

OFFICE OF TEXTILES AND APPAREL (OTEXA)

Market Reports Textiles, Apparel, Footwear and Travel Goods

European Union

The following information is provided only as a guide and should be confirmed with the proper authorities before embarking on any export activities.

Import Tariffs

The EU is a customs union that provides for free trade among its 28 member states--Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and The United Kingdom. The EU levies a common tariff on imported products entered from non-EU countries. By virtue of the Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU), Belgium and Luxembourg are considered a single territory for the purposes of customs and excise.

Members of the European Union apply the EU common external tariff (CET) to goods imported from non-EU countries. Import duties are calculated on an ad valorem basis, i.e., expressed as a percentage of the c.i.f. (cost, insurance and freight) value of the imported goods.

EU: Tariffs (percent ad valorem) on Textiles, Apparel, Footwear and Travel Goods

	HS Chapter/Subheading	Tariff Rate Range (%)
Yarn		
-silk	5003-5006	0 - 5
-wool	5105-5110	2 - 5
-cotton	5204-5207	4 - 5
-other vegetable fiber	5306-5308	0 - 5
-man-made fiber	5401-5406/5501-5511	3.8 - 5
Woven Fabric		
-silk	5007	3 - 7.5
-wool	5111-5113	5.3 - 8
-cotton	5208-5212	8
-other vegetable fiber	5309-5311	4 - 8
-man-made fiber	5407-5408/5512-5516	8
Knit Fabric	60	6.5 - 8
Non Woven Fabric	5603	4.3
Industrial Fabric	59	0 - 8
Apparel	61-62	6.3 - 12
Home Furnishings including: bed, bath, kitchen linens, etc.	63	0 - 12
Carpet	57	3 - 8*
Footwear	64	3 - 17
Travel Goods	4202	2.7 - 9.7

*5701.10.9000 - 8.00% MAX 2.80 EUR/M2

Binding Tariff Information (BTI)--The ultimate authority regarding products imported into the EU are the customs authorities in the individual Member States. On request, a written tariff classification decision (i.e., BTI) is provided, which is legally binding on all customs administrations within the EU. The BTI is intended to provide assurance about the correct tariff classification of the goods, it is not a legal requirement. For more information on BTI and how to apply for one, see the [European Binding Tariff Information website](#).

Taxes and Other Import Fees--VAT (value added tax) rates vary by individual EU member country. In general, the VAT charged on clothing, household linens and footwear are also the standard rates. Reduced rates may be applicable in certain member countries for children's clothing. The VAT is applied on the c.i.f. value plus duty. For more details, see the [Europa-Taxation and Customs Union website](#).

Punitive tariffs-- Effective May 1, 2017, the EU will apply a punitive duty of 4.3% on imports from the United States of women's or girls' cotton denim trousers and breeches (excl. industrial & occupational, bib and brace overalls and panties), classified in EU CN code 6204.62.31.

To return to the Foreign Tariff Information webpage, click [here](#).

The [EU TARIC database](#) on the [EU TARIC homepage](#) includes the various rules applying to specific products when imported into the EU's customs territory, as well as tariff suspensions, tariff quotas, preferential treatment, anti-dumping and countervailing duties, import prohibitions and restrictions, quantitative limits, export surveillance, licenses and certificates. Products that are prohibited or subject to restriction, are indicated with the following codes:

- CITES - Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species
- PROHI - Import Suspension
- RSTR - Import Restriction

Ban on Fur from Animals Caught in Leghold Traps--In 1991, the EU adopted a regulation banning the use of leghold traps in the EU. The regulation also requires a ban on imports of fur and fur products of certain species from countries that either do not ban leghold traps or do not conform their trapping practices to internationally agreed humane trapping standards. In December 1997, United States and the EU signed an agreement on humane trapping standards, which should permit continuing access of U.S.-sourced fur and fur-products to the European market.

Dog and Cat Fur--Regulation 1523/2007 bans the trade in cat and dog fur and products containing fur taken from cats and dogs, making it illegal to import, export and place on the EU market, fur from cats and dogs and articles containing fur from such animals.

For information on local customs requirements and documentation, see:

- [Member States customs websites](#)

Standards

EU legislation harmonizes mandatory requirements for product safety throughout European Economic Area - EEA, covering all 28 EU member states and including Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. With appropriate certification, goods travel freely within the EEA. Products tested and certified in the United States are likely to have to be retested and re-certified to EU requirements due to the EU's different approach to the protection of the health and safety of consumers and the environment. Where products are not regulated by specific EU technical legislation, they are subject to the EU's General Product Safety Directive (GPSD), as well as to possible additional national (i.e., specific EU member country) requirements.

The following are the main regulations that may apply to textiles, apparel and footwear:

- General Product Safety Directive (GPSD) - 2001/95/EC
- CE Marking
- REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) - EC1907/2006
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Directive 89/686/EEC (re. occupational/safety clothing and footwear)
- Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR) - EU 528/2012 (amending regulation 334/2014)
- European Labeling Directives (see section on Labeling)

General Product Safety Directive (GPSD) - 2001/95/EC

The GPSD is intended to ensure a high level of product safety throughout the EU for consumer products that are not covered by specific sector legislation. The Directive provides a generic definition of a safe product. In addition to the basic requirement to place only safe products on the market, manufacturers must inform consumers of the risks associated with the products they supply. Manufacturers also must take appropriate measures to prevent such risks and be able to trace dangerous products. See [European Commission General Product Safety website](#) for more information, as well as a list of standards that may apply to various textile, apparel and footwear products.

Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX)

The GPSD provides for an alert system between Member States and the Commission. The [RAPEX](#) system ensures that the relevant authorities are rapidly informed of dangerous products. In the case of serious product risks, temporary decisions can be taken on Community-wide measures. Under certain conditions, the Commission may adopt a formal Decision requiring the Member States to ban the marketing of a product posing a serious risk, to recall it from consumers or to withdraw it from the market.

CE Marking

Products sold in the EEA (and Switzerland and Turkey) must have a [CE marking](#) whenever they are covered by specific product legislation. The CE marking legislation offers manufacturers a number of choices and requires decisions to determine which safety/health concerns need to be addressed, which conformity assessment module is best suited to the manufacturing process, and whether or not to use EU-wide harmonized standards.

Products manufactured to standards adopted by CEN, CENELEC or ETSI, and referenced in the EU Official Journal as harmonized standards, are presumed to conform to the requirements of EU Directives. Manufacturers of such products may apply the CE marking and issue a declaration of conformity, which will allow the product to circulate freely within the EEA. Manufacturers can choose not to use the harmonized EU standards, but then must demonstrate that the product meets the essential safety and performance requirements.

Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive list of the products that require a CE mark. Therefore, it is the manufacturer's responsibility to determine if a product requires a CE mark from various directives issued by the European Commission. Certain textile, apparel and footwear products are subject to CE marking and certification under the following EU directives: [Safety of Toys](#), [Medical Devices](#), [Construction Products](#) and [Personal Protective Equipment](#). For more information, see the [Export.gov webpage on CE marking](#).

Hazardous Substances

Registration, Evaluation and Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) is the system for controlling chemicals in the EU. Under REACH, registration is required on all chemicals manufactured or imported into the EU in volumes above 1 metric ton per year. Information on a chemical's properties, uses and handling are part of the registration process. U.S. companies exporting chemical products to the EU must update their Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) to be REACH compliant. For more information, see guidance on the compilation of safety data sheets on the [European Chemicals Agency – ECHA website](#).

Manufacturers or importers of articles containing more than 0.1% by weight of any substance requiring authorization must provide their customers with adequate information on the safe use and disposal of the article, including the relevant names of the substances of very high concern (SVHC). Manufacturers and retailers must be prepared to answer consumers' questions regarding the presence of SVHC in articles and provide sufficient information to allow a safe use of these articles.

Restricted chemicals & dangerous substances under Annex XVII of REACH, affecting textile, apparel and footwear products include:

- Lead
- Cadmium
- Azo Colourants (Dyes & Pigments)
- Dimethyl Fumarate (DMF)
- Nickel
- Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)
- Pentachlorophenol (PCP) (note: several countries within Europe have more stringent national legislation, e.g., Norway, Austria and Denmark.)
- Chromium VI
- Phthalates (Toy and childcare products)

*Formaldehyde is not regulated by REACH, but is subject to restriction in some member states, such as Germany.

Footwear--CEN has published a technical report (TR) with guidelines regarding the usage and presence of certain chemicals known as Substances of Very High Concern (SVHC) applicable to the footwear industry. The technical report *PD CEN/TR 16417:2016 "Footwear – Footwear industry guideline for substances of very high concern (Annex XIV of REACH)* indicates which SVHC may be present in footwear components and the footwear industry. The guideline can help footwear manufacturers collect mandatory information from suppliers regarding the content of these chemicals and assists manufacturers in providing accurate information to their customers.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Directive 89/686/EEC

The [PPE Directive](#) covers clothing and footwear designed to be worn by individuals for protection against health and safety hazards. It is intended to ensure that any personal protective equipment placed on the EU market meets its intended purpose. All products that come under the scope of the Directive and are placed on the market in an EU country must be CE marked. (see information on CE Marking)

The PPE Directive does not define how particular types of product must be tested. It only includes health & safety requirements that need to be taken into account. However, the European Commission has mandated the development of various product safety standards via the European Standards agency CEN (Comite Europeen de Normalisation). A manufacturer can use any technical specification, as long as it can be shown to satisfy the relevant PPE Directive essential safety requirements. However, if a European harmonized standard is available, a sound technical argument must be provided for not using it. For more information see the Commission website on [Personal Protective Equipment](#).

Under the PPE, footwear is divided into three classes, depending on the intended use: safety footwear, protective footwear and occupational footwear. The performance specifications are provided in the following standards:

- EN ISO 20345 for safety footwear
- EN ISO 20346 for protective footwear
- EN ISO 20347 for occupational footwear.

Additional standards exist for footwear used in other activities, such as those of chainsaw operators and motorcyclists.

Note: Effective April 21, 2018, Directive 89/686/EEC will be replaced by the new [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/425 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on personal protective equipment](#).

Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR) - EU 528/2012 (amending regulation 334/2014)

Whenever biocidal products are added to textiles, apparel, or footwear to give them specific properties (e.g., repel insects or avoid allergens) the provisions of the [Biocidal Products Regulation \(BPR\)](#) must be followed. Under the regulations, articles can only be treated with active substances that have been approved in the EU for that purpose. The BPR requires treated articles to be labeled when:

1. a claim is made that the treated article has biocidal properties
2. conditions of the approval of the active substance used to treat the article require specific labeling provisions to protect public health or the environment.

As under REACH, the BPR permits consumers to request that suppliers of treated articles provide information on the biocidal treatment. For more information, see the [European Commission Environment website on biocidal products](#).

Children's Apparel

CEN has published a technical report (TR) for manufacturers, recommending methods of making children's garments avoiding certain hazards that may pose a risk to the wearer's safety -- *Cen TR 16792-2014: Safety Of Children's Clothing – Recommendations For The Design And Manufacture Of Children's Clothing – Mechanical Hazards*. The GPSD requires that all products placed on the market are safe. Product safety may be assessed by reference to a number of regulations and standards including industry codes of practice such as European technical reports.

Drawstrings in Children's Clothing--European standard EN 14682-*Safety of Children's Clothing – Cords & Drawstrings on Children's Clothing-Specifications* contains specific baseline requirements to ensure that cords and drawstrings are placed safely on children garments. EN 14682 is a "harmonized" standard that is directly referenced by the GPSD making it a mandatory standard in all EU member states. Producers must ensure that garments they place on the EU market are safe. Also importers, distributors and retailers are required to act with due care to ensure that products they supply to consumers are safe.

EN 14682 specifies requirements for cords and drawstrings on children's clothing, including costumes and skiwear, up to the age of 14. Specific requirements are divided into two main categories, according to the age of the children:

- Children up to 7 years – corresponding to children with a height up to 134 cm
- Children 7-14 – corresponding to a height greater than 134cm and up to 182 cm for boys or 176 cm for girls

Actions against the noncompliant and dangerous garments include withdrawal from the market, recall from consumers and ban on sales. Noncompliance to EN 14682 is the major reason for product notifications/recalls in the EU RAPEX (Rapid Alert System for non – food Dangerous Products). For more information, see the [European Commission webpage re. European standard EN 14682](#). It should be noted that there are differences between the EU and U.S. requirements, such as the clothing sizes regulated and the length of cords regulated.

Zipper--EN 16732 -*Specification for Slide Fasteners (Zips)* include specific requirements for zippers on children's clothing and other textile products such as sleep bags, mattresses and pillows.

Apparel Flammability

There are no specific textile/apparel flammability requirements at the EU level. The GPSD provides the framework that covers flammability, although it does not specifically address requirements. The use of voluntary standards helps comply with the GPSD. European Standard EN 14878-*Burning Behaviour of Children's Nightwear-Specification* is a voluntary European standard, with test methods under EN 1103-*Fabric For Apparel-Detailed Procedure for Determination of the Burning Behaviour*.

In the UK, requirements (technical and labeling) on the flammability of nightwear are laid down in The Nightwear (Safety) Regulations-1985. Flammability performance requirements are specified in UK standard BS 5722-*Flammability Performance of Fabric and Fabric Assemblies Used in Sleepwear and Dressing Gowns*. BS 5438-*Methods of test for Flammability of Vertically Orientated Textile Fabrics and Fabric Assemblies* describes how to burn the fabrics for compliance with BS5722. To ensure compliance with both the UK regulations and the GPSD, see the BERR advisory, [New requirements for the fire safety of children's nightwear – Nightwear Advisory Note 2008](#). In general, it is recommended that the more onerous of the requirements of both the GPSD/EN 14878 and the UK Regulations be applied to children's nightwear to be sold in the UK market.

In the Netherlands requirements (technical and labeling) on the flammability of clothing are laid down in the "Covenant fire safety of nightwear", which are referred to in the Enforcement Agreements regarding the fire safety of clothing. The Dutch requirements apply to two types of clothing: nightwear and clothing other than nightwear. Clothing must be made of cloth that meets the flammability test conforming to ASTM D1230. Nightwear must meet the flammability test conforming to EN 1103 and NEN 1722 surface flash test.

Other EU member countries also have national flammability regulations, including Ireland and Sweden. Care should be taken to ensure that products meet the EU, as well as applicable national requirements. Although the requirements may be similar, there may be differences in product coverage, as there are differences in the definition of nightwear and some national laws include clothing other than nightwear. Also, test methods and labeling requirements/instructions may differ. In Portugal and Lithuania, national flammability regulations apply to the workwear in professions at risk, such as fire-fighters.

Home Textiles

Textiles Flammability--Some EU member states have legislation on the flammability of products such as furniture, carpets, curtains, and car seats. In the UK, testing and labeling requirements for furniture and furnishing are laid down in "the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations. Austria, Finland, and France also have textile flammability regulations.

Some European standards for furniture flammability follow:

- EN 1021-1: *Furniture-Assessment of the ignitability of upholstered furniture: Smouldering cigarette*
- EN 597-1:1994 – *Furniture-Assessment of the ignitability of mattresses and upholstered bed bases - Part 1: Ignition source: Smouldering cigarette*
- EN 597-2:1994 – *Furniture-Assessment of the ignitability of mattresses and upholstered bed bases - Part 2: Ignition source: Match flame equivalent*

Carpet CE Marking--Carpeting sold in the EU must have a CE marking, as required under the [Construction Products Directive \(89/106/EEC\)](#). Under the directive, materials intended for construction must comply with health, safety and environmental requirements as follows: mechanical strength and stability; fire safety; hygiene, health and environment; safety of use; sound nuisance; and energy savings and heat retention. Attesting the conformity of a floor covering with the requirements of EN 14041 must be done in part by the producer, but may also require third party testing and certification. A construction product is defined as any product that is produced for incorporation in a permanent manner in a construction project, thus various other textile products could be covered. For more information, see the U.S. Commercial Service report on [The European Union's Directive on Construction Products](#).

Window blinds--Under Commission implementing decision 2014/531/EU, compliance with the European standards listed below meet the GPSD regarding risks posed to children by internal blinds, corded window coverings and safety devices:

- EN 16433:2014 - Internal blinds – Protection from strangulation hazards – Test methods.
- EN 16434:2014 – Internal blinds – Protection from strangulation hazards – Requirements and test methods for safety devices.
- EN 13120:2009+A1:2014 – Internal blinds – performance requirements including safety. Clause 8.2 Protection from strangulation and clause 15 Information for installation, use and maintenance.

Cosmetotextiles

Cosmetotextiles, include textile products that release a cosmetic substance from a microcapsule on to the human body. Cosmetotextiles represent a growing field for smart textiles in the beauty and fashion industries. Technical report, PD CEN/TR 15917:2009 – Textiles, Cosmetotextiles addresses the product safety of this technology in Europe. Note that the cosmetic product used in a cosmetotextile should comply with the European Cosmetics Directive 76/768/EEC. Examples of cosmetotextiles products include:

- Slimming preparations: pantyhose, underwear, trousers
- Moisturizing preparations: pantyhose, underwear, T-shirts
- Refreshing preparations: houselinen (bedsheets)

Local standards organization and other resources:

- [European Committee for Standardization - CEN](#) - CEN/TC 248-Textiles and textile products
- [European Commission - European Standards](#)
- [Commission's Technical Regulations Information System - TRIS](#) (technical regulations)
- [U.S. Commercial Service-U.S. Mission to the European Union: EU Standards and CE Marking](#)

Labeling

EU member countries have varying regulations pertaining to the marking, labeling and packaging of products. There is no one EU-wide law covering all of the various requirements. Also, EU member states generally specify that the national language be used on the label.

Textile and apparel products

Textile and apparel products placed on the EU market must have a label clearly identifying the fiber content. In addition, individual country labeling requirements may also apply. See the [OTEXA Labeling Requirements table](#) for a summary of possible requirements applied by individual EU member countries.

In general, surveillance and inspection of the conformity of products to the information provided on the labels are carried out at different stages of the supply chain, which, in the case of imported products, ranges from customs clearance to retail outlets. The responsibility for compliance marking and labeling regulations generally falls on the importer. Exporters should carefully follow importer's instructions as failure to do so can cause customs delays and extra expenses.

Fiber content labeling--EU regulations require that textile products be labeled to show fiber content as specified in Regulation No 1007/2011. For more information on this labeling regulation, see the [EU's website - Textiles and clothing legislation](#).

Fur and Leather content labeling--Any use of animal-derived materials (i.e., real fur and leather) must be clearly stated on apparel labels.

Care labeling--Care labeling provides information on recommended methods for cleaning textile and apparel products, i.e., washing, bleaching, ironing, dry cleaning and tumble drying. There is no harmonized EU legislation on care labeling, although some EU member countries may require care labels on products sold in their markets. Nevertheless, care labeling is recommended as the manufacturer can be held liable under the EU Product Liability Directive if a problem occurs.

Care symbols generally used in the EU comply with ISO 3758 - *Textiles -- Care labelling code using symbols* standard, which is based on the care symbols developed by [GINETEX](#). These symbols are registered as international trademarks by GINETEX and there may be a fee to use them in certain markets.

Also, for further reference, see the [Intertek brochure on care labeling](#) (Intertek is a private quality assurance provider).

Country of Origin labeling--There is no EU-wide legislation on country of origin labeling for textile and apparel products, although some member countries may require the origin to be listed on the label.

Flammability labeling--See the Standards section for information regarding flammability labeling.

Size labeling--Standard EN 13402 was developed for labeling clothes sizes, based on body dimensions and measured in centimeters. Although EN 13402 was supposed to replace many older national sizing systems, the standard reportedly has not been fully accepted in all EU member states.

Footwear

Footwear must be labeled with information relating to material content of the main component parts (i.e., the upper, the lining/sock, and the outer-sole). The information must be conveyed by means of approved pictograms or text, as defined by the [European Labelling Directive for Footwear - 94/11/EC](#). The label can be attached to just one shoe of the pair by stitching, printing, embossing or sticking. For more information on the directive, see the [EU Footwear legislation webpage](#).

Protective occupational shoes are exempted from this labeling obligation as they are subject to conformity labeling under [Directive 89/686/EEC on Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#).

Travel Goods

Travel goods of textile materials, as well as all travel goods, are not subject to mandatory labeling--except those considered protective equipment, which may be subject to [CE marking](#). See also, the [Directive 89/686/EEC on Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#).

European Ecolabel--The ecolabel is officially endorsed by the EU and can be placed on a range of products that meet high standards of environmental awareness, which are sold across the EU and EEA (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) countries. Participation in the eco-label scheme is voluntary. While not required, companies may consider this label to improve consumer perception of the product. For more information, see the [European Ecolabel website](#).

In the case of textiles, the label is awarded to products if: substances with harmful effects on the aquatic environment and air have been limited during fiber production, the risk of allergic reactions has been reduced, the product does not shrink more than conventional products, the product is as color resistant against washing, drying friction and light exposure as conventional products. For a product made outside the European Community, an application must be submitted to the designated authorities of the Member States in which the product is to be or has been placed on the market. Applications for the award of an Eco-label are subject to payment of a fee. In addition, there is an annual fee for the use of the label.

A European Ecolabel for footwear, established in 1999, applies to all categories of footwear, including sports, occupational, children's, men's, and women's; and specialist footwear for cold, casual use, fashion, and indoors.

The German label Öko-tex is also a widely used ecolabel in Europe. It is a recognized measure of ecological and health consciousness, and is widely used in the textile production sector in Europe¹²³. In order to mark and advertise textile products with the Öko-tex label, all components, including accessories, must meet the specified requirements and be certified. For more information, see the [International Oeko-Tex Association website](#).

Sun-safe testing and labeling for apparel--Two standards that specify the materials for protective garments and their marking are EN 13758, part 1 (method of test for apparel fabrics) and part 2 (classification and marking). The designated pictogram of a sun with the CEN reference number and the number "40+" can be attached to the garment if it is in compliance with the Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF), which must be at least 40, and fulfill certain design requirements as specified in the standard.

Market Information

See the [European Commission – Growth](#) for information on the following sectors:

- [Fashion and high-end industries](#)
- [Textiles and clothing](#)
- [Footwear](#)
- [Medical devices](#)

[Informative Tool on light Industries \(ITI\)](#) - EUROSTAT data on textile, clothing, leather, wood, printing, paper, furniture and footwear industries.

[Your Europe, your opportunity - Practical guide to doing business in Europe website](#).

[EU Trade Helpdesk](#)

For additional information on exporting textiles, apparel, footwear and travel goods, click [here](#).

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