

## TRA report to the BIR – May 2012 – Rome

Used clothing collections are now attracting the attention of the national media in the UK with increasing frequency. Some of the reporting is very considered taking a balanced view on all the issues involved. This week, a report is due to be aired on primetime national television on non-other than BBC1. Viewing figures for the show in question often top 5 million. Whilst at the time of writing this we cannot say for sure what the exact angle of the report will be, we know that the continuing increases in the value of used clothing and the move by some local authorities to tender out exclusive clothing/textile collection agreements is something that has caught their attention, as are the implications that this can have for charities and commercial operators.

When newspaper, TV and radio reporters first embark on producing their articles, we have found that their knowledge is often at best “sketchy” and it usually becomes apparent to them quickly that the issues that they are looking at are much more complicated than they initially seem. This makes the Textile Recycling Association’s role as the authoritative body even more important. We are the UK’s only trade body that represents both private businesses and the fundraising arms of charities that are specifically engaged in clothing collections and therefore we are in a unique position to give the media impartial advice. However, we would like to commend all the other UK trade bodies that represent other bodies that have a link with the used clothing industry as we are all taking responsible positions when dealing with the media at the moment.

The input that the UK Government(s) will have into promoting used-clothing and textile collections look set to increase. The Government department responsible for charity fundraising has recently conducted a review of a key piece of legislation and there have been calls by various key stakeholders to overhaul the current system of licensing of charitable collections in England and Wales and to license all door to door clothing collections, both charitable and non-charitable (but to keep textile collections outside the waste regulations).

The Scottish Government have just introduced new regulations which will ban the landfilling of all biodegradable wastes (which including textiles) and the UK Government has pledged to have a look at placing restrictions specifically on the landfilling of all textile wastes (not just biodegradable textile waste) in England and Wales in the lifetime of the current Parliament.

However, what is perhaps most notable is the acceleration in the amount of work now being produced through the Sustainable Clothing Roadmap, which was handed over by the UK Government last year to their delivery body the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP). The annual conference will be held in London on 11<sup>th</sup> July. There are about 30 pieces of research being delivered through the roadmap and soon WRAP will be publishing textiles collections guidance aimed at local authorities and updated research into flows of clothing and textiles in the UK.

Written by:

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