



[Exporting textile travel accessories to Europe](#)

The European market for travel accessories made from textiles provides opportunities for developing country exporters, as demand for travel accessories is increasing. In order to succeed, you should keep two increasingly important trends in mind: increased demand for sustainable materials, made from lightweight yet fashionable fabrics.

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1 . Product description

Travel accessories from textiles is a group of products, rather than one specific product. This group includes textile articles used during travelling to carry and protect personal items. This group includes:

- *Duffel bags*: large cylindrical bags made of textiles or other materials used to carry luggage by people who travel;
- *Backpacks*: textile sacks carried on one's back and secured with one or two straps that go over the shoulder(s).
- *Laptop sleeves*: generally thought of as a thin layer of protection to prevent a laptop from scratches or bumps when carried around.
- *Etuis*: small bags made from textiles or other material that are used to carry small articles, such as pencils or toiletries.

Since the product group is diverse, duffel bags and laptop sleeves will be considered the indicative products of the category travel accessories made from textiles and will be further analysed in this product factsheet.

Classification of travel accessories:

- Harmonised System (HS): within Europe, the following HS codes are used as indications for trade in travel accessories:
 - 4202.1291: travel goods, similar containers of textile materials, of other materials, including vulcanised fibre
 - 4202.1299: travel goods, with outer surface of textile materials, other
 - 4202.2290: travel goods, with outer surface of textile materials
 - 4202.3290: articles carried in pocket or handbag of textile materials
 - 4202.9291: musical instrument case, similar case of textile materials
- Prodcom: the following prodcom code is used to indicated European production of travel accessories:
 - 1512.1220: handbags of leather, composition leather, patent leather, plastic sheeting, textile materials or other materials (including those without a handle)

Quality:

- Functionality: The main purpose of travel accessories is to provide storage and protection while travelling.
- Raw material quality: Travel accessories can be made of many different fabrics, both natural and synthetic.
- Durability: It is very important that the fabric used is durable. The travel accessory should be able to protect what is stored inside from scratching or breaking.
- Design: All shapes and sizes are allowed. It is therefore wise to communicate, to your potential European buyer, the sizes (or ranges) that you are able to produce during the early stages of collaboration.

Labelling:

- Labels for transport should include information on the producer, consignee, composition of the product and the size of the product, number of pieces, pallet identification and total number of boxes, net and gross weight.
- The most important information on the product or packing labels of travel accessories from textiles is: composition, size, origin and care labelling. For more information and illustrations of product labelling please refer to labelling-specific rules of home textiles under legal requirements.

Packaging:

- When shipping your product to a client, the textile travel accessories should be packed according to the instructions of your buyer. Packaging usually consists of plastic wrapping to protect the fabric from water, solar radiation and staining. The packaging should be easily manageable in terms of size and weight. Preferably, they are placed together in boxes and then on pallets.
- Travel accessories made from textiles such as duffel bags and laptop sleeves are usually displayed unpacked, making consumer packaging of minor importance. Packaging is more important for the high-end market, providing protection and a storage solution.

2 . Which European markets offer opportunities for exporters of travel accessories from textiles?

European imports of textile travel accessories have grown strongly after a dip in 2013. Developing Countries are Europe's main textile travel accessory suppliers. Europe's main importers of textile travel accessories are:

- Germany
- France
- The United Kingdom

Especially Germany and the United Kingdom are interesting focus countries, with a strong market

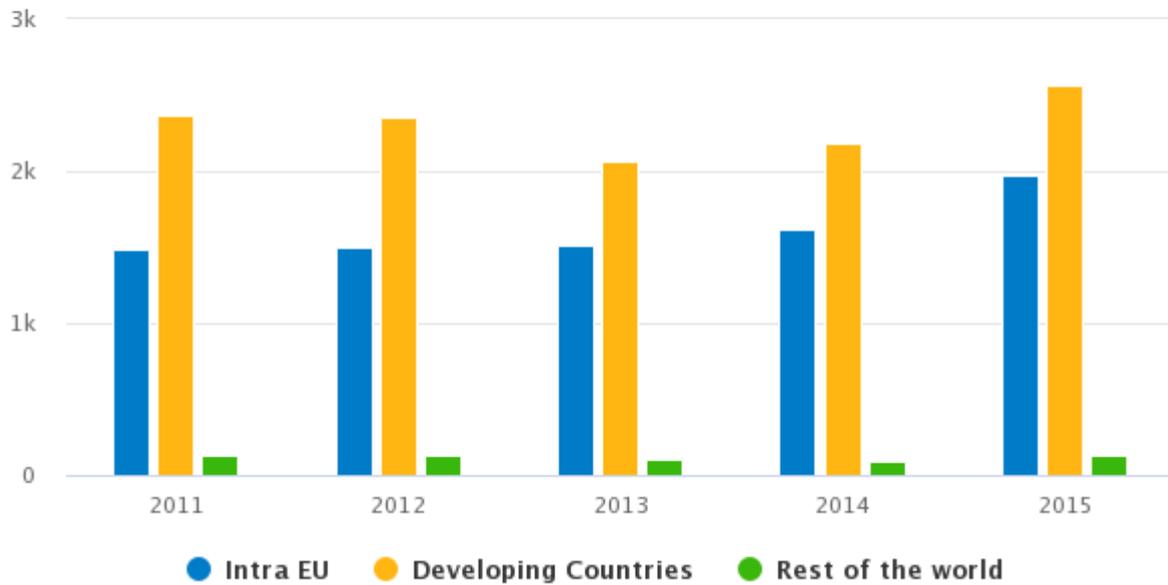
for developing countries.

(!) The following data only give an indication of trade in textile travel accessories. No specific trade data are available. The figures below also include some travel accessories of non-textile materials.

Imports

Figure 1: European imports of textile travel accessories

By main destination

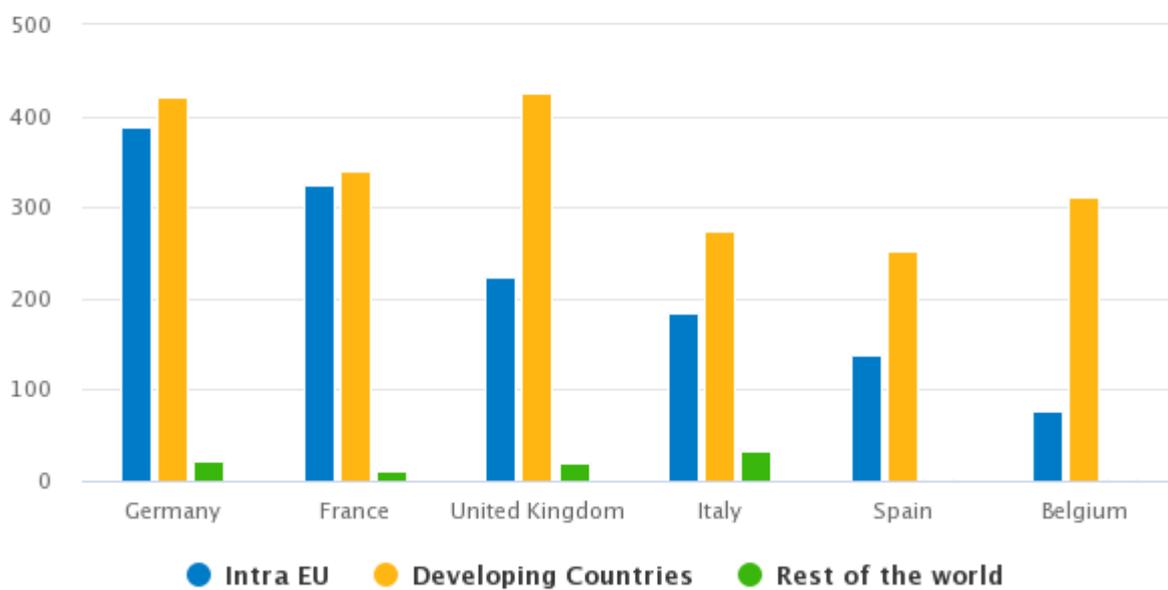


Source: Trademap

Source: Trademap (2015)

Figure 2: Main importers of textile travel accessories

2015

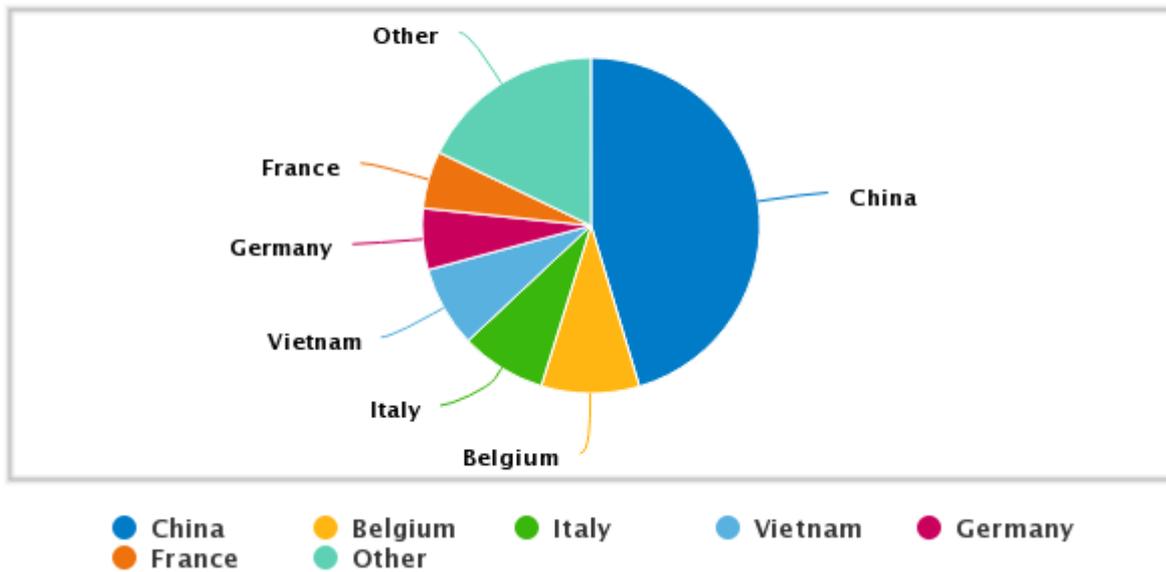


Source: Trademap

Source: Trademap (2015)

Figure 3: Leading suppliers of textile travel accessories

2015



Source: Trademap

Source: Trademap (2015)

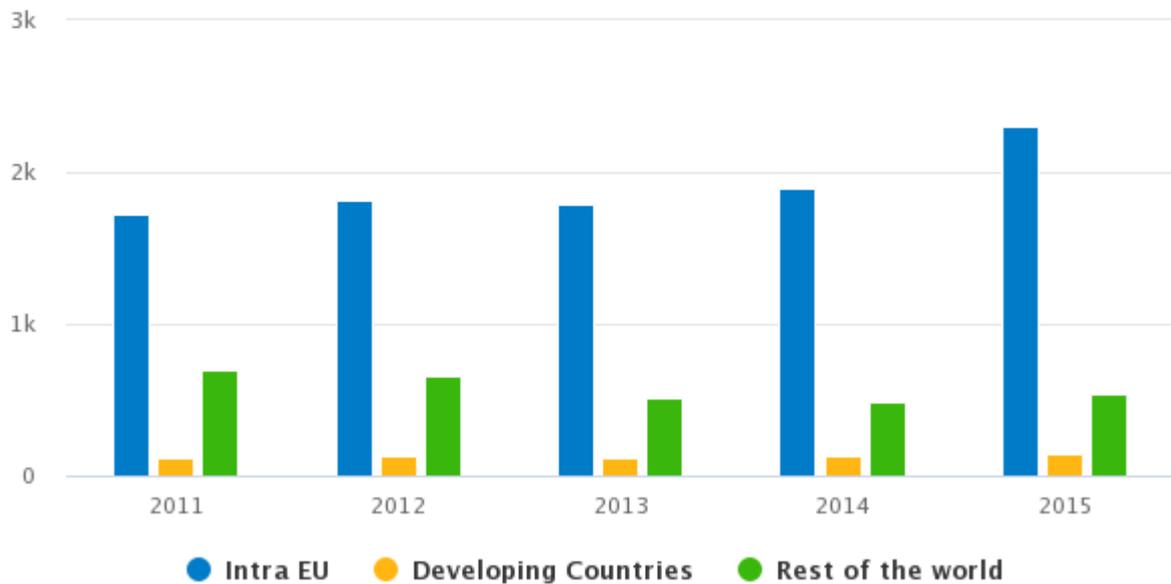
- After a dip in 2013, European imports of textile travel accessories have recovered strongly. They reached € 4.7 billion in 2015. This resulted in an average annual growth rate of 4.1% between 2011 and 2015.
- In the coming years, European imports are expected to keep growing moderately.
- The main cause of the dip in 2013 was a decrease in imports from developing countries. As Europe's main source of textile travel accessories, they supply 55% of European imports. This amounted to € 2.6 billion in 2015. This share is predicted to be stable in the coming years.
- Germany is Europe's leading importer of textile travel accessories, with € 830 million in 2015. France and the United Kingdom follow with € 677 million and € 669 million respectively.
- When it comes to imports from developing countries, the United Kingdom is leading with € 425 million. This is 64% of its total imports. Germany follows with € 420 million, ahead of France (€ 341 million) and Belgium (€ 312 million).
- Imports from Developing Countries grew between 2011 and 2015, especially in the United Kingdom with € 110 million. With € 66 million, Belgium also increased its imports from developing countries considerably. In France however, these imports slightly declined.
- China dominates European textile travel accessory imports, with 45% in 2015. Another leading supplier from Developing Countries is Vietnam.

Tips:

- Focus on Germany and the United Kingdom, as well as Belgium. Their large imports from Developing Countries make them especially interesting markets.
- Compare your products and company to the strong competition from China and Vietnam. You can use [ITC Trademap](#) to find exporters per country. You can compare:
 - market segment
 - price
 - quality
 - target countries

Figure 4: European exports of textile travel accessories

By main destination



Source: Trademap

Source: Trademap (2015)

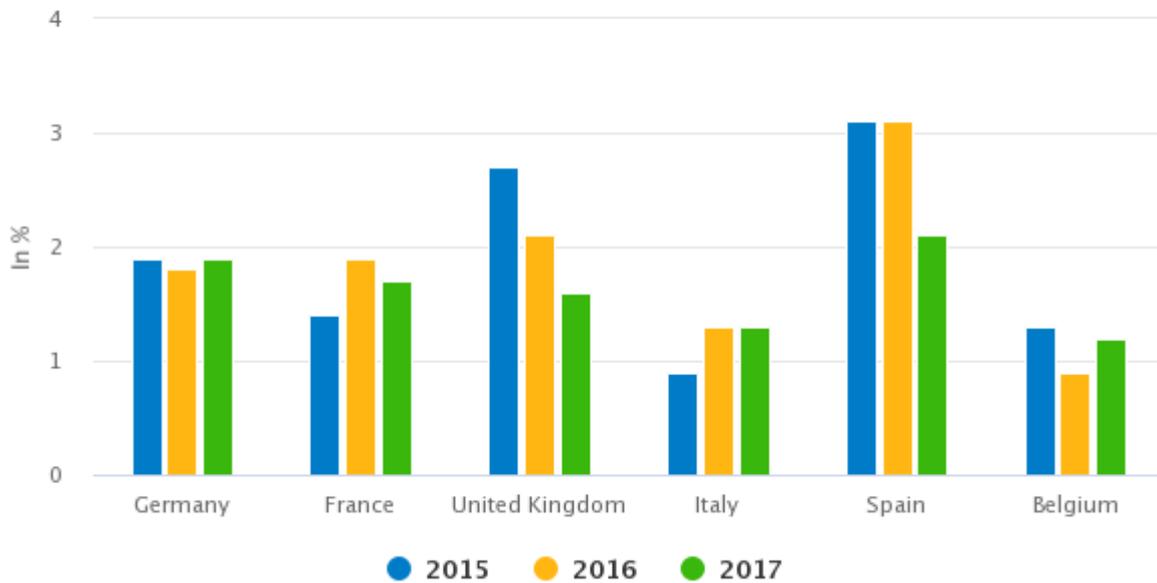
- European textile travel accessory exports consist mainly of trade within Europe.
- Italy (€ 777 million) and Belgium (€ 533 million) are Europe's leading textile travel accessory exporters.

Production and consumption

- Europe's production of textile travel accessories is larger than its demand. However, imports don't seem to be negatively affected as they are increasing again.
- European textile travel accessory production increased strongly between 2010 (€ 4.8 billion) and 2014 (€ 7.8 billion).
- In the same period, European textile travel accessory consumption also increased, from € 4.1 billion to € 5.4 billion.
- With € 3.9 billion, Italy is responsible for 50% of European textile travel accessory production. France follows with another 35% at € 2.8 billion.
- European textile travel accessory consumption is also highest in France and Italy, at € 1.4 billion and € 1.1 billion respectively.

Figure 5: Real private consumption expenditure growth

Change from previous year



Source: Eurostat

Source: Eurostat

- Private consumption expenditure is an important indicator for the European home textiles market. The sector is closely linked to economic conditions. When money is tight, consumers postpone buying non-essential items until they have enough disposable income.
- Between 2015 and 2017, European private consumption expenditure is expected to increase. This means that consumption of luxury and decorative products is likely to rise. Especially in emerging markets, consumers will have more money available to spend on these products. Consumers in mature markets already spend a fair amount of money on luxury, so growth in their consumption will be moderate.

3. What trends offer opportunities on the European market for travel accessories from textiles?

In the European market for textile travel accessories, the trends of lightweight accessories and sustainability seem to prevail among designers and consumers.

Conscious travel accessories

The shift towards sustainability by consumers has influenced designers and producers of travel accessories. Suitcases made from recycled carpet and laptop or smartphone sleeves made from recycled yarns, are trendy items for travel accessories. Sustainability in this product is more than using 'green materials'. It is the minimisation of the environmental impact of production, namely the reduction of pollution, landfill and demand for dyes related to textile production.

Tip:

- Consider sustainable solutions for your products, especially if you are supplying the middle-high/high end segment of the market, since sustainable materials and processes come with a higher price. Take into account that the aesthetics of your travel articles are not compromised by the use of recycled fabrics. Feel free to experiment with different colours, tones and variants in order to make a fashionable product. For more information, please refer to our special study on the [marketing of sustainable materials](#).

Intelligent but fashionable

Travelling is an inseparable part of everyday life, thus is important to find solutions for travel accessories to fit the most important items needed for a journey. Being able to travel in a lightweight yet fashionable manner is a growing trend in the European market, where business trips or short vacations are the rule. Therefore, smart textile travel accessories, like hanging organisers or other storage systems, will be very trendy in the coming years.

Tip:

- If you are supplying the middle-high or high-end segment of the market, consider using lightweight, durable yet fashionable fabrics.

Please refer to [CBI Trends for Home Decoration & Textiles](#) for more information on general trends in home textiles.

What requirements should travel accessories from textiles comply with to be allowed on the European market?

Figure 6: Buyer requirements



4 . Legal requirements

General Product Safety: The [General Product Safety Directive \(GPSD\)](#) states that all products marketed in the European Union must be safe to use, so that it forms a network for all specific legislation established for specific products and issues. Even if no specific legal requirements have been established for your product and its uses, the General Product Safety Directive still applies. If there are specific requirements applicable to travel accessories from textiles, the general Product Safety Directive applies in addition, covering all other safety aspects that may not have been

described exclusively in the product's specific legal requirements.

Tip:

- Study the specific legal requirements listed, but also use your common sense to ensure the product does not cause any danger in its normal use. Most buyers will require proof of the developing country exporter's compliance with legal requirements and most large retailers have their Codes of Conduct. You can read more about the [General Product Safety Directive in the EU Export Helpdesk](#).

Chemicals-Restricted Substances: The European Union has restricted a great number of chemicals in products that are marketed in Europe. These are listed in the [REACH](#) regulation. If you dye your products, make sure you do not use any of the *azo dyes* that release any of the 22 aromatic amines that are prohibited. The European Union's legislation lists the aromatic amines, not the azo dyes that release them. The vast majority of azo dyes are therefore legally acceptable. Furthermore, the *flame-retardants* that can be used have been restricted, where Tris (2,3-dibromopropyl) phosphate (TRIS); Tris (aziridinyl) phosphineoxide (TEPA) and Polybromobiphenyles (PBB) have been prohibited in products intended to come into contact with the skin.

Tips:

- In case of dyeing: Make sure your products do not contain any of the *azo dyes* that release the forbidden aromatic amines. This includes checking your suppliers.
- Follow the new developments in the field of *flame-retardants*, as new alternatives are being developed. You can do so for instance through the [European Flame Retardants Association \(EFRA\)](#). The addition of other flame-retardants and proofing agents is only permitted for products that are intended for use in commercial buildings where they are subject to and fulfil the appropriate fire protection regulations. Familiarise yourself with the full list of restricted substances in products marketed in the European Union by checking out [restricted chemicals in textile products in the EU Export Helpdesk](#).

Labelling-specific rules for textiles: Textiles should be labelled or marked indicating fibre composition whenever they are made available on the market and should be durable, easily legible, visible and accessible. The main purpose of the European Union's [Textile Regulation](#) is to ensure that consumers, when purchasing textile products, are given an accurate indication of their fibre composition.

There is no European Union-wide legislation on the use of symbols for washing instructions and other care aspect of textile articles, while consumers consider care information to be the second most important information on a product's label (after size). You are therefore advised to follow ISO standards on this matter.

Tips:

- Know your own product and study the labelling rules of the European Union to find out how it should be labelled in the European Union. For example, if you use a cotton name, trademark, or other term that implies the presence of a type of cotton, the generic fibre

name "cotton" must be used. Find out more about [textile labelling rules in the EU Export Helpdesk](#).

- You are advised to follow [ISO 3758: 2012](#) on care labelling code using symbols for textiles.

5 . Additional requirements

Social performance: Sustainability is one of the ways for companies to differentiate themselves, and the means of offering sustainable products are numerous, ranging from recycling to certification and use of labels. The processes of textile manufacturing are energy intensive and require significant water use and disposal of waste. Two retail initiatives have gained ground, particularly in West European countries.

The [Business Social Compliance Initiative \(BSCI\)](#) has been developed by European retailers to improve social conditions in sourcing countries. Suppliers of BSCI participants are expected to comply with the BSCI Code of conduct. To prove compliance, your production process can be audited at the request of the importer. Once a company has been audited, it will be included in a database that can be used by all BSCI participants.

The [Ethical Trading Initiative \(ETI\)](#) is an alliance of companies, trade unions and voluntary organisations working in partnership to improve the working lives, across the globe, of people who make or grow consumer goods.

Tip:

- Since more and more European importers participate in BSCI and ETI, complying with the BSCI and ETI codes of conduct will be seen as basic requirements.

6 . Niche requirements

While sustainability is gaining ground, the actual use of certification is still not widely spread in this sector. Nevertheless, there are several eco-labels used for textiles, including travel accessories. As this is a means of showing sustainability, there is an increasing interest from buyers. [The Global Organic Textile Standard \(GOTS\)](#) is a textile-processing standard for organic fibres; [OEKO-TEX](#) stands for no use of hazardous chemicals and the European Union's [Ecolabel](#) also looks at environmentally friendly options. The voluntary [Nordic Swan eco-label](#) is used in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland for textile products.

Tips:

- Check the possibility of sourcing organic cotton. Textile products that contain a minimum of 70% organic fibres can become GOTS certified.
- Consider the Oeko-Tex® Standard 100 for your product. The certification provides textile and clothing companies with more transparent supplier relationships and facilitates the flow of information regarding potential problematic substances.
- Consider the Ecolabel for your product. The label is awarded only to products with the lowest environmental impact in a product range.
- Consider the Swan eco-label when targeting the Nordic Countries.

For a complete overview of certifications for textiles please turn to [ITC's Standards Map](#)

What competition do I face on the European travel accessories from textiles market?

Please refer to [CBI Home Textile Field of Competition](#), as the competitive field for travel accessories from textiles does not differ significantly from this general overview.

7 . Through which channels can you get travel accessories from textiles on the European market?

Please refer to [CBI Home Textile Channels and Segments](#), as the market channels and segments for travel accessories from textiles do not differ significantly from this general overview.

8 . What are the end market prices for travel accessories from textiles?

There is a very wide price range within the European market for travel accessories made from textiles. Duffel bag retail prices can vary from €35 to more than €170. Laptop sleeve retail prices can vary from €10 to more than €95. The prices vary based on the size and composition of the product, as well as the brand or the designer.

Your products will be sold to European consumers for a price that is significantly higher than your selling price. The consumer price is approximately 4-6.5 times the FOB price in the country of origin.

Table 1: Indicative consumer prices

	Low end	Middle-low end	Middle-high end	High end
Duffel bags	€35-€58	€70-€90	€110-€150	€170 or more
Laptop sleeves	€10-€30	€39-€50	€55-€89	€95 or more

Tip:

- Developing country producers are recommended to focus on the middle-high segment if they can offer some added value, or on the middle-low end if they offer mechanised production.

Rising raw material prices pressure on margins

Besides energy, labour and transport costs, FOB prices depend heavily on the availability and prices of the raw materials. Between May of 2015 and 2016, the average prices of for instance cotton fluctuated about every three months. In total, they noted a moderate decrease of about 5%. This example shows the fluctuating character of the raw materials market. Incidental price hikes of raw materials cannot directly be passed on to the consumer, but exert pressure on exporters, importers and retailers' margins.

Tips

- Calculate your prices regularly and carefully, especially when you know that prices of your raw materials are regularly fluctuating. When prices of your raw materials pressure your margin for a longer period, consider increasing your price or finding another suitable alternative.

Figure 7: Indicative price markups



Source: ProFound 2014

*VAT percentages in Europe range from 18% in Malta to 27% in Sweden. On average these percentages are around 20%.

9 . Useful sources

Trade fairs

Visiting, and especially participating in, trade fairs is highly recommended as one of the most efficient methods for testing market receptivity, obtaining market information and finding prospective business partners. The most relevant trade fairs in Europe for exporters of travel accessories are:

- [Ambiente](#) - Frankfurt, Germany (Halls 9, 10 and 11)
- [INDX Accessories & Travel Goods](#) - Solihull, the United Kingdom
- [Maison & Objet](#) - Paris, France (Hall 6 'Fashion')
- [OutDoor](#) - Friedrichshafen, Germany
- [TourNatur](#) - Düsseldorf, Germany

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