supporting the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure (MMPHI) in developing the legal and institutional basis for the circular economy. This cooperation began years ago and has gained new momentum during the period 2023–2024, with a focus on reviewing the National Strategy and aligning it with resource circulation objectives. In this context, GIZ has also promoted inter-municipal cooperation at the local level, supporting the drafting of joint waste management plans, in line with national strategic priorities.

In practical terms of circular economy, GIZ is currently supporting the establishment and implementation of two key mechanisms:

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** – for fractions such as vehicle waste, electrical equipment and batteries, which in the future may also be extended to textiles.
- **Deposit Return System (DRS)** – which involves the return of plastic, glass and aluminium bottles for refund, with the aim of increasing recycling and reducing waste in the environment.

At the same time, GIZ is supporting the drafting of the New Waste Law, which will serve as a legal basis for advancing the circular economy and integrating sustainable mechanisms across the entire waste management sector – potentially including textiles.

9.5 KOSOVO LANDFILL MANAGEMENT COMPANY (KMDK)

The interview with representatives of the Kosovo Landfill Management Company (KMDK) helped to understand the current practices for the treatment of textile waste and to identify the challenges related to their inclusion in the waste management system. One of the main observations is that textile waste represents only a small fraction of the waste composition reaching landfills. Although a study on the composition of waste has been previously conducted by GIZ, it focused more on construction waste, while data on textiles are limited.

The representatives emphasized that, according to current legal regulations, textile waste is not allowed to be landfilled as a mixed part with other waste, as it requires its separation according to the categorization catalog. However, this is not implemented in practice due to the lack of infrastructure for source separation and the lack of special spaces for the treatment of this fraction.

KMDK confirmed that there is currently no specific method for separating textile waste in the processing or collection process. There is also no functional system or active collaboration with companies or organizations that deal with textile recycling or reuse. This gap was mentioned as an area with great potential for future development.

Regarding the challenges, the representatives mentioned some of them that affect the inability to manage textiles sustainably:

- Lack of separation of textiles at the source (i.e., at the collection stage).
- Lack of specific infrastructure for the disposal or treatment of this type of waste.
- Non-implementation in practice of the ban on the disposal of textiles as a mixed fraction.

There are currently no government incentives that would support or encourage the improvement of textile management at the landfill level. The representative emphasized that in addition to the lack of statistics and structured planning, there is also no concrete strategy specifically oriented towards this fraction. However, it was mentioned that in existing strategic documents, especially in plans related to the management of bulky waste such as tires, oils, construction and medical waste, there is room to include textiles in the future.

According to the representatives of the KMDK, one of the directions that could be explored is the establishment of special payments for producers, so that they contribute financially to the treatment of waste generated by their products, following the principle of extended producer responsibility. This would create a sustainable mechanism for financing special systems for textiles but would require legal and institutional support.

Finally, the representatives of the KMDK assessed textile waste as a fraction with high complexity in treatment, due to its composition and duration of decomposition, which in some cases can be even longer than that of plastic. The need was expressed to consider new opportunities for the construction of infrastructure for treatment and recycling, as well as to advance the strategic approach to this problem.

9.6 SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

All interviews show that textile waste management in Kosovo is still in its infancy and is not treated as a separate category in the existing legal framework. The Ministry of Environment confirms the lack of a specific law, while the KMDK and the Municipality of Prishtina do not have organized systems for textile separation or recycling.

The circular economy, although included in national strategies and guidance documents, is very little implemented in practice. GIZ and KEMP have supported the drafting of strategic and legal documents, such as the "Roadmap for the Circular Economy" and the new Strategy 2024–2035, which foresees the inclusion of textiles and ambitious recycling targets.

Textile recycling remains underdeveloped, with the exception of some initiatives such as "Serec", which nevertheless face challenges in raising citizens' awareness. Thus, a state system of support for recycling is missing.

The main challenges include:

- Lack of legal basis for textiles,
- Limited institutional capacities,
- Lack of separation at the source and citizen awareness,
- Lack of structural cooperation with the private sector.

Opportunities for improvement include implementation of the new Law on Waste, investments in recycling through projects such as EU4Green and GIZ, as well as expanding inter-municipal and private sector cooperation for the development of sustainable textile management systems.

10. CONCLUSION

The textile industry in Kosovo constitutes an important component of the local economy due to its employment capacity and potential for development. However, the results of this study clearly highlight the major challenges in terms of waste management, environmental impact and the application of circular economy principles.

Based on data collected from citizen surveys, interviews with business representatives and discussions with relevant policymakers, several important conclusions have been drawn that indicate the challenges and potential for sustainable development of the textile industry in Kosovo.

Based on data collected through surveys with citizens and businesses, it is estimated that **approximately 18,965 tons of textile waste are generated in Kosovo annually**. This is a rough estimate, due to the lack of official statistics for this category, but it helps to understand the scale of the problem. In addition, in 2024, Kosovo imported over 24.5 million kg of textiles and exported only 1.2 million kg, **creating a surplus of over 23 million kg of textiles remaining in the country**. These data highlight the urgent need for structured policies and effective systems for textile waste management.

Regarding the results of the citizen survey, they show a low level of awareness and practices for textile reuse and recycling. Most consumers purchase textile products as new and throwing away clothing and household textiles as waste is common practice. Only a small number of citizens reuse or recycle these products. The main reasons for this include lack of information, distrust in the quality of reused products, and lack of recycling infrastructure. However, most citizens have expressed a willingness to change their behavior if provided with more information and access to reuse and recycling services.

On the other hand, the textile sector in Kosovo has considerable importance for the economy, as it represents an important part of the industrial activity in the country, generating high financial turnover and having the potential for increased exports to regional and European markets. However, the industry faces several challenges that hinder its sustainable development and integration into the circular economy. Results from interviews with businesses show a significant lack of practices for efficient textile waste management, with most companies relying on municipal landfills as the only solution. Only a small percentage of them are involved in recycling or reuse initiatives, and most do not measure the amount of waste they generate at all. This indicates a lack of an internal waste management system and a lack of connection to the recycling chain.

Businesses generally have these weaknesses in waste management:

- Lack of internal system for reuse or separation of materials at source.
- High dependence on municipal landfills and lack of cooperation with recycling companies.
- Lack of awareness of the environmental impact of textile waste.
- High use of non-biodegradable materials such as polyester and elastane.

- Almost no company measures the amount of waste it generates during the year.

Needs to build their capacities include:

- Information and awareness of the benefits of the circular economy and the environmental impact of the sector.
- Specialized training on waste management.
- Financial and technical support for the implementation of recycling technologies.
- Dedicated policies and guidelines for textile waste management and the application of EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility).
- Creation of cooperation networks between the private sector and recycling service providers.

Furthermore, from interviews with policymakers, it was noted that there is still no clear and comprehensive policy for textile waste management or for promoting the application of circular economy principles in this sector. Although there is a willingness for cooperation and support, the lack of resources and other priorities on the institutional agendas are pushing this issue to the background. Also, there is a lack of financial support, subsidies or grant schemes that would encourage companies to invest in recycling technologies or sustainable design.

Overall, the textile industry in Kosovo has considerable potential for development in terms of sustainability, but currently there are serious gaps in waste management, in the recycling chain and in the collective awareness of the environmental impact. This gap can only be overcome through an integrated approach that includes training for businesses, political and regulatory interventions, the development of recycling infrastructure and raising public awareness of the importance of the circular economy.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are recommendations for each of the actors involved, starting from textile businesses to international donors.

For public institutions:

- Develop a national and local policy for textile waste management, harmonized with EU directives, including textiles in the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme - EPR.
- Integrate support into subsidy and grant programs for manufacturing enterprises that apply the principles of the circular economy,
- Create direct financial support schemes for initiatives that apply the principles of the circular economy and recycling in the textile sector.
- Establish legal requirements for annual reporting of waste generation by large textile businesses.
- Promote waste separation at source through dedicated textile collection points according to the European Union directive on textile waste collection.
- Strengthen monitoring of textile imports, with a focus on non-biodegradable materials and their environmental impact.

For educational institutions:

- Start teaching circular economy in pre-university institutions and universities.
- Create schemes to encourage creativity and innovation to find advanced ways of waste management in the textile sector.

For textile businesses:

- Start measuring the amount of waste generated and find innovative ways to reuse and recycle remaining materials.
- Set up internal mechanisms for separating waste by type and connect them with recycling operators.
- Invest in training on sustainable design and waste management.
- Seek opportunities for collaboration with technical schools and NGOs for pilot recycling projects.
- For civil society and non-governmental organizations:
- Develop awareness and information campaigns for the public and businesses on the impact of textiles and recycling opportunities.
- Organize exchange fairs and second-hand clothing initiatives.
- Undertake ongoing research and publish practical information on the application of circular economy practices.

For donors:

- Support with grants or soft loans to companies investing in recycling, upcycling or sustainable production.
- Finance programmes for the development of the recycling chain and the construction of waste separation infrastructure.
- For investors:
- Invest in textile recycling and processing technologies, addressing the current lack of waste management infrastructure in this sector.
- Support the development of new enterprises focusing on sustainable design, repair and upcycling of textile products.
- Create partnerships with local businesses to set up dedicated centres for textile separation, collection and processing.
- Use existing co-financing schemes from the EU and international donors to reduce risk and provide technical and financial support.
- Support the certification and standardization of recycled products to enable easier access to international and regional markets.

The combination of these coordinated actions by all stakeholders would enable the construction of a textile sector that is not only economically competitive, but would also significantly contribute to reducing waste, increasing the application of circular economy practices, protecting the environment and improving social well-being in Kosovo.

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ANNEX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CITIZEN SURVEYS

Section 1. Supply of textile products

1. How are you supplied with the following textile products? (Multiple answers)

	I buy them personally	Someone in the family buys them for me	I reuse them from family members	I don't buy/use them
Clothing				
T-shirts, shirts, blouses and similar	◻	◻	◻	◻
Jackets, coats, jackets and similar	◻	◻	◻	◻
Trousers, jeans and skirts/dresses	◻	◻	◻	◻
Underwear	◻	◻	◻	◻
Sportswear	◻	◻	◻	◻
Shoes, boots, sneakers and similar	◻	◻	◻	◻
Socks	◻	◻	◻	◻
Accessories				
Bags	◻	◻	◻	◻
Hats	◻	◻	◻	◻
Scarves and/or gloves	◻	◻	◻	◻
Household textile				
Bed linen (sheets, pillowcases, duvet covers)	◻	◻	◻	◻
Tablecloths	◻	◻	◻	◻
Rugs	◻	◻	◻	◻
Curtains	◻	◻	◻	◻

2. How often do you buy the following textile products? (Put the selected products in the option *I buy them personally* or *someone in the family buys them for me*)

	A few times a month	Once a month	Every 2-3 months	Every 6 months	Less than once in 6 months
Clothing					
T-shirts, shirts, blouses and similar	○	○	○	○	○
Jackets, coats, jackets and similar	○	○	○	○	○
Trousers, jeans and skirts/dresses	○	○	○	○	○
Underwear	○	○	○	○	○
Sportswear	○	○	○	○	○
Shoes, boots, sneakers and similar	○	○	○	○	○
Socks	○	○	○	○	○
Accessories					
Bags	○	○	○	○	○
Hats	○	○	○	○	○
Scarves and/or gloves	○	○	○	○	○
Household textile					
Bed linen (sheets, pillowcases, duvet covers)	○	○	○	○	○
Tablecloths	○	○	○	○	○
Rugs	○	○	○	○	○
Curtains	○	○	○	○	○

3. Where do you usually buy the following textile products? (Put the selected products in the option *I buy them personally* or *someone in the family buys them for me*) (Multiple answers)

	Inside Kosovo	Outside Kosovo
Clothing		
T-shirts, shirts, blouses and similar	☐	☐
Jackets, coats, jackets and similar	☐	☐

Trousers, jeans and skirts/dresses	◻	◻
Underwear	◻	◻
Sportswear	◻	◻
Shoes, boots, sneakers and similar	◻	◻
Socks	◻	◻
Accessories		
Bags	◻	◻
Hats	◻	◻
Scarves and/or gloves	◻	◻
Household textile		
Bed linen (sheets, pillowcases, duvet covers)	◻	◻
Tablecloths	◻	◻
Rugs	◻	◻
Curtains	◻	◻

4. (If P3=Inside Kosovo) In which countries outside Kosovo do you make these purchases? ________________

5. (If P3=Outside Kosovo) Why do you buy these products outside of Kosovo (Multiple answers) (By rotation)
   a) I can't find the products I'm looking for in Kosovo
   b) I think the quality of products outside Kosovo is better
   c) I prefer international brands that are not in Kosovo
   d) Models are newer abroad
   e) The reputation of international stores is better
   f) Product prices are reasonable in relation to the quality
   g) Other (specify) ________

6. How do you usually buy the following textile products? (Multiple answers)

	In shops	Online shops
Clothing		
T-shirts, shirts, blouses and similar	◻	◻
Jackets, coats, jackets and similar	◻	◻
Trousers, jeans and skirts/dresses	◻	◻
Underwear	◻	◻
Sportswear	◻	◻
Shoes, boots, sneakers and similar	◻	◻
Socks	◻	◻

Accessories		
Bags	□	□
Hats	□	□
Scarves and/or gloves	□	□
Household textile		
Bed linen (sheets, pillowcases, duvet covers)	□	□
Tablecloths	□	□
Rugs	□	□
Curtains	□	□

7. (If P3=Inside Kosovo dhe P6=In shops) What kind of stores do you usually make these purchases in? (Multiple answers) (By rotation)
   a) Stores inside shopping malls
   b) Neighborhood stores
   c) Online stores
   d) Second hand stores
   e) Flea markets
   f) Popular international stores (e.g. Zara, H&M, Mango, etc.)
   g) Other (specify) ________

8. (If P6=Online shops) On which platforms do you usually shop online?
   ____

9. What type of the following textile products do you buy? (Multiple answers)

	New	Second-hand	Recycled
Clothing			
T-shirts, shirts, blouses and similar	□	□	□
Jackets, coats, jackets and similar	□	□	□
Trousers, jeans and skirts/dresses	□	□	□
Underwear	□	□	□
Sportswear	□	□	□
Shoes, boots, sneakers and similar	□	□	□
Socks	□	□	□
Accessories			
Bags	□	□	□
Hats	□	□	□
Scarves and/or gloves	□	□	□
Household textile			
Bed linen (sheets, pillowcases, duvet covers)	□	□	□

Tablecloths	□	□	□
Rugs	□	□	□
Curtains	□	□	□

If P9 = Second-hand proceed P10, others at P11

10. How do you usually buy reused textile products (second-hand)?
    a) In shop
    b) Online shop

If P9 != Second-hand proceed P11

11. What are the reasons you don't buy reused textile products (second-hand? (Multiple answers) (By rotation)
    a) I don't think they are of good quality
    b) They are not suitable for my tastes
    c) I think they are not clean/hygienic
    d) I have difficulty finding products that suit me
    e) I don't like the idea of using something someone else has used.
    f) Other (specify)_______

12. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1-not at all willing and 7-very willing, how willing are you to buy reused products in the future?

If P12>4 continue P13, others P14

13. What are the reasons why you would consider purchasing second-hand textile products in the future? (Multiple answers) (By rotation)
    a) They are cheaper than new products
    b) There is a reduction in waste and a positive impact on the environment
    c) I can find unique or historically valuable products
    d) I can buy products that are no longer available on the market as new
    e) Other (specify) _______

If P1 = I reuse them from family members continue P14, others P15

14. What are the reasons for reusing textile products by your family members? (Multiple answers) (By rotation)
    a) To save money
    b) To reduce waste and for environmental reasons
    c) The clothes are still in good condition for use
    d) I don't really need to buy new clothes
    e) It's a family tradition
    f) Other (specify) _______

Section 2. Clothing and accessories

If P1 = ***I buy them personally*** or ***Someone in the family buys them for me*** in ***Clothing*** or ***Accessories*** continue P15, others P17

15. What type of clothing and accessories do you prefer to buy the most? (Multiple answers)
    a) Casual
    b) Formal
    c) Party/Event
    d) Sporty
    e) Other (specify) _______

16. What are the three factors that most influence your decision to choose the clothing or accessories you buy? (Multiple answers)(By rotation)
    a) Price
    b) Trend
    c) Brand
    d) Design
    e) Quality
    f) Material
    g) Country of manufacture
    h) Other (specify) _______

17. How informed are you about the concept of Fast Fashion?
    a) Very informed
    b) Somewhat informed
    c) A little informed
    d) Not at all informed (Go to P19)

18. How often do you think you buy clothes or accessories because of the influence of Fast Fashion?
    a) I buy a lot more often
    b) I buy a little more often
    c) It does not affect how often I buy clothes
    d) I buy less often

19. How do you manage clothes and accessories you no longer use? (Multiple answers)(By rotation)
    a) I give them to my family
    b) I give them for recycling (specify the place where: _____)
    c) I give them to families in need (specify the place where: _____)
    d) I sell them at second-hand markets (specify the place where and if you have a store: _____)
    e) I save them for future reuse
    f) I throw them away as garbage (specify the place where: _____)
    g) Other (specify)______

If P19=f continue P20, others P21

20. Approximately how many kilograms of clothing do you throw away in a year?
    ____

Section 3. Household textile

Household textiles include bed linen (sheets, pillowcases, duvets), tablecloths, rugs, curtains and other similar products.

If P1 = ***I buy them personally*** ose ***Someone in the family buys them for me*** in ***Household textile*** continue P21, others P24

21. On what occasions do you usually buy new household textile products? (Multiple answers) (By rotation)
    a) During seasonal offers
    b) When a replacement is needed
    c) During holidays or special events
    d) When I want to update my home decor
    e) Other (specify)______

22. What are the three factors that most influence your decision to choose the home textile products you buy? (Multiple answers) (By rotation)
    a) Price
    b) Trend
    c) Brand
    d) Design
    e) Quality
    f) Material
    g) Sustainibility
    h) Country of manufacture
    i) Other (specify) _______

23. Have you changed your home textile product purchasing habits in recent years?
    a) Yes, I buy more often
    b) Yes, I buy less often
    c) No, my habits have remained the same

24. How do you manage household textile products that you no longer use? (Multiple answers) (By rotation)
    a) I give them to my family
    b) I give them for recycling (specify the place where: _____)
    c) I give them to families in need (specify the place where: _____)
    d) I sell them at second-hand markets (specify the place where and if you have a store: _____)
    e) I save them for future reuse
    f) I throw them away as garbage (specify the place where: _____)
    g) Other (specify)______

Section 4. Reuse and recycling practices

Textile reuse and recycling involves the process of collecting and donating textile products for reuse or recycling purposes.

25. Do you have knowledge about the environmental impact of the production and disposal of textile products?
    a) Yes
    b) No

26. (If P25=a) How important do you think this problem is?
    a) Very important
    b) Important
    c) A little important
    d) Not at all important

27. (If P25=b) What do you think is the main reason for your lack of information on this issue? (Multiple answers)
    a) Lack of information in the media
    b) Lack of awareness campaigns
    c) I have had no interest in this topic
    d) I do not see it as a significant problem
    e) Other (specify) _______

28. How often do you reuse and recycle your textile products?
    a) Often
    b) Sometimes
    c) Rarely
    d) Never (Skip P30)

29. Do you face difficulties during the process of reusing and recycling textile products?
    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) Sometimes

30. (If P28=d) What changes would encourage you to reuse and recycle textile products more often? (Multiple answers)(By rotation)
    a) Providing dedicated recycling points for clothes
    b) Receiving discounts or rewards for reuse/recycling
    c) Awareness campaign on the importance of reuse/recycling
    d) Clearer information on the reuse/recycling process
    e) Providing a home-based clothing collection service
    f) More options for donating clothes to people in need
    g) Other (specify) _______

31. What aspects regarding the reuse and recycling of textile products would you like to receive more information on? (Multiple answers)(By rotation)
    a) Textile reuse/recycling processes
    b) Reuse/recycling sites and centers in your community
    c) Environmental benefits of reuse/recycling
    d) How to identify materials that can be reused/recycled
    e) How to care for clothes before reuse/recycling

f) Other (specify) _______

32. Do you have information about any initiatives for recycling textile products?
    a) Yes (Please specify:__________)
    b) No

33. On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1-not at all willing and 7-very willing, how willing would you be to be involved in the recycling processes of textile products?

Section 5. Circular economy

34. How much do you know about the concept of circular economy?
    a) Yes, I know it very well
    b) Yes, I have heard of it but I don't have much knowledge
    c) No, I don't know it as a concept

If P34=c continue P36

35. Would you be willing to change your textile sourcing habits to contribute to the circular economy?
    a) Yes, completely
    b) To some extent
    c) Not at all

36. How willing are you to participate in clothes swapping events?
    a) Very willing
    b) Somewhat willing
    c) Not at all willing

If P36=c continue P38

37. What motivates you most to become part of such initiatives? (Multiple answers)(By rotation)
    a) Mediocre Benefits
    b) Financial Savings
    c) Social Impact
    d) Lifestyle Improvement
    e) Opportunity to Exchange/Obtain Unique Products
    f) Other (specify)______

Section 6. Sources of information

38. What sources of information do you use to obtain information about textiles and purchasing textile products? (Multiple answers)(By rotation)
    a) Social media
    b) Television
    c) Radio
    d) Websites
    e) Conversations with family/friends
    f) Flyers/brochures
    g) Other (specify)______

If P38=a continue P39, others Demography

39. Which social networks do you use most often for information and purchasing textile products? (Multiple answers)
    a) Facebook
    b) Instagram
    c) Twitter
    d) TikTok
    e) LinkedIn
    f) Youtube
    g) Snapchat

Section 7. Demography

D1. GENDER

a) Female
b) Male

D2. AGE (years)

_ _

D3. (MARITAL STATUS) What is your current marital status?

a) Single
b) Married
c) Divorced
d) Widowed
e) Living with partner

D4. (FAMILY) Number of family members: ______

D5. (PERSONAL INCOME) What is your personal monthly income (Neto)?

a) I do not have an income
b) Up to 150 euro
c) 151-300 euro
d) 301-450 euro
e) 451-600 euro
f) 601-750 euro
g) 751-900 euro
h) 901-1200 euro
i) 1201-1500 euro
j) 1501-2000 euro
k) 2001 – 2500 euro
l) 2501 – 3000 euro

m) 3000+ euro
n) I refuse to answer

D6. (FAMILY INCOME) What is your family's monthly income (Net)?

a) We do not have an income
b) Up to 200 euro
c) 201-400 euro
d) 401-600 euro
e) 601-900 euro
f) 901-1200 euro
g) 1201-1500 euro
h) 1501-2000 euro
i) 2001-2500 euro
j) 2501-3000 euro
k) 3001 - 4000 euro
l) 4001 – 5000 euro
m) 5000+
n) I refuse to answer

D9. MUNICIPALTY ________________________

D10. (RESIDENCE) What place do you live in?

a) Urban
b) Rural

D11. (EDUCATION) What is the highest level of education you have completed??

a) No completed education
b) Elementary school (8 or 9 years)
c) Secondary school
d) High school
e) University (Bachelor's)
f) Master's
g) Doctorate

D12. (EMPLOYEMENT) What is your employment status?

a) Unemployed – looking for work
b) Unemployed – not looking for work
c) Self-employed
d) Employed in the public sector
e) Employed in the private sector
f) Employed occasionally
g) Pensioner

h) Homemaker
i) Student
j) Other, please specify: _______________

BUSINESS INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPANY

1. Company name: ___________________________________
2. Brand name: ___________________________
3. Company activity: ___________________________________
4. Gender of company owners: (If there are more owners of different genders, click on as many as there are)
   a) Female: __________
   b) Male:_______

5. Number of employees in the company and gender breakdown:

Gender	Number of employees
Female	
Male	

6. Municipality: (municipalities will be listed in dropdown format)
7. Contact:
   a) Email: ____________________
   b) Phone number: ________________
   c) Adress: _____________________
8. Annual turnover for your sector declared in 2024 to TAK: (Write the amount in Euro as you declared to the Kosovo Tax Administration) [If the business does not have the information for 2024, ask for 2023]
   ____
9. What was the value of your company's exports in 2024?
   a) Export (Write the amount in €): ___________________
   b) I did not export in 2024 [skip the question 11]

10. What was the value of your company's imports in 2024?
    a) Import (Write the amount in €): ___________________
    b) I did not import in 2024 [skip the question 12]

11. To which countries did you export in 2024? (Shëno shtetet në të cilat keni eksportuar në vitin 2024)

Country	Quantity in KG

12. From which countries did you import in 2024??

Country	Quantity in KG

13. Where does your company source its raw materials?
    a) In Kosovo
    b) Outside Kosovo: Please specify countries ______________

14. What was the main form of sales in your company in 2024?
    a) Retail
    b) Wholesale
    c) Both

15. What was the quantity of products processed by your company in 2024?
    a) Total quantity processed (in KG): ____________________
    b) Type of processed products: ____________________
    c) Not applicable

USE OF RAW MATERIALS FOR PRODUCTION

16. What is the main activity of your company?
    a) Manufacturer
    b) Reprocessor
    c) Retail
    d) Wholesale
    e) Importer
    f) Exporter
    g) Services (e.g., design, adjustments, textile adaptation, etc.)
    h) Other (Please specify): ________________

17. If your company is a manufacturer, what products do you produce? [You can choose more than one option]
    a) Sportswear
    b) Underwear
    c) Jeans
    d) Work uniforms
    e) Shoes, bags, and leather goods
    f) Socks
    g) Children's clothing
    h) Wedding and event wear
    i) Men's and women's suits
    j) Household textiles
    k) Curtains
    l) Carpets

m) Knitted clothing
n) Not applicable
o) Other (Please specify): ________________

18. If your company offers services, what are the main services you offer? [You can choose more than one option]
    a) Textile design
    b) Clothing repair
    c) Product customization (e.g., embroidery, printing)
    d) Fashion or textile consulting
    e) Not applicable
    f) Other (Please specify: ________________)

19. If your company is a retailer/wholesaler, what main products do you sell? [You can choose more than one option]
    a) Sportswear
    b) Underwear
    c) Jeans
    d) Work uniforms
    e) Shoes, bags, and leather goods
    f) Socks
    g) Children's clothing
    h) Wedding and event wear
    i) Men's and women's suits
    j) Household textiles
    k) Curtains
    l) Carpets
    m) Knitted clothing
    n) Other (Please specify: ________________)
    o) Not applicable

20. What is the raw material you use for the products you manufacture? [Companies answer only for products they manufacture]

    ____

21. What are the materials that are most requested by your customers and that have the most sales? [You can choose more than one option]

    a) Cotton
    b) Polyester
    c) Linen
    d) Microfiber
    e) Knitted materials (e.g., jersey)
    f) Genuine leather
    g) Synthetic materials (e.g., nylon, elastane)

h) Specialized materials (e.g., hypoallergenic textiles, waterproof textiles)
i) Other (Please specify: ____________)

WASTE MANAGEMENT

22. Waste management practices: How does your company manage material waste in the production process? [You can choose more than one option)
    a) Collect them in municipal landfills
    b) Recycle them
    c) Use leftover materials
    d) Incinerate them
    e) Bury them
    f) Throw them into nature (rivers, open spaces)
    g) Cooperate with material reuse initiatives
    h) We sell them
    i) Other (Please specify ________)

23. If the municipal landfills collect the waste materials, how much do you pay per year? [If 22=a]
    ____
24. If yes, how often do they collect the waste material? [If 22=a]
    a) Every day
    b) Once a week
    c) Once a month
    d) Not applicable
    e) Other (Please specify: _____)

25. How many tons of textile waste does your company generate per year? _____________
26. What are the main types of waste you generate during the work process?
    a) Textile waste (pieces, trimmings, etc.)
    b) Waste from raw material packaging
    c) Waste from final product packaging
    d) Paper/cardboard
    e) Metal
    f) Plastic
    g) Wood
    h) Other (specify: _______)

27. Does your company have a system for reusing leftover materials within the production process?
    a) Yes (Please describe it briefly:_____________)
    b) No

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

28. Have you heard of the concept of circular economy??
    a) Yes
    b) No [go to question 32]

29. Are you interested in applying circular economy practices to your company?
    a) Yes
    b) No

30. Is your company ready to start recycling and implement circular economy practices?
    a) Yes, we have already started
    b) Yes, we are interested, but we have not started yet
    c) No, it is not a priority at the moment
    d) I am not sure

31. Would you be interested in participating in training on textile recycling and the circular economy for your business and employees?
    a) Po, për stafin menaxhues
    b) Po, për punëtorët në prodhim
    c) Po, për të dyja kategoritë
    d) Jo, nuk kemi interesim

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON TRACING

32. How concerned are you about the pollution that your company's activities cause in the environment?
    a) Very worried
    b) Worried
    c) Neutral
    d) Not very worried
    e) Not at all worried

33. Are you willing to invest in improving practices to reduce environmental impact and carbon footprint?
    a) Yes
    b) No

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS FOR EXPORT

34. For companies exporting to the EU: Are you willing to invest to meet the environmental criteria required for export?
    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) Not sure
    d) I don't have enough information regarding this issue

INTEREST AND CHALLENGES FOR RECYCLING

35. Is your company currently involved in any reuse and recycling initiatives for post-production waste?_________________
a) Yes
b) No [pass to question 37]
c) I'm not sure/ I don't know

36. If yes, please briefly describe the recycling initiatives undertaken _____________________
37. If not, why aren't you involved?_______________________________________

38. Does your company cooperate with any recycling company for textile waste management?
a) Yes
b) No
c) Interested, but not currently active
d) We don't know if such companies exist

39. Would your company be interested in collaborating with a recycling company that specializes in clothing waste management??
a) Very interested
b) Interested
c) Not interested
d) Not sure

40. Please specify the main obstacles your company faces in collaborating with a recycling company.
a) Lack of information about available recycling services
b) Unaffordable costs
c) Logistical challenges
d) Other (Please specify ________)

41. What waste management solutions would your company prefer?
a) Waste reduction programs within the company
b) Collaboration with recycling companies – external
c) Other (Please specify ________)

42. How important is environmental maintenance in your company?
a) Very important
b) Neutral
c) Not very important
d) Not at all important

43. Does your company plan to implement any new initiatives to improve waste management and environmental maintenance?
a) Yes (Please elaborate: _____________________)

b) No

44. Would you be open to providing additional information or participating in further discussions regarding waste management and recycling initiatives in your company?
a) Yes
b) No

45. Does your company participate in textile and textile technology fairs?
    a) Yes, regularly
    b) Yes, every now and then
    c) No

46. Would you be interested in receiving information about fairs and conferences related to your activity?
    a) Yes
    b) No

47. Would you be interested in engaging your staff in textile recycling training?

    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) I don't know

We express our deep gratitude to all contributors who participated in the realization of this research. We thank the businesses that shared their time and experience, the citizens who gave their opinions with sincerity, as well as the institutional representatives who offered valuable knowledge and important perspectives. Their contribution has been essential for the realistic reflection of the situation and for the formulation of recommendations aimed at improving the textile sector in Kosovo.

This publication has been implemented by Rilindja Gjelbër, managed by the Community Development Fund (CDF) and produced with the financial support of the Swedish Embassy in Prishtina. Its content is derived from the survey responses received up to the date specified in this report and is the sole responsibility of Rilindja Gjelbër, implementing the project “Returning Values to the Circular Economy” under the framework of the program “Strengthening Environmental CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) in Kosovo.