SIFO PROJECT NOTE 6-2023

CONSUMPTION RESEARCH NORWAY (SIFO)

Professional and private clothing repair in Norway: scale and price examples

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Cover photo: erierika, depositphotos.com

Suggested citation:
Løvbak Berg, L. & Laitala, K. (2023). Professional and private clothing repair in Norway: scale and price examples. (SIFO-Project Note 6-2023), Oslo Metropolitan University

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CONSUMPTION RESEARCH NORWAY SIFO

Title	**Pages**	**Date**
Professional and private clothing repair in Norway: scale and price examples	18	15.11.2023
Tittel		
Profesjonell og privat klesreparasjon i Norge: utbredelse og priseksempler		
Authors	**Project number**	**Signature**
Lisbeth Løvbak Berg and Kirsi Laitala	202935 201822	

Financed by

The Research Council of Norway program MILJØFORSK through the project “LASTING: Sustainable prosperity through product durability”, number 303080, and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI)

Summary

This project note is made to be used in the work of developing Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) for Apparel and Footwear, more specifically for the working group that focuses on repairability of clothing and footwear. The note provides background information for discussions on clothing repairability, especially regarding the prices and types of clothing repair and differences between countries.

Our study shows that average starting prices of garment repairs vary between 151 NOK (13 euros) for simpler repairs such as repairing an undone seam or a fallen hem, and 1375 NOK (117 euros) for more demanding repairs such as changing a lining of a coat. When compared to the average prices of repair in France, the prices are on average 84% higher but can be up to triple in some cases. This is more than the differences in labour costs, indicating that other factors, such as higher operating expenses, market dynamics and taxation policies may also contribute to the higher repair prices.

Sammendrag

Dette prosjektnotatet er laget for å bidra til arbeidet med å utvikle kategoriregler for produkters miljøfotavtrykk (PEFCR) for bekledning og fottøy, mer spesifikt arbeidsgruppen som jobber med reparerbarhet av klær og fottøy. Notatet gir bakgrunnsinformasjon for å diskutere reparerbarhet av klær, spesielt relatert til priser og typer klesreparasjon og forskjeller mellom land.

Vår studie viser at den gjennomsnittlige prisen for klesreparasjon varierer mellom 151 NOK (13 euros) for enkle reparasjoner som å fikse en søm eller et opplegg som har raknet, og 1375 NOK (117 euros) for mer krevende reparasjoner som å skifte fór i ei kåpe. Når man sammenlikner med gjennomsnittlige priser i Frankrike, er prisene i gjennomsnitt 84% høyere, men kan i noen tilfeller så mye som tredobles. Dette er en større forskjell enn det forskjellene i lønnsnivåer kan forklare hvilket indikerer at også andre faktorer, slik som høyere driftskostnader, markedsdynamikk og avgiftspolitikk også bidrar til de høyere reparasjonsprisene.

Keywords

Clothing repair, mending, price, product lifespan

Stikkord

Klesreparasjon, pris, produktlevetid

Preface

This project note is made to be used in the work of developing Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) for Apparel and Footwear, more specifically for the working group that focuses on repairability of clothing and footwear. The note provides background information for discussions on clothing repairability, especially regarding the prices and types of clothing repair and differences between countries.

Oslo, November 2023

Consumption Research Norway (SIFO)
OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University

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1. Introduction

Repairing products, such as clothing, can extend their lifespan, thereby delaying the need for replacements. This, in turn, helps reduce waste from replacements and lessens resource usage. Repairing is considered a crucial part of sustainable consumption and the circular economy (Heidenstrøm et al., 2021).

The European Commission has proposed common rules promoting repair, aligning with its priority of the green transition within the European Green Deal. The New Circular Economy Action Plan and the New Consumer Agenda emphasize promoting sustainable consumption through repair, working towards establishing a 'right to repair'. The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation encourages product reparability from the production phase, while the Directive on Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition aims to inform consumers about product reparability and durability before purchase. The proposal for common rules promoting repair focuses on post-sales repair, ensuring consumers' ability to repair goods. Together, these initiatives cover the entire lifecycle of goods, collectively aiming to establish a 'right to repair' and promote a more sustainable approach to consumption.

The repairability of clothing is also considered in the work with the Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules for Apparel and Footwear. This project note is prepared to provide background information for discussions on clothing repairability, especially regarding the costs and types of clothing repair and differences between countries.

2. Background

Repair choices available to individuals encompass commercial solutions conducted by the product's manufacturer, authorized networks, or independent repair shops or experts. Non-commercial alternatives include individual Do-It-Yourself (DIY) and group-based Do-It-Together (DIT) methods, like community repair events (Svensson-Hoglund et al., 2022). The repair experience is influenced by both internal (individual) and external (environmental) factors, converging in how individuals perceive the process, especially in terms of weighing perceived costs against benefits. Factors that impact this include the individual's predisposition towards repair, experience with repairing, and relationship to the product (Svensson-Hoglund et al., 2022).

Repairing products is expected to prolong their lifespans and therefore reduce the need for early replacement, but there are no studies on clothing consumption that document the actual impact of repair on reducing the number of clothing that is acquired. However, WRAP (2022) has conducted a consumer survey in the UK that indicates that there is a strong association between longevity and repair. The study that included over 44,000 garments that were in active use showed that the average lifespan of repaired garments was 1.3 years longer than the items that were not repaired. It is however unknown whether the older garments in general were more in need of repair, if the favourite garments that were still in use were chosen to be repaired to a higher degree and used longer than the inactive garments in the wardrobe, or if the repair itself is the main reason for the increased lifespan.

When deciding between repair options and product replacement, individuals often face constraints dictated by their abilities and circumstances, influenced by a larger system that shapes the availability, desirability, and accessibility of these choices at the time of a product breakdown (Svensson-Hoglund et al., 2022). McLaren and McLauchlan (2015) divide such barriers into practical (such as convenience and access to materials or skills), social (such as not wanting to use visibly mended clothing in order not to appear impoverished), socioeconomic (such as varying availability of money for repair), systemic (such as structural barriers to establishing a repair business, limited availability of original spare parts and manuals, lack of suitable education to learn repair skills) and psychological barriers (such as lack of emotional attachment to a product or the desire for a new one). The most commonly identified constraints are financial costs, lack of time, and lack of skills (Laitala et al., 2021). Nevertheless, repairing wear and tear through simple stitch-based techniques like darning, sewing buttons, and stitching hems can be accomplished with minimal and affordable equipment, basic skills, and a small-time investment (Middleton, 2015).

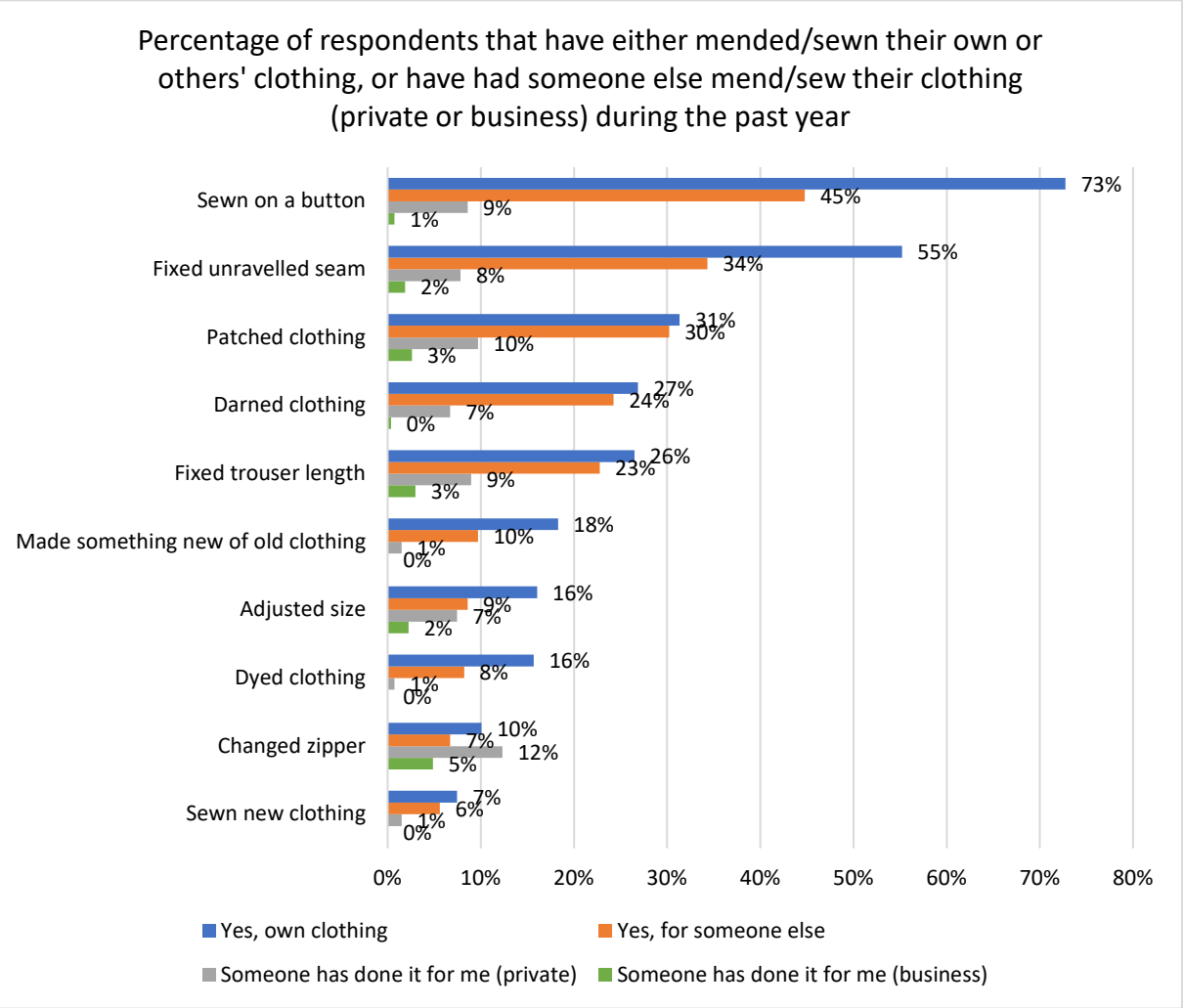

Figure 1 Percentages of respondents that have either mended/sewn their own or others' clothing or have had someone else sew/mend their clothing (private or business) during the past year. (Survey 2010, N = 268, 83% women) (Source: Laitala & Klepp, 2018).

In Norway, most clothing repair happens in the home (Laitala & Klepp, 2018). The most common repair tasks reported are sewing on a button and fixing an unravelled seam. Figure 1 shows results from a survey from 2010, which shows that most respondents had conducted some repairs themselves, but also especially women had helped others to repair their clothing. Use of professional repair services was much less common, and mainly used for changing zippers, fixing trouser length, and patching clothing. USA and Canada show similar tendencies; also there, self-repair was the most common form of clothing repair, especially among women (McQueen et al., 2022). Other international studies indicate that the level of repair varies greatly, however. For example, in the USA, only 31% of respondents said that they would often mend their own clothing (Diddi & Yan, 2019).

Table 1 Which of the following have you done in the last 12 months? (Source: Laitala & Klepp, 2019)

	China	Germany	Japan	UK	USA
Sewn a button	57%	53%	52%	49%	48%
Fixed an unravelled seam	37%	17%	25%	18%	26%
Patched clothing	9%	32%	10%	17%	23%
Darned clothing	16%	22%	34%	14%	11%
Changed a zipper	29%	8%	2%	6%	14%
Fixed a trouser length	24%	17%	24%	20%	13%
Adjusted the size of clothing	18%	8%	6%	6%	10%
Made something new out of old clothing	4 %	8 %	5 %	2 %	10 %
Sewn new clothing	6 %	8 %	4 %	5 %	8 %
Knitted or crocheted	10 %	15 %	6 %	6 %	15 %
None of these	15 %	27 %	26 %	37 %	31 %

Another survey, conducted in five countries, illustrates further the differences in consumer practices between countries (Laitala & Klepp, 2019). Table 1 shows how it is more common to repair and adjust clothing in China than for example in the UK, where the consumers reported having been the least inclined to engage in clothing mending or altering over the past year. Only 15% of Chinese respondents had not repaired or altered clothing in the previous year, while 37% of the respondents in the UK said the same. There are also national differences in which repair techniques are common to use. Sewing on a button is the most reported repair activity in all five countries, but repairing unravelled seams and broken zippers is common in China while in Germany it is more common to patch clothing. Adjusting the size of clothing is also more common in China than in the other four countries in the study, while making new clothing (sewing, knitting, or crocheting) is more common in Germany and the USA.

Figure 2 gives more recent and representative survey data from Norway and shows that the percentage of consumers having done at least one repair has declined over time, from 70 % in 2011 to 62% in 2017 (Laitala & Klepp, 2018).

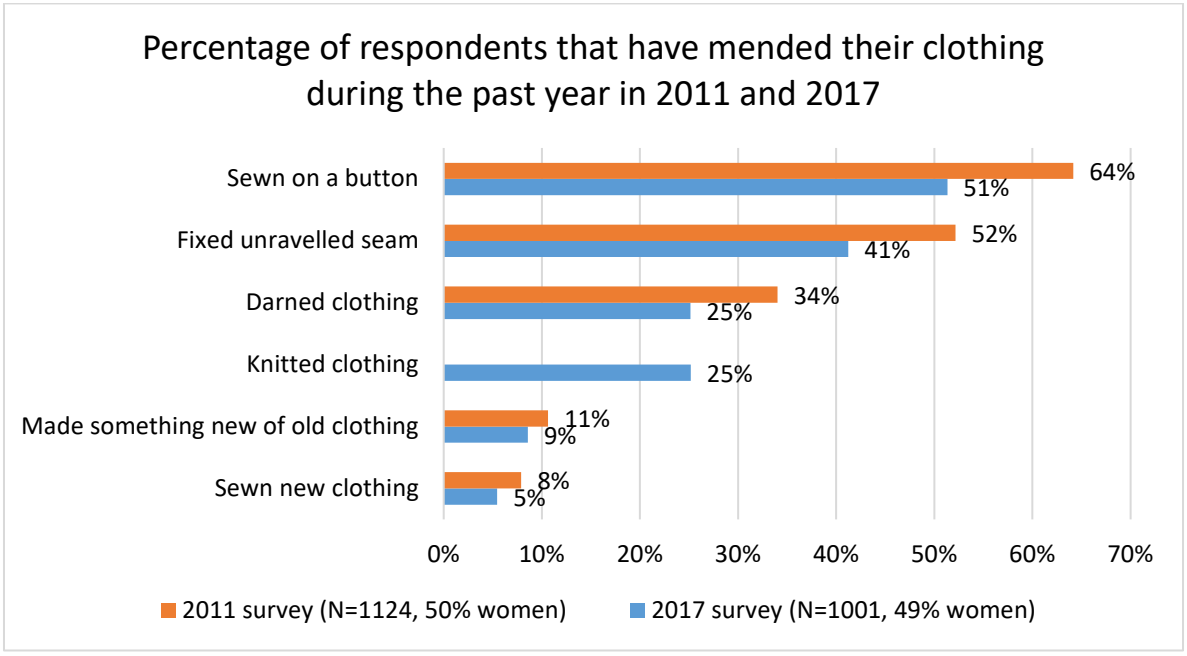

Figure 2 Percentage of respondents that have mended their own clothing or made new clothing during the past year (Two representative surveys, from 2011 and 2017) (Source: Laitala & Klepp, 2018).

In the UK, WRAP conducted a large consumer survey in 2022 which showed that 22% of items had been repaired – either by the owners themselves (13%) or a paid service (9%). 57% of the respondents said that if their clothes get damaged, they always look for a way to repair them. This is highest among women aged 55+ (68%) and women aged 18-34 (60%); and lower among men in general (WRAP, 2022). Lower figures were found in a Norwegian study of clothing going out of use, where about 2,7% of the clothing had been repaired (Sigaard, 2023; Sigaard et al., 2023). The differences are likely based on methodological issues, as the UK study was based on consumer reporting on garments they had used most recently for five different occasions. This means that these garments are in active use and include items that the respondents are satisfied with and wish to continue to use for longer, which increases the repair motivation. In contrast, the data in Norway was based on all clothing going out of use, including those not actively worn. The Norwegian study did not investigate clothing that was still in use. Further, some small repairs like replaced buttons may have been difficult for the consumers to remember to report and to detect in clothing.

Figure 3 shows the results from a survey of 1196 Norwegian consumers reporting on the repairs and customisations of clothing they have had done in the last two years, stating who performed the repairs/customisations of clothing items and whether these were successful (Laitala et al., 2021). The results show that private clothing repair is at least three times more common than using professional help. Most of the professional repairs were conducted by tailors/seamstresses, followed by producers'/retailers' own service providers.

Figure 3 Who repaired or customized the clothing item? The number of successful and failed repairs. Multiple answers were allowed (Norway, N = 625 repairs) (Source: Laitala et al., 2021).

The ability to repair and create clothing is closely tied to handicraft skills. One of the international surveys have inquired about respondents' proficiency in hand sewing or the use of a sewing machine (Table 2) (Laitala & Klepp, 2019). It is noteworthy that the Chinese respondents who claimed to have undertaken the most repairs in various categories (Table 1) appear to be the most reserved in acknowledging their sewing skills. This discrepancy could stem from cultural nuances, possibly influenced by differing expectations regarding skill levels when queried about sewing machine or hand sewing proficiency.

Table 2 Here are some statements people have made about their skills in making / repairing / altering clothes. Which of the following best applies to you? (Source: Laitala & Klepp, 2019)

	China	Germany	Japan	UK	USA
I can use a sewing machine	20 %	29 %	42 %	18 %	35 %
I can sew by hand	35 %	50 %	56 %	50 %	55 %
I can knit	15 %	22 %	15 %	14 %	15 %
I can crochet	9 %	25 %	15 %	6 %	17 %
None of these	50 %	37 %	27 %	39 %	30 %

Interviews among Norwegian professional clothing repairers showed that the repaired clothing is typically either high-priced or holds significant sentimental value for the customer, such as their favourite trousers or an inherited jacket (Haugrønning et al., 2019). This suggests that the decision to repair is influenced by the initial value of the garment, either as an expensive and often high-quality product or as an emotionally cherished item. Additionally, this willingness to repair is determined by the cost and time involved in the repair process.

The interviews showed that there was a difference between the common repair types between tailors/seamstresses and clothing stores. The nature of the repair conducted is contingent upon the company type, whether the service caters to the company's garments and the specific type of clothing they offer. Common occurrences in children's clothing are broken zippers and typical wear and tear, whereas, in jeans, the most common issue is stress at the crotch. The repair approach is also connected to the service structure. In cases where repairs have minimal practical and financial impact on customers, routine repairs like small holes, loose buttons, or pocket lining holes are performed. If the service is tied to new clothing sales, customization becomes predominant, like altering trousers. The independent tailoring companies have larger repairs and more expensive garments (coats, suits, wedding dresses, etc.).

Clothing repair is labour-intensive work, which indicates that prices of professional repair are likely to vary between countries, depending on salary levels, competition, and access to repair services. The cost of repair also influences the rate of professional repairs being undertaken (ADEME et al., 2022; Haugrønning et al., 2019).

The ADEME report “Fonds réemploi-réutilisation et réparation de la filière TLC : étude préalable” [Reuse-Reuse and Repair Fund for the textiles, linen and shoes sector: preliminary study] from 2021 examines professional repair costs in the French market (ADEME et al., 2022). It is a pre-study for the creation of a funding scheme to support the repair and re-use of textiles and apparel. The funding of repair is planned to subsidise the consumers’ expenditures on repairs not covered by warranties. This presupposes that the repair cost is the main barrier for repairs in France - indeed a previous ADEME study found that cost was the main barrier for 68% of French consumers and that 82% of French consumers would have more repairs done if a guarantee system for repairs existed (ADEME & Harris Interactive, 2020). This study, however, concerned the repair of various types of goods, not textiles and apparel specifically. A Norwegian study confirms that, both from a repair service supplier and a consumer perspective, high repair costs compared to low product prices are barriers to the repair of household appliances, mobile phones, and clothing (Laitala et al., 2021).

A lower garment price decreases the likelihood of a consumer seeking professional repair services, and even more so in a country with high repair costs. The Eurostat price level index for consumer goods calculates that the indices for clothing and footwear are respectively 105.4 and 111.6 for France, versus 122.3 and 124.6 for Norway, showing a 16% and 12% higher price level in Norway (Eurostat, 2023a). Further, the differences in price level index for consumer services are even

greater, as the level is 108.8 in France compared to 169.9 in Norway, which is 56% higher (Eurostat, 2023b). One of the explanations for this is related to salary levels.

The French minimum wage from the 1st of May 2023 is 11.52 €/hour (Insee, 2023). While Norway does not have a general legal minimum wage, some professions are regulated, and for example, cleaning staff are from the 15th of June 2023 paid a minimum of 216.04 NOK/hour (18.37 €/hour) (Tariffnemda, 2023), which is considered low pay. There are, however, lower paid Norwegians: Statistics Norway report that the 10% lowest paid Norwegian workers earned on average 27,920 NOK/month (Grini et al., 2023), approx. 16.16 €/hour in 2022. In 2022, the French minimum wage was 11.07 €/hour at the end of the year (Insee, 2023). This indicates that low Norwegian wages are higher than French low wages by somewhere around 40-60%.

Despite the much higher prices, the average Norwegians have 24.7% higher purchasing power than the average French person: the purchasing power parity is currently respectively 126 and 109, compared to the EU base level of 100 (Eurostat, 2023b).

Repair costs for consumers usually also include Value-Added Tax (VAT). These rates vary between European countries, and Norway has one of the highest in Europe (25%), which is at the same level as Croatia, Denmark, and Sweden, only exceeded by Hungary (27%) (Enache, 2023). The general VAT in France is 20%. The EU's average standard VAT rate is 21 per cent, and the general minimum required rate is 15%. However, EU legislation opens up for reduced rates for repairs of bicycles, shoes and leather goods, clothing and household linen (including mending and alteration). These reduced rates cannot be less than 5%. This possibility is taken into use in some countries like Ireland, Netherlands, and Sweden (Rreuse, 2017). Further, it is possible to use other tax reductions as a means to incentivise repair, for example by reimbursing consumers part of the labour cost related to repair, providing repair vouchers or other repair fund schemes (Ganapini, 2023). Since November 2023, France has extended 'bonus réparation' funding scheme that was previously valid for electronics to also apply for repair of clothes and shoes (Thompson, 2023). Consumers can get up to 60% of the repair cost covered when the repair has been done by one of the approved repair shops. The scheme applies only to repairs, not alterations, and is valid after the guarantee period has expired. The funding is financed by extended producer responsibility (EPR) based on the idea that the "polluter should pay", and administered by Refashion (ReFashion, 2023).

In the following, we compare the prices of professional clothing repair in France and Norway.

3. Method

Norwegian companies and organisations providing clothing repair were identified using a Google keyword search. Seven of these companies provided repair price lists. These were collected from the company websites from April to May 2023. The lists varied in detail and the type of repair listed. Several companies specify that their listed prices are starting prices that are subject to change. When companies listed from-to price ranges, the lowest price was collected. We chose this because all the listed prices are starting prices, which indicates that the actual costs for many repairs are likely higher. The seven selected companies vary quite a lot, some being professional tailors while others are resource organisations that focus more on social sustainability and giving employment opportunities. This is likely to impact the price differences between the companies and the types of services they are able to provide.

Table 3 Overview of included companies/organisations.

Number	Name	Web address to price list
Co. 1	Systua på Vegårshei	http://skredderstuen.no/prisliste.html
Co. 2	Sisters in Business	https://www.sistersinbusiness.no/butikk/sider/systue-ikea-slependen
Co. 3	Repairable	https://repairable.no/velgreparasjon
Co 4	LIN (Likestilling, Inkludering og Nettverk)	https://www.linorg.no/prisliste
Co. 5	Skredderservice	http://www.skredderservice.no/prisliste/
Co. 6	Forny Norge	https://www.fornynorge.no/reparere-klaer/
Co. 7	Saks og nål	https://saksognal.no/tjenester-og-priser/

Prices per garment category are compared with French repair prices based on an Adème (2022) study and prices per repair category are compared with French repair prices from further categorisation and calculations conducted by Refashion[1], based on a Kantar study on the repair market for TLC & Arthur D Little analysis, to be used in the PEFCR apparel and footwear working group “repairability”. These have been presented by Stéphane Popescu (2023) in the Repairability meeting, 27.4.2023 and by Théo Moroni (2023) in the meeting, 19.10.2023.

[1] Refashion (previously Eco TLC) is the French Textile, Household linen and Footwear Industry's eco-organisation. It manages the prevention of waste and management of the end-of-service life of products on behalf of the 5000 companies placing goods onto the French market. https://refashion.fr/en

4. Results

We found that Norwegian companies mainly advertise prices for alterations and some more complex repairs like replacing zippers and linings.

The prices are first compared per garment category that is chosen based on the PEFCR product subcategories, followed by comparisons per type of repair.

4.1 Repair prices per garment category

Table 4 shows prices collected from each company and calculations of average prices. Minimum clothing repair prices in Norway range from 2.55 EUR (30 NOK) for simple repairs such as replacing a button, to 195 EUR (2.299 NOK) for replacing the lining of a coat or jacket.

The prices include value-added taxes (VAT) of 25%, as most services are marketed to consumers.

Table 4 Collected repair prices and average price per repair type and garment category.

Garment category and type of repair	Co. 1	Co. 2	Co. 3	Co. 4	Co. 5	Co. 6	Co. 7	Average	
								NOK	EUR[2]
Dresses									
Replace zipper	250	249	399			624	500	404.40	34.37
Replace button, hook, loop, elastic			149					149.00	12.67
Repair hole			299	150				224.50	19.08
Restitch seam			199					199.00	16.92
Average dresses								**244.23**	**20.76**
Skirts									
Replace zipper	200		349	150		651	350	340.00	28.90
New puller (no guarantee)			249					249.00	21.17
Replace button, hook, loop, elastic			149	50				99.50	8.46
Mend hole			199	150				174.50	14.83
Restitch seam			129	150				139.50	11.86
Replace lining							700	700.00	59.50
Lengthen				150				150.00	12.75
Average skirts								**264.64**	**22.49**
Tops (shirts/blouses etc.)									
Replace zipper			349					349.00	29.67
New puller (no guarantee)			249					249.00	21.17
Replace button, hook, loop, elastic	149			50				99.50	8.46
Mend hole			299					299.00	25.42
Restitch seam			129					129.00	10.97
Mend 2 parallel tears elbows			499				300	399.50	33.96
New back & lining waistcoat	390							390.00	33.15
Replace chest pocket	160							160.00	13.60
Average tops								**259.38**	**22.05**

[2] 1 EUR = 11.76 NOK, 29.06.2023.

Trousers									
Replace zipper	200		349	150	380		250	265.80	22.59
New puller (no guarantee)			249					249.00	21.17
Replace button, hook, loop, elastic	155		149	50				118.00	10.03
Mend hole			199	150			100	149.67	12.72
Restitch seam			129	150				139.50	11.86
Mend 2 parallel tears inseams/knees			499	200				349.50	29.71
Replace lining	350	899						624.50	53.08
Replace pocket lining							500	500.00	42.50
Average trousers								**299.50**	**25.46**
Coat/jacket/blazer									
Replace zipper	400		399	200			450	362.25	30.79
New puller (no guarantee)			249					249.00	21.17
Replace button, hook, loop, elastic	30	149	149					109.33	9.29
Mend hole			299					299.00	25.42
Restitch seam			699					699.00	59.42
Replace lining	800	899	2299				1500	1832.67	155.78
Replace partial lining			1799					1799.00	152.92
Replace pocket lining	200						150	350.00	29.75
Replace other textile parts			499					499.00	42.42
Add leather patch							300	300.00	25.5
Average coats/jackets/blazers								**649.93**	**55.24**
Sweaters/jumpers									
Repair ladders/darn hole			199				80	139.50	11.86
Add elbow patches							300	300.00	25.50
Average sweaters/jumpers								**219.75**	**18.68**
Leather clothes									
Replace button, hook, loop, elastic			199					199.00	16.92
Replace zipper			399					399.00	33.92
New puller (no guarantee)			249					249.00	21.17
Mend hole			399					399.00	33.92
Restitch seam			399					399.00	33.92
Average leather clothes								**411.25**	**34.96**
Accessories									
Repair shoulder strap backpack				300				300.00	25.50
Replace zipper backpack				400				400.00	34.00
Average accessories								**350.00**	**29.75**

Average Norwegian repair prices per garment type are higher than French average repair prices per garment category (Table 5). For some items, they are as much as triple the French prices.

Table 5 Comparison of Norwegian and French average repair prices per garment category (ADEME et al., 2022).

Garment category	FRANCE (€)	NORWAY (€)	Percentage higher
T-SHIRT	10	22.05	120 %
SHIRT AND BLOUSES	10	22.05	120 %
SWEATERS AND MID-LAYERS	15	18.68	25 %
JACKETS AND COATS	31	55.24	78 %
TROUSERS AND SHORTS	14	25.46	82 %
DRESSES, SKIRTS AND JUMPSUITS	19	20.76	9 %
LEGGINS, STOCKINGS, TIGHTS AND SOCKS [3]	9	18.68	108 %
UNDERWEAR [2]	9	18.68	108 %
SWIMWEAR [2]	9	18.68	108 %
APPAREL ACCESSORIES	9	29.75	231 %
AVERAGE	13,50	25.00	85 %

4.2 Repair prices per type of repair

Prices of different types of garment repairs are listed in Table 4.

Table 6 Collected repair prices per repair type and garment category

Repair	Type of garment	AVERAGES PER COMPANY							AVERAGE	
		Co. 1	Co. 2	Co. 3	Co. 4	Co. 5	Co. 6	Co. 7	NOK	EUR
Replacing zippers	Trousers, sweater, vests, skirts, dresses	216.67	249.00	361.50	150.00	380.00	1275.00	1100.00	533.17	45.32
	Coats [4]	400.00	-	699.00	200.00	-	-	450,00	437.25	37.17
	Jackets	400.00	-	399.00	200.00	-	-	450.00	362.25	30.79
Tear repair	Trousers, vest, skirts, dresses	-	-	332.33	162.50	-	-	200.00	231.61	19.69
	Coats	-	-	299.00	-	-	-	-	299.00	25.42
Tear repair, snag, moth hole	Sweaters and Mid-layers	-	-	199.00	-	-	-	-	199.00	16.92
Replacing of shirt collar or cuff	Shirts and blouses [5]	250.00	-	-	-	-	-	150.00	200.00	17.00
Repairing undone seam, fallen hem	Trousers, skirts, dresses	-	-	152.33	150.00	-	-	-	151.17	12.85

[3] These garments were not represented in the companies' price lists and prices for sweaters and mid-layers were used as they are also made of knitted fabrics.

[4] All companies except one combined jackets and coats in one garment category, hence the prices here represent the lowest price for replacing zippers, more likely relevant for jackets than coats.

[5] This price is likely too low as the closest relevant price suggestion was for moving shirt cuffs up or down (to shorten/lengthen sleeves), which is less complicated than making a new cuff or collar.

Replacing pocket lining	Trousers, Coats	200.00	-	-	-	-	-	325.00	262.50	22.31
Replacing lining	Coats	800.00	899.00	2299.00	-	-	-	1500.00	1374.50	116.83
	Skirts, dresses [6]	-	-	-	-	-	-	700.00	700.00	59.50
Stained clothes	Trousers, skirt, T-shirt, dress, sweater, shirt, coat, jacket	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Installation of knee pads, elbow pads	Trousers, sweater, vest	-	-	-	-	-	-	300.00	300.00	25.50

Table 7 compares the differences between the French and Norwegian clothing repair prices and shows that in most cases repair in Norway is more expensive, even though the base for Norwegian prices is the minimum starting prices that companies provide.

The French study also included stains in the list of repairs. This is not included in the list of typical clothing repairs by Norwegian companies. This service is more likely covered by dry cleaners and professional laundries.

Table 7 Comparison of Norwegian and French average repair prices per repair category

Repair	Type of garment	FRANCE (€)	NORWAY (€)	Percentage higher
Zip change	Trousers, sweaters, vests, skirts, dresses	20	45.32	127 %
	Coats	42	37.17	-12 %
	Jackets	32	30.79	-4 %
Tear repair	Trousers, vests, skirts, dresses	10	19.69	97 %
	Coats	12	25.42	112 %
Tear repair, snag, moth hole	Sweaters and mid-layers	11	16.92	54 %
Replacement of shirt collar or cuff	Shirts and blouses	8	17.00	113 %
Repairing undone seam, fallen hem	Trousers, skirts, dresses	5	12.85	157 %
Pocket lining replacement	Trousers, coats	14	22.31	59 %
Changing the lining	Coats	54	116.83	116 %
	Skirts, dresses	22	59.50	170 %
Stained clothes	Trousers, skirts, T-shirts, dresses, sweaters, shirts, coats, jackets	17	-	-
Installation of knee pads, elbow pads	Trousers, sweaters, vests	19	25.50	34 %

[6] The price is based on skirts as none of the companies' price lists displayed prices for dresses. Prices for dresses are likely higher.

5. Conclusions

Enabling and increasing clothing repair is an important aspect of sustainable consumption. A consumer survey from the UK indicates that there is a strong association between longevity and repair, as repaired garments that were in active use were on average 1.3 years older than the items that had not been repaired (WRAP, 2022). While private clothing repairs are more common than professional ones, the pricing of professional services is an important topic to study to understand better the consumer repair motivations and enable a higher share of more severe damages to be repaired.

Our study shows that average starting prices of garment repairs vary between 151 NOK (13 euros) for simpler repairs such as repairing an undone seam or a fallen hem, and 1375 NOK (117 euros) for more demanding repairs such as changing a lining of a coat. When compared to the average prices of repair in France, the prices are on average 84% higher but can be up to triple in the cases of some garment types. The study is limited in scope but indicates that the price differences are substantial. The price differences may also be larger than these calculations indicate, because these are based on starting prices and because some repair categories were not specified by the repair companies/organisations in their price lists. Furthermore, the difference in average professional repair prices is much higher than the difference in clothing prices according to Eurostat's (2023a) price index (17%), which likely affects the consumers' willingness to have clothing professionally repaired. The difference is also higher than the 56% higher price index on consumer services and the 40-60% difference in the lowest salary levels.

The price difference of repair services can likely only partially be explained by higher salaries in Norway: it is likely that other expenses that repairers incur, such as rent, additional staff, equipment and supplies, also contribute to the repair price difference, as indicated by a previous SIFO study (Haugrønning et al., 2019). It may also be that the functioning of the Norwegian clothing repair market comes into play: size, competition etc. We do, however, have little quantitative data about these dynamics but previous SIFO studies have found that recruitment of repairers for other sectors is difficult (Haugrønning et al., 2019). Furthermore, the salary levels of repairers in the two countries and whether these represent low-paid jobs, have not been verified.

In addition, while the average Norwegian has 24.7% higher purchasing power than the average French person (Eurostat, 2023b), it is unknown whether this favours repair in general, including the use of repair services or the purchase of new goods. Though we have data on the share of Norwegians undertaking repairs, the overall volumes and shares of repaired goods and how these compare to those in France, are unknown.

Further, there are structural differences in support systems and taxation of services between European countries, such as the use of repair vouchers in some Austrian federal states, the French repair fund that is now also applied to clothing and lowered VAT for repair in several European countries. This study was limited in scope and has not examined the impact of these aspects on the repair rate. Future studies are suggested to focus on the relationships between new clothing prices and repair costs, considering factors like taxation, salary levels, funding schemes, and exploring the connections between repair, product lifespans, and environmental impacts.

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