

CHINA CUTS OFF WASTE RELOCATION TAP

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Chinese city of Shantou has been awash with mountains of imported waste. The area has specialized in plastic recycling and the recovery of electronic components. However, since January 1, in order to reduce the environmental impact, China has banned the import of 24 categories of waste, and as a consequence tons of garbage are left piling up in ports in Europe and the US, just as recounts [*Financial Times*](#).

The Asian giant received 7 million tons of plastic waste in 2016. Britain alone has sent 2.7 million tons to China since 2012, and Greenpeace points out that there is now no alternative destination to offshoring for such a volume big garbage. In total, 56% of the garbage that moved around the world in 2016, generally from developed countries, ended up in China, where it is recycled to meet domestic demand for raw materials.

China's import ban is a reflection of Beijing's tougher policy on pollution and environmental risks, and the fact that China alone generates more and more waste, so plants recycling and recovery of components do not depend as much on imports. In Guiyu, the rivers are black, and cancer rates in the population are high, due to inadequate treatment plants. The reduction in imports means that the situation continues like this, but on a smaller scale.

This whole situation highlights that Western countries are in a relatively more favorable environmental situation, not because of "the adoption of strict environmental regulations", but because they have transferred their polluting production to developing countries, such as Xu Bin, professor at the China-Europe International Business School (CEIBS), explains to [*The Country*](#).

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