

## Collection and processing of used textiles endangered by COVID-19 crisis- VHT sees the sector's chances of survival dwindling

**The Hague, 31 March 2020.** We are experiencing turbulent times in which, unfortunately, far-reaching measures are necessary. Much is still unclear about the consequences of the COVID-19 virus in the Netherlands and how the pandemic will develop worldwide.

What will happen to our textile recycling sector, which is heavily dependent on exports, is that we will be severely affected. Our recent member survey shows that the COVID-19 crisis has enormous financial and operational consequences for the VHT members.

Whether it concerns textiles intended for recycling and use in the automotive industry or sorted second hand clothing for sales at home and abroad, all our markets for sorted reusable textiles are affected by global lockdowns and other COVID-19 related measures. One of the measures to promote 'social distancing' is the closure of many (second hand) clothing and recycling shops. This measure has been taken in the Netherlands but also in various other countries.

As a result of this closure and the suspension of exports, the sorting companies in the Netherlands and abroad can no longer dispose of their products and have to stop sorting.

The collection of textiles falls under 'Transport of Waste and Garbage' on the List of Critical Professional Groups. Our collection companies will therefore do everything in their power to keep the national textile containers empty and to guarantee the collection infrastructure.

However, the markets where collected textiles can be disposed of have already almost all closed or will do so in the coming weeks. Price devaluation, higher operating costs and higher inventory costs reinforce the effect of evaporating sales. For reasons of force majeure, collectors are therefore forced to review their services to municipalities.

The VHT is also unable to estimate how long this situation will persist. However, we are convinced that the demand for second-hand clothing and textiles will continue. It may even increase under the influence of economic conditions and the sustainability concept when the markets reopen. Even in these difficult times we find it important to be and remain a reliable partner for municipalities and governments.

Our members need financial and operational support that will enable them to gain time to weather this crisis. We would like to talk to government and municipalities to find flexible solutions that will enable us to continue the collection of textiles in the Netherlands. We will have to do this together!

For more information you can contact Mariska Zandvliet, tel +31 6 11 60 45 49 or mail [info@textielrecycling.nl](mailto:info@textielrecycling.nl).

### **About the VHT**

*The Textile Recovery Association (VHT) represents the interests of companies in the textile recovery industry. The VHT strives to make the textile chain more sustainable in order to achieve the highest possible quantity and quality in the separate collection and reuse of textiles. The VHT is of the opinion that a free, healthy market for reusable textiles forms the basis for this necessary sustainability. A market where professional parties can freely trade in reusable textiles without being unnecessarily hampered by impractical and unnecessary laws and regulations. Reusable textiles are a valuable raw material, which should be recognized and treated as such, also on a European level.*

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