

The European market potential for liquorice

There is an increasing demand for more natural cosmetic products on the European market. The demand is driven by increasing consumer awareness of the harmful effects of synthetic ingredients. Cosmetics manufacturers are constantly looking for natural ingredients with active and functional properties which they can use in their formulations, such as liquorice extract.

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1. Product description

Liquorice is the root of *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, from which a great sweet flavour can be extracted. It is a herbaceous perennial legume native to the Middle East, Southern Europe and some parts of Asia.

The root has a similar flavour profile to anise, star anise or fennel, which are not botanically related. Liquorice is used in candies and sweeteners, herbalism and traditional medicine, but also in cosmetic products, which are a relatively small user of liquorice.

Liquorice extract is made by boiling the root and evaporating much of the water. Liquorice is traded as a paste and/or a spray-dried powder. In the cosmetics industry, the extract has to be highly refined.

Despite its black colour and its strong smell, the unprocessed liquorice is not commonly used in cosmetics because the ingredient is less effective than in its extracted form. Otherwise, it has to be added in substantial quantities to be effective.

The majority of liquorice extract is used in the food, pharmaceutical and tobacco industries. The application of liquorice extract in cosmetics is relatively small. In cosmetics, liquorice is used primarily in skincare and haircare products, as it has several properties. Table 1 gives an overview of the use of liquorice ingredients in cosmetic products.

Table 1 Liquorice ingredient applications in cosmetic products

Liquorice Ingredients	Properties
Liquorice root extract, liquorice root water	Hair and skin conditioning and protecting, emollient and humectant
Liquorice root water	Cosmetics astringents
Liquorice root extract, liquorice root water	Antioxidant agents
Liquorice root extract, root juice, leaf extract, root powder	Smoothing and soothing agents, miscellaneous

Rhizome and liquorice roots	Flavouring agents
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Source: various

Liquorice is classified as Harmonised System code 1302.12. Table 2 shows the classification of liquorice and its derivatives in the [COSING](#) database. COSING is the official cosmetic ingredient database of the European Union (EU). It lists more than 15,000 ingredients used in the manufacturing of cosmetics and gives information on permitted as well as banned substances.

Table 2 Classification of liquorice in COSING database

INCI Name	GLYCYRRHIZA GLABRA ROOT EXTRACT
Description	Glycyrrhiza Glabra Root Extract is an extract of the roots of the Licorice, Glycyrrhiza glabra L., Leguminosae
INN Name	
Ph. Eur. Name	
CAS #	84775-66-6
EC #	283-895-2
Chemical/IUPAC Name	
Cosmetic Restriction	
Other Restriction(s)	
Functions	BLEACHING
	EMOLLIENT
	PERFUMING
	SKIN CONDITIONING
	SMOOTHING
	SOOTHING
SCCS opinions	

Identified INGREDIENTS or substances e.g.	
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Source: COSING

Table 2 provides the INCI name as well as the CAS number. The database also lists the properties and applications of liquorice extract. This information will help suppliers preparing a technical dossier for their ingredients.

2. What makes Europe an interesting market for liquorice?

A growing demand for natural ingredients in the cosmetics industry and demographic trends such as an ageing population make Europe an attractive market for exporters of liquorice extract from developing countries. Cosmetics companies in Europe are looking to remove synthetics in their formulations and use natural ingredients such as liquorice extract.

Liquorice extract is used in the food, pharmaceuticals, tobacco and cosmetics industry. The bulk of liquorice extract is used in the food industry. In the cosmetics industry, liquorice provides several functions, as highlighted in the previous section.

Europe has the [largest cosmetics market](#) in the world. In 2018, it was valued at EUR 78.6 billion. Skincare, haircare and toiletries are the most important product categories, generating about 70% of the total sales.

The cosmetics market is also influenced by demographic trends such as an ageing population. As Europe experiences an [ageing population](#), the demand for anti-ageing cosmetics is likely to rise. Liquorice extract is used in anti-ageing cosmetics because of its active properties.

There is also a growing demand for natural ingredients in the cosmetics industry. The European market for natural and organic cosmetics is growing at a healthy rate; Ecovia Intelligence shows that the market was worth EUR 3.6 billion in 2018. European consumers are willing to pay more for quality natural and organic products.

Table 3 shows that while the imports of liquorice decreased significantly in volume from 2012 to 2014, the imported value increased. The imported volume of liquorice extract has been at about the same level since 2014. It is worth noting that the cosmetics industry is a relatively small consumer of liquorice extract compared with other industries. The price of liquorice extract has increased because of the low availability of raw materials.

Table 3 Imports of liquorice extract to the EU, 2011-2018

Liquorice extract, HS code 130212	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
EU28 ¹ '000 EUR	13,246	13,104	14,311	19,273	21,463	24,643	26,881	26,572
% change		-1%	9%	35%	11%	15%	9%	-1%

EU28/` 000 tonnes	19,519	32,212	18,763	3,751	3,672	3,448	3,606	3,818
% change		65%	-42%	-80%	-2%	-6%	5%	6%

Source: Eurostat

There is an opportunity for liquorice suppliers in developing countries. The prices are rising, while the number of applications in the cosmetics industry is increasing. Liquorice extract can be used in anti-ageing cosmetics, sun-care products and dermatological personal care products. As the demand for natural ingredients increases in the industry, the market for liquorice extract will continue to grow.

Tip:

When approaching European buyers, emphasise the actives in liquorice extract. State the applications in cosmetic products and be prepared to provide scientific documents in order to back up any claims. You can find [examples](#) online.

3. Which European countries offer the most opportunities for liquorice?

The countries that offer the most opportunities for suppliers of liquorice are France, Germany, Spain, the UK and the Netherlands. Germany and France are by far the leading importers of liquorice extract. The reason is that these countries have a robust cosmetics manufacturing industry.

Figure 2 shows the leading importers of liquorice in Europe. Germany is the largest importer of liquorice extract, followed by France. Other countries, such as the Netherlands, Italy, Finland and the UK, also import significant quantities of liquorice extract. Germany and France are expected to remain the leading importers of liquorice extract in future.

Table 4 Imports of liquorice extract to Europe, 2011-2018

2018	000 Tonnes	% Change in Volume (2012-2018)	m EUR	% Change in Value (2012-2018)	Major Exporters	Important Market Players
Germany	43.2	3%	24.20	13%	Iran (81.3%), USA (7.7%), China (4.2%)	Norevo, Worlée

France	29.9	131%	16.63	115%	UAE (57.7%), Turkmenistan (24%), China (14%)	Extraits Végétaux et Dérivés, S.A.S. Phytexence
Netherlands	21.4	-89%	13.55	35%	Germany (43.4%), France (18.9%), Iran (14.3%)	Ruitenbergh BasIQs B.V., VehGro BV
Italy	5.5	19%	2.29	15%	France (47.5%), Slovakia (31.9%), Germany (7.4%), Iran (7.8%)	A.ERRE & CO, Natura d'Oriente srl
Finland	4.8	-20%	2.87	7%	Netherlands (70%), France (16%), Germany (7.2%)	Kouvola Licorice Ltd
UK	2.4	-48%	1.85	-29%	France (74.6%), Iran (14.1%),	A & E Connock, Handa Fine Chemicals

Source: Eurostat

Tips:

Target Western European countries, especially France and Germany. These countries are large importers of liquorice extract. France and Germany have a large number of cosmetics manufacturers, while they also have the largest markets for conventional and natural cosmetics.

See the [CBI report](#) on 10 tips for how to find buyers when exporting natural ingredients for cosmetics to Europe.

Visit trade fairs in Europe when looking for buyers. Recommended trade shows include [InCosmetics](#) and [Vivaness](#).

Germany

German imports of liquorice extract increased in volume and value between 2011 and 2018. The volume of

liquorice extracts to Germany reached 43,200 tonnes in 2018, an increase of 3% from 2011. The value of imports increased by 13% over the same period. Around 94% of liquorice extract imported to Germany comes from outside of the EU. This share decreased slightly from 95% in 2011. The leading exporter is Iran, followed by the United States.

Germany has a strong cosmetics manufacturing industry. It also has the leading consumer market in Europe. The cosmetics market (conventional and natural) in Germany is the largest in Europe.

In Germany, [Beiersdorf](#) is a major cosmetics manufacturer. Leading natural and organic cosmetics companies include [Wala Heilmittel](#), the Börlind group, [Laverana](#), Logocos (L'Oréal), Primavera Life and Santaverde. Brands such as Sante (Logocos), Anne Marie Börlind (the Börlind group) and Dr. Hauschka (Wala Heilmittel) have dedicated sun-care lines. There is also a wide range of companies offering anti-ageing products; they include Beiersdorf, Wala Heilmittel, the Börlind group, Logocos and Speick. Worlée is a leading importer of liquorice extract.

There is a growing demand for natural and organic cosmetics in Germany. The market has been growing at a healthy rate for many years and this trend is likely to continue.

Germany is an attractive market for exporters of liquorice extract from developing countries. Suppliers of liquorice extract should target German buyers, as there is a growing demand for natural and organic cosmetics. The number of cosmetics companies with dedicated sun-care and anti-ageing skincare lines is increasing.

France

French imports of liquorice extract increased between 2011 and 2014. In terms of volume, the level of imports increased by 131%. Liquorice extract imports increased in value by 115% between 2011 and 2018. Imported volumes have increased at a steady rate since 2015. Around 98% of liquorice imports come from outside of the EU. This figure is a slight increase from 96% in 2011.

France has one of the largest cosmetics markets in Europe. It has the second-largest market for natural and organic cosmetics in the region. The country has a strong cosmetics manufacturing sector. France is also an important exporter of liquorice extract to other European countries.

[L'Oréal](#), [Groupe Rocher](#), Laboratoire Nuxe, [Bioderma Laboratories](#) and [Pierre Fabre](#) are some of the leading cosmetic companies in France. All major cosmetics companies offer sun-care and anti-ageing skincare products. Bioderma has a dedicated sun-care line called Photoderm. France has an advanced market for natural and organic cosmetics. Leading natural and organic cosmetics companies include L'Occitane, Caudalie, Léa Nature Group, Cattier Laboratoires and Nature et Stratégie. Caudalie, Cattier and Florame are some of the brands with anti-ageing products.

Many new natural and organic cosmetic products are being launched on the French market. Conventional brands are launching natural and organic versions of successful brands. For instance, L'Oréal launched the Garnier Bio range in February 2019. The organic skincare products are COSMOS-certified.

The French market offers a lot of opportunities for liquorice exporters from developing countries. The demand for natural and organic cosmetics is growing. It is expected that this trend will continue in future.

The Netherlands

Imports to the Netherlands have decreased in volume. Between 2011 and 2018, the volume of liquorice extract imported to the Netherlands decreased by 89%. The value increased by 35% over the same term. Most of the liquorice extract imported into the Netherlands is re-exported to other European countries.

Around 30% of imported liquorice extract comes from outside of the EU. Leading exporters are Iran, Japan and

the United States. In 2011, the share of imports from outside of the EU was 7%.

The Netherlands has a growing market for natural and organic cosmetics. De Traay, Chi International and Pavèz are some of the leading domestic brands. Pavèz has sun-care and anti-ageing products in its portfolio.

Suppliers of liquorice extract should target the Netherlands. Most of the liquorice extract is re-exported to other European countries. It is expected that the Netherlands will remain a significant importer of liquorice extract in the near future.

Italy

Italian imports of liquorice extract have increased. In terms of volume, the imports increased by almost 19% from 2011 to 2018. The value of imports reached EUR 2.29 million in 2018, a 15% increase from 2011.

Almost 13% of liquorice extract imports come from outside of the EU. This share decreased from 39% in 2019. The trend is expected to continue. Italy has one of the largest markets for conventional and natural cosmetics in Europe.

Italy has one of the largest cosmetics markets in Europe. There is a growing demand for natural and organic cosmetics. Leading natural and organic companies include L'Erbolario, ISMEG, Lacote, Helan and Bema Cosmetici. L'Erbolario and Bema Cosmetici have sun-care lines. Many natural and organic cosmetic companies such as L'Erbolario also offers anti-ageing lines.

The Italian market offers opportunities for exporters of liquorice extract from developing countries. There is a growing demand for natural cosmetics. Many leading conventional and natural brands have dedicated anti-ageing as well as sun-care lines.

Finland

Imports of liquorice extract to Finland decreased between 2011 and 2018. The volume of imports has decreased by 20% from 2011. The value of imports increased by 7% over the same period. The majority of imports come from within the EU.

The leading Finnish cosmetics company is [Lumene](#). The company has phased out synthetic chemicals in its formulations and launched the Lumene Harmonia range, which contains 99% natural ingredients. Lumene also has a sun-care line.

There is a growing demand for natural and organic cosmetics on the Finnish market. Important Finnish brands include Frantsila, Muru Muru and Atopik.

Finland is an attractive export market for suppliers of liquorice extracts from developing countries. There is a growing market for natural and organic cosmetics. Conventional cosmetics companies are adding natural ingredients to their product formulations.

UK

The UK is the sixth-largest market for liquorice extract. The imported volume of liquorice extract decreased by 48% between 2011 and 2018. The value of liquorice extract imports decreased by 29% over the same term. Around 15% of liquorice imports come from outside of the EU. This share has increased from 13% in 2011.

The UK has one of the largest consumer markets in Europe. [Unilever](#) and [Elemis](#) are two leading cosmetic companies. Unilever launched its Love, Beauty and Planet brand of sustainable cosmetics in 2017. The company aims to reduce its carbon footprint by 20% in 2020.

The British market for natural and organic cosmetics is growing. Neal's Yard Remedies, REN Skincare (Unilever),

Green People and Faith in Nature are some of the leading brands. REN Skincare has a dedicated sun-care line, while Neal's Yard Remedies has anti-ageing skincare products.

The UK offers opportunities for exporters of liquorice extract from developing countries. There is a growing market for natural and organic cosmetics, which trend is expected to continue. Leading conventional and natural personal care companies are developing dedicated lines of sun-care and anti-ageing products.

A possible no-deal Brexit may disrupt the supply chains for ingredients such as liquorice extract. It may take some time to renegotiate trade deals with developing countries, so there is some uncertainty when supplying liquorice extract to the UK.

Slovakia and Poland import significant volumes of liquorice extract. However, only a small portion of imports come from outside of the EU.

There is a growing demand for natural ingredients in the European cosmetics industry. Natural ingredients such as liquorice extract can be used in anti-ageing products. About 32% percent of women in the UK, 30.5% of women in France, 29% of women in Germany and 28% of women in Spain [use anti-ageing products](#).

4. Which trends offer opportunities on the European market?

There are several trends on the European cosmetics market to which suppliers of liquorice extract can cater. The ageing population in Europe is generating a demand for anti-ageing products. Liquorice extract is used in anti-ageing products because of its active and functional properties. Cosmetics manufacturers are looking to clean up their formulations as well by replacing synthetic ingredients with natural ones. The growing sun protection market is also generating a demand for natural ingredients such as liquorice extract.

Ageing population in Europe driving demand for anti-ageing products

Europe has an ageing population, which is stimulating the demand for anti-ageing products such as cosmetics. In 2018, the [global anti-ageing market](#) was valued at USD 42.5 billion. It is estimated that the market will grow by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.3% to USD 55.0 billion in 2023.

Consumers are searching for anti-ageing skincare products such as creams, serums and roll-on face masks. Important segments are anti-wrinkle products, anti-pigmentation products and anti-stretch mark products. There are several natural ingredients that can be used in these products. Liquorice is used for its anti-ageing and antioxidant properties.

Liquorice is renowned for its anti-ageing properties; it has antioxidants that can help to prevent skin from ageing prematurely. Liquorice also has skin-soothing properties, because it contains the antioxidant glabridin, which can mitigate the effects of sun-damaged or red, irritated skin.

Suppliers of liquorice extract from developing countries should consider catering to this growing market for anti-ageing products.

Tips:

Use claims which are positive and which make people feel good about themselves, such as 'nourishing', 'firming' and 'brightening'. Use these claims in your marketing materials and when approaching European buyers.

See the [CBI report on exporting anti-ageing extracts to Europe](#). You can find more information on competition, regulations and channels through which to export to Europe.

Educate yourself on the EU regulations for the justification of claims used in cosmetics. Review [EU](#)

[Claim Substantiation Regulation 655/2013](#) or visit [blogs](#) that explain EU regulations.

Increasing demand for sun-care cosmetics

The [global sun-care market](#) was valued at USD 11.65 billion in 2018. This market is forecast to grow by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.85% to USD 17.0 billion in 2024.

The [European market for sun protection products](#) is expected to grow by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.1% between 2018 to 2024.

The growth in the market for sun-care products is due to a general rise in consumer awareness of skincare issues, driven by health promotion and disease prevention campaigns. For example, public health campaigns are informing consumers about the importance of protecting their skin from the sun. A secondary factor is that consumers are using specialised skincare products. These factors are stimulating a growth in the European market for sun-care products. In addition, multi-functional skincare products with benefits such as anti-blemish, anti-ageing and dark spot reduction are becoming popular.

Liquorice extract is used in sun-care products. It protects the skin against ultra-violet rays and it can also be used in aftersun products. For example, the Greek personal care company Greenyard Naturals uses liquorice extract in its [aftersun cream](#).

There is a growing demand for cleaner and more natural sun-care products. This trend is due to the harmful effects of sun-care products on marine ecosystems such as coral. This trend is expected to continue over the forecast period, creating an opportunity for liquorice suppliers from developing countries.

Tips:

Target buyers who specialise in natural and organic ingredients. These buyers tend to work with natural and organic cosmetics companies. They are aware of the harmful effects of synthetic ingredients in cosmetics and look for innovative ingredients, such as liquorice extract, for their products.

Educate yourself on EU regulations for the justification of claims used in sunscreen products. Visit the [European Commission website](#) for more information.

Prepare a dossier for your liquorice extract to support your claims. There are various ways to support your claims. You can use scientific and marketing data that are already published, experimental studies or consumer perception tests. For more information, see the [CBI study](#) of how to prepare a technical dossier for cosmetics ingredients.

See the [CBI study](#) of what requirements your product must comply with on the European market. Here, you can find information on the regulations when supplying ingredients to the European market.

Clean beauty becoming popular in Europe

Rising awareness among European consumers of the harmful effects of synthetic ingredients is the major driver of the clean beauty trend. Cosmetics manufacturers are cleaning up their formulations by replacing contentious synthetic ingredients with natural ones. Synthetic ingredients that consumers look to avoid include parabens, phthalates, aluminium salts, sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS)/sodium laureth sulphate (SLES) and mineral oils.

European consumers are becoming more informed due to the rise in mobile phones and portable devices. Various apps are available that educate consumers on cosmetic product formulations. The ability to check product formulations instantly enables consumers to choose personal care products that have 'clean formulations'.

This trend is likely to continue in the near future. It will drive the demand for natural ingredients such as liquorice extract.

Tips:

Educate yourself on how natural ingredients can replace synthetic chemicals. Communicate this information to potential buyers and encourage them to switch to natural ingredients. Use scientific data to back up your claims.

See the [CBI study](#) of trends on the European cosmetics market for more information on what trends offer the most opportunities for suppliers of natural ingredients to the cosmetics sector.

This study has been carried out on behalf of CBI by [Ecovia Intelligence](#).

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