



CBI  
*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

# **CBI Product Factsheet:**


## **Picture and Mirror Frames in Europe**







## Introduction

Europe's favourable economic prospects inspire consumers to invest in home decoration. Demand for new, sustainable materials and production methods offer interesting opportunities for developing country suppliers. China is Europe's largest supplier of frames meaning that you have to offer added value (going niche) in order to compete against Chinese imports, which mainly focus on the low-end market.

## Product description

Product	Theme	HS codes	PRODCOM codes
Frames	Sharing & showing  <i>Refer to CBI Trendmapping for more information on this theme.</i>	4414 00 10: <i>Wooden frames for paintings, photographs, mirrors or similar objects, of tropical wood.</i>  4414 00 90: <i>Wooden frames for paintings, photographs, mirrors or similar (excl. okoume, obeche, sapelli, sipo, acajou d'afrique, makore, iroko, tiama, mansonina, ilomba, dibetou, limba, azobe, dark red, light red, white or yellow meranti, meranti bakau, white).</i>  8306 30: <i>Photograph, picture or similar frames of base metal; mirrors of base metal (excl. optical elements).</i>	16.29.14.20: <i>Wooden frames for paintings; photographs; mirrors or similar objects.</i>
<p>Frames can be used for framing paintings, photographs, mirror or similar objects and come in a great variety of materials ranging from the more industrially-applied materials to semi-industrial or hand-applied materials.</p> <p><b>Industrially-applied materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>metal (stainless steel, silver, silver-plated, platinum)</li> </ul> <p><b>Semi-industrially or hand-applied materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wood</li> </ul> <p>In the collection of a general home decoration wholesaler or retailer, frames are classified as 'home accessories'. In this group, decorative vases, objects such as figurines, and sometimes candle holders, stools or wall decoration are also found.</p>			
<b>Frames – functions and features</b>	<p><b>Functions</b></p> <p>Three main purposes of frames can be distinguished:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to frame photos,</li> <li>to display paintings and drawings, and</li> <li>to hold mirrors.</li> </ol> <p>With the increasing popularity of putting up frames in the home, frames have developed new functions (see 'Market Trends'). Depending on these various uses, frames have a spectrum of styles: from almost invisible to more expressive. Generally, frames for artworks are neutral, as the consumer's focus is on the framed painting or drawing rather than on the frame itself. Photo and mirror frames are more relevant for Developing Country exporters, as the consumer makes a conscious choice for a particular type and style of a frame that is in line with the style of the interior of the home. Such frames are therefore more decorative pieces in their own right.</p> <p>Dimensions of photo frames are linked to the usual formats of photo prints, but mirror frames have enormous flexibility with sizes ranging from miniature to 'statement'. Both types of frames can be found around the house: suspended from the walls of the, living room, bedroom (kids and adults), home office or the hallways, or mounted, placed on mantelpieces or side tables.</p> <p><b>Material</b></p> <p>An almost unlimited choice of materials and techniques is available to frames: from any type of metal (silver, pewter, brass etc.), wood, plastics and other such artificial materials, bamboo, even textile, recycled paper etc. In the lower and upper sections of the market, industrialised processes ensure affordability (low end) or sleek, minimal looks (high end), whilst the middle of the market offers much that is handmade or semi-industrial.</p> <p><b>Design</b></p> <p>Craft statements can be made by handmade techniques such as wood marquetry, enamelling, or by means of decoration with precious stones or by gilding. Recycled wood is an often-found material in the market for frames, not necessarily from the point of view of sustainability, but because the distressed look of reclaimed wood fits well into the prominent nostalgic style in the middle of the market. Frames in metal</p>		

	<p>often find their place in more classical mid and premium segments, whilst the lower-end segment will use hardboards, poly-resin, MDF, plastics, composites, and other inexpensive materials.</p> <p>Shapes, especially in mirrors, are extremely flexible, from square, rectangular to round, oval and any fancy abstract or figurative shapes. Shape, size, material and techniques, and decoration are the ingredients that create a <b>style</b> and as such need to match to be convincing.</p> <p>In the European market, frames generally follow the normal segmentation of home decoration, but vary somewhat in having a very broad lower and middle segment, and quite a small top segment. Overall, frames are affordable and accessible. Mirrors can go luxury, but are then often masterpieces in glass or crystal, without frame.</p>
<b>Quality</b>	<p>As with any product, frames need to be well-made, fitting their price. This relates to the <i>corner joints</i>, and how well the <i>backings</i> fit. Durability is a less central value with frames, as they are usually not handled much and, as a typical mid-market product, subject to trends in colour and style and as such will have a relatively fast turnaround. Larger, mounted frames are more central to the overall look of the home and as such will not be replaced often.</p> <p><i>Functional quality</i> is related to the suitability of frames for the standard dimensions of photo prints, which can vary from the popular 'postcard' size (10x15 cm) to anything larger. It is good service to provide a matte (or 'passe partout' as it is called in Europe) that helps to place the print correctly. Frames can come with or without extra covering in the form of glass or other transparent materials. Photo frames with options at the back for mounting or suspending the frame offer extra convenience. Frames that can be used both in portrait or landscape should have rear stands accommodating both modes.</p> <p><i>Artistic quality</i> comes with such features as wooden frames with mortise and tenon or other joints signalling traditional craftsmanship, skilled metalwork, or attractive decoration. Generally, though, in Europe frames belong to the middle of the market and as such are <i>accessible</i> in style and price, rather than top design. This is because they need to blend with the going atmosphere (e.g. romantic, classic or nostalgic) rather than stand out as an individual craft piece.</p>
<b>Labelling</b>	<p>Your label on the outer box should include information concerning the product such as the producer, consignee, material used, quantity, size, volume, and caution signs. Information on the carton should correspond to the packing list sent to the importer. Appropriate labelling and marking can protect products from being damaged by indicating, for instance, that the item is fragile or that it needs to be kept upright. It is important to label individual parcels and packages as well, but always based on the buyer's instructions.</p> <p>Within Europe, EAN/Barcodes are widely used on the product label. Please ensure that the instructions of your importer are followed when it comes to placing the barcode stickers. Generally, it makes sense to do so at the back of the frames, out of sight of the consumer.</p> <p>Please note, your buyer will specify what information they need on product labels or on the item itself (logos, 'made in...'). This forms part of the order specifications. Use the English language for labelling of the outer packing to facilitate transportation handling. Use the language of the destination market for the consumer packaging. That is, unless your buyer has indicated otherwise.</p>
<b>Packing and packaging of product</b>	<p><b>Packing</b></p> <p>Frames should be packed in agreement with the importer's instructions. Every importer will have their own specific requirements related to the use of packing materials, the filling of cartons, palletisation, and the stowing of containers. Always ask for the importer's order specifications, which are part of the purchase order. The balance is between using maximum protection and avoiding excess materials (waste removal is a cost to buyers) or shipping 'air'.</p> <div data-bbox="986 1429 1286 1570">  </div> <p>Proper packing of frames can minimize the risk of damage through shocks, extreme temperatures, humidity, and vibration. The fragility of the frames determines the packing of the products for export. Packing should prevent that individual items inside a carton damage each other and that the cartons themselves damage each other when they are stacked inside the container. Packaging therefore usually consists of inner and outer cardboard boxes, with appropriate materials to protect the products inside the inner boxes (this may involve materials such as bubble wrap or paper, depending on the preferences of the buyer). Packing needs to be of easy-to-handle dimensions and weight. Standards here are often related to labour regulations at point of destination and will have to be specified by the buyer. Cartons are usually palletised for air or sea transport and exporters are requested to maximise pallet space. In the case of frames, they are generally conveniently flat and as such will pack efficiently, although special care must be taken of the glass panes and any accessories such as beadwork or floral decorations that may be vulnerable.</p> <p>In the case of wooden frames, special care should be taken to properly dry the wood after production to prevent the wood from moulding or cracking. Mould can appear during transport due to condensation inside the container, caused by the humid air from the place of origin getting colder and warmer due to day-to-night fluctuations in temperature. Proper air ventilation inside the container is vital to prevent this and containers must be inspected for air holes before shipment, and anti-moisture products are available to place amongst the cargo. Make sure the importer's instructions are followed here.</p>

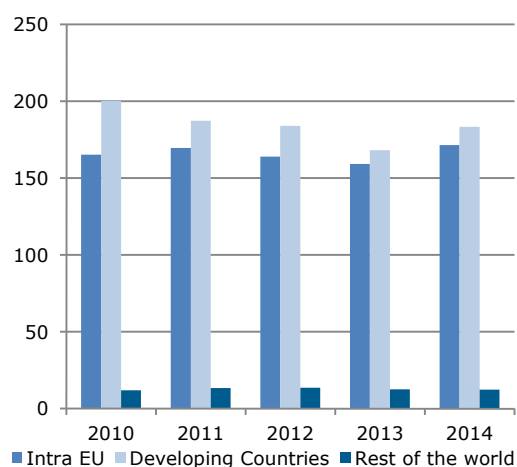
	<p><b>Packaging</b></p> <p>Although frames have a high gift and seasonal character (see 'Market Trends' below), the exporter is usually not requested to provide consumer packaging as that is usually provided by the retailer at the point of sale in the form of corporate packaging or gift wrapping.</p> <p>For the growing e-tail market, exporters need to pack their items individually, to facilitate logistics to the end consumer.</p>		
<b>Illustration</b>	<p>Low end: inexpensive</p>  	<p>Mid end: accessible design and price</p>  	<p>High end: premium materials and techniques</p>  

Source:  
HomeBase  
Sainsbury's  
Debenhams  
Loaf  
'l'Objet',  
Amara,  
Conran  
Shop

## What is the demand for picture and mirror frames in Europe?

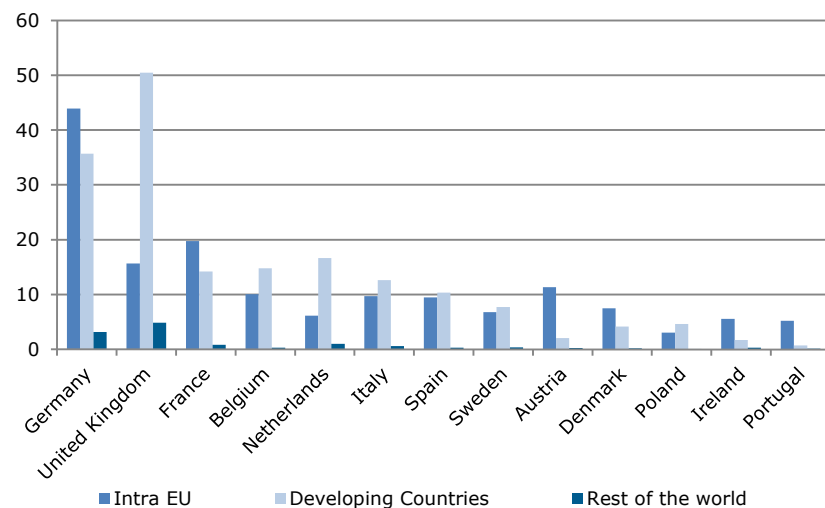
After a dip in 2013, European imports of picture and mirror frames are recovering strongly, especially imports from developing countries. As the largest decorative object importers in Europe by far, Germany and the United Kingdom are interesting focus markets for developing country suppliers of picture and mirror frames. Opportunities on these mature markets are predominantly in the lower and middle end.

**Figure 1: European imports of picture and mirror frames by main origin, € million**



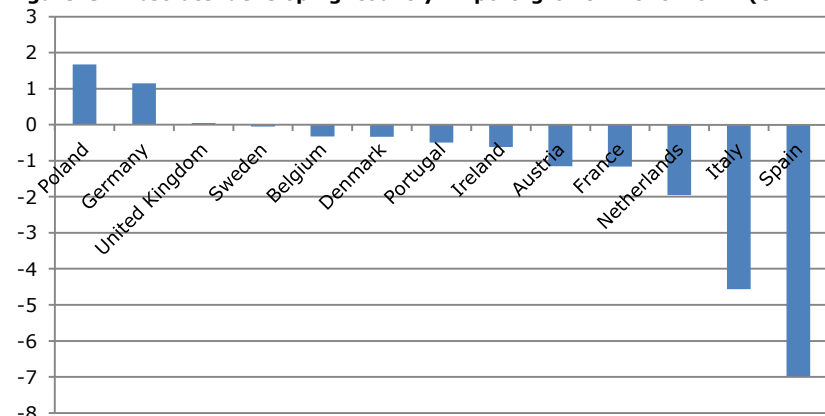
Source: Trademap

**Figure 2: Main European importers of picture and mirror frames by main origin, 2014, € million**



Source: Trademap

**Figure 3: Absolute developing country import growth 2010-2014 (€ million) (countries in range of largest importers)**



Source: Trademap

### European imports of photo and mirror frames are recovering

European imports of picture and mirror frames declined from €377 million in 2010 to €367 million in 2014, with an average annual growth rate of -0.7%. However, in 2014 imports recovered with 8.0%. This recovery is expected to continue at a moderate rate.

#### Tips:

- Germany and the United Kingdom are by far the largest decorative object importers in Europe, making them interesting focus markets for you to consider.
- Developing country exporters are advised to monitor developments in Chinese production of frames, as well as developments in imports and consumption in Europe, to discover possible options for entry or for increasing market share. Both online and offline (trade fairs) market research will be an invaluable way for developing country exporters to understand market needs and to discover ways to differentiate.

Similarly, European imports of picture and mirror frames from developing countries decreased with an average annual growth rate of -8.5% from €200 million in 2010 to €183 million in 2014, with a recovery of 9.0% in 2014. This recovery is also expected to continue at a moderate rate.

With €83 million, Germany is Europe's main importer of picture and mirror frames, followed by the United Kingdom with €71 million. When it comes to imports from developing countries, however, the United Kingdom is the leading importer, with €50 million (71% of imports), compared to Germany with €36 million (43% of imports).

**Tips:**

- It may be that increasing costs of production and a growing internal market in China may lead to a loss of market share in Europe that could become available to other suppliers from developing countries.
- Developing country exporters wishing to make inroads in the mature European market for frames, being predominantly lower- and middle-end, need an efficient operational system, combining effective production and logistics with flexibility in design.

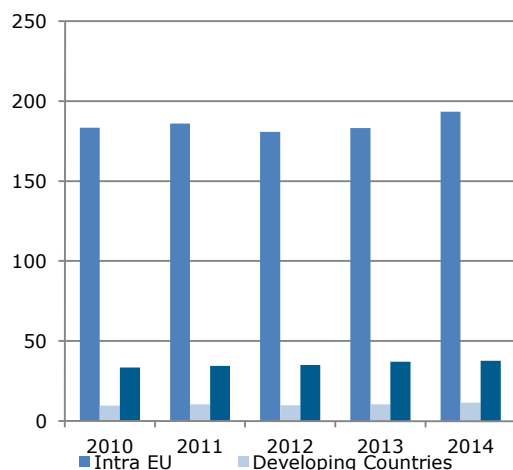
It is noteworthy that, unlike in Germany, the United Kingdom's imports from developing country suppliers of picture and mirror frames did not increase between 2010 and 2014, but remained stable.

European imports of picture and mirror frames are dominated by China with €168 million. Another leading supplier from a developing country is India with €4.7 million.

**Tip:**

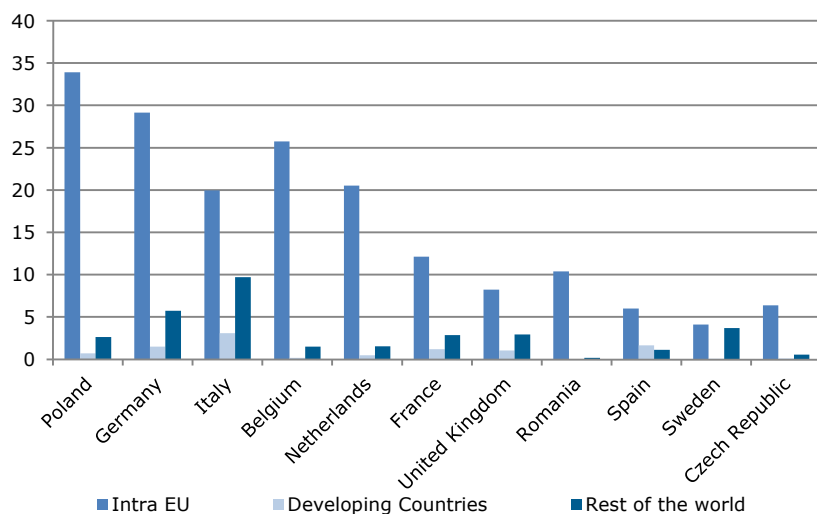
- Invest in long-term relationships with your buyers, giving them less incentive to switch to a competitor.

**Figure 4: European exports of picture and mirror frames by main destination, € million**



Source: Trademap

**Figure 5: Main European exporters of picture and mirror frames by main destination, 2014, € million**



Source: Trademap

### European exports of picture and mirror frames are increasing

European exports of picture and mirror frames increased from €226 million in 2010 to €243 million in 2014, with an average annual growth rate of 1.7%. This moderate growth is expected to continue.

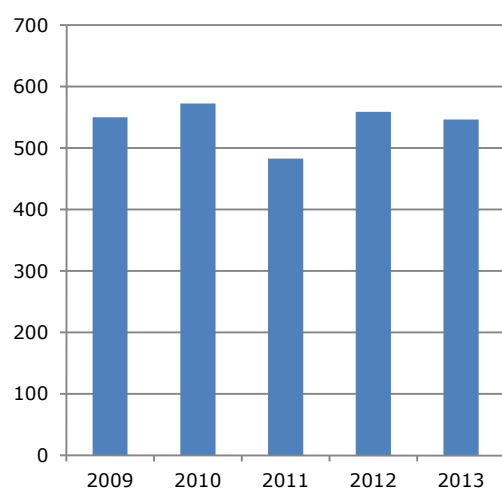
**Tip:**

- Be aware of your European buyer's markets and its requirements. In this way, you can develop new ideas also for the buyer's other European markets.

European exports of picture and mirror frames consist mainly of trade within Europe.

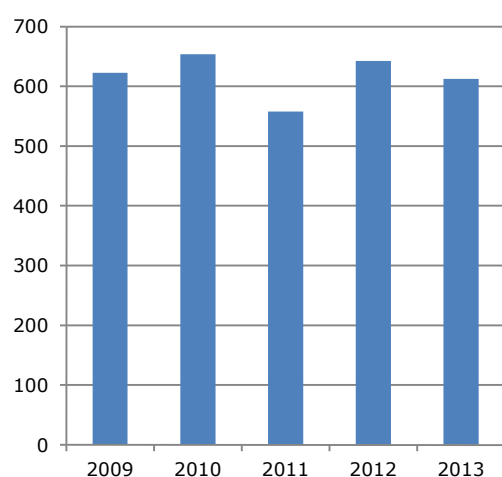
Europe's leading exporter of decorative objects is Poland with €37 million, followed by Germany with €36 million and Italy with €33 million.

**Figure 6: European production of picture and mirror frames, 2009-2013, € million**



Source: Prodcorn

**Figure 7: Apparent European consumption of picture and mirror frames, 2009-2013, € million**



Source: Prodcorn

### Fluctuations in European consumption and production of picture and mirror frames

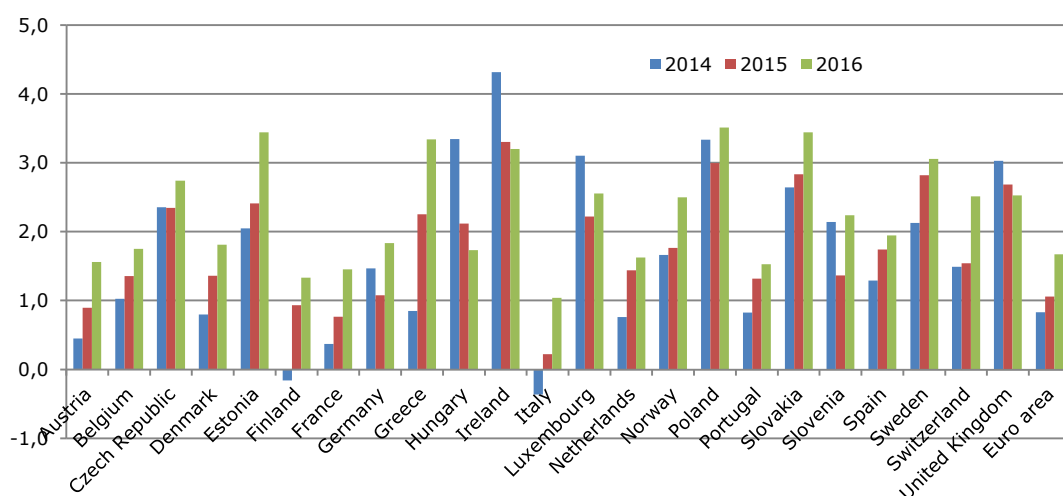
European production of picture and mirror frames fluctuates somewhat around €550 million. Similarly, consumption fluctuates around €620 million, making Europe's demand for picture and mirror frames higher than its production.

With €273 million, Italy is responsible for 50% of European production of picture and mirror frames, followed by France with €63 million. These countries are also Europe's main consumers of picture and mirror frames, with €258 million and €77 million, respectively.

**Tip:**

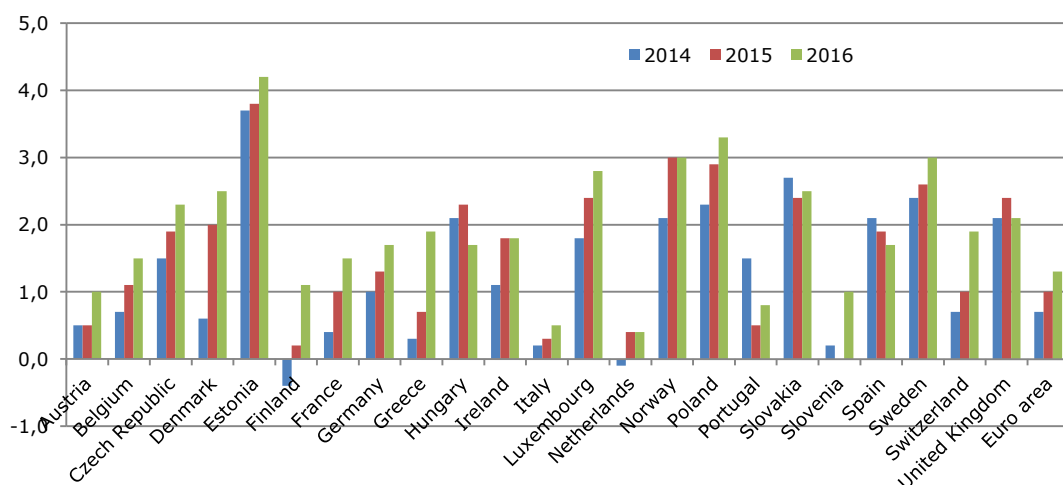
- Suppliers can be sourced online and with the help of trade fairs. Europe has a very rich department store culture and, in your sourcing, it makes sense to target the importer-wholesalers supplying this type of retailers.

**Figure 8: Real GDP, 2014-2016, % change from previous year**



Source: Eurostat (2015)

**Figure 9: Real private consumption expenditure, 2014-2016, % change from previous year**



Source: Eurostat (2015)

**Economic indicators are promising**

Predictions of GDP and private consumption expenditure are important indicators for the European market for picture and mirror frames. The sector is closely linked to economic conditions. When there is room in their disposable income, consumers increase their spending on luxury products like picture and mirror frames.

**Tip:**

- Monitor GDP and private consumption expenditure, because when these are positive, expenditure on picture and mirror frames is expected to increase

Between 2014 and 2016, European GDP and private consumption expenditures are expected to increase. This means that consumption of luxury and decorative products is likely to rise. Especially in emerging markets, an increase in GDP creates room for this type of spending. Due to saturation, growth in consumption will be moderate for mature markets.

## What trends offer opportunities on the European market for picture and mirror frames?

**Framing itself is trendy. As such, frames have become more than functional items, framing pictures of the family or artworks.**

### *Decorative items on walls*

Frames have become typical decorative items, taking pride of place on walls and throughout the home. Also, frames have developed new directions.

#### **Tip:**

- Mature markets offer a broad scope of segments, from low to premium. Developing country exporters aiming for a share in the European market of picture and mirror frames need to study their own strengths in materials and techniques, as well as study the market to identify the right segment. Based on the requirements in the target market (esp. in terms of product features and pricing), exporters can offer supreme craftsmanship and aim for a higher segment, or value-for-money products and aim lower. Studying the market can be done online by studying the offers of retailers and wholesaler-importers, or offline by visiting trade fairs.

Stimulated by online and offline home magazines, consumers in the mature European market are increasingly using the main walls, especially in living- and bedrooms, to *compose* with frames. This links to the longer-term trend where consumers are increasingly confident to personalise their homes to display their style and sense of taste to visitors.

#### **Tip:**

- Since the market for frames is relatively small, as a share of home decoration in general, developing country exporters are advised to see this category as one line in their total offer with other home decoration products or furniture. Specialisation on frames, only, may not offer sufficient profit to sustain one's business.

Both in mirrors and photo frames, *clustering* is popular. Consumers randomly group their frames on the wall, or buy ready-made clusters of frames.

#### **Tip:**

- In line with the trend to compose and cluster with frames, developing country exporters are invited to develop a wide offer of shapes, dimensions, and finishes, to allow importers to select an eclectic enough range to satisfy the needs of the consumer.

The frames grouped together can have different shapes and decorations. This is connected with the trend where consumers eclectically mix and match old, new, different materials, sizes, and shapes to be and feel different.

### *Different consumers with different preferences*

Especially mid market, consumers put much pride in making their own frames or accessorising them, redecorating old frames with the help of paint, wall paper, beadwork etc. Ideas are provided by Home and Hobby magazines, hobby and DIY programmes, blogs, and design websites.

#### **Tips:**

- 'Making Your Own' has already been a trend for quite long in home decoration. Therefore, exporters should by now be able to offer the consumer a way to 'make their own frames', too, by offering materials to accessorise or style the frames or put them together themselves in a way that suits the occasion or the consumer's taste.
- Mid market, frames are an important accessory. Developing country exporters must study the going styles in this end of the market (e.g. romantic, country, colonial, nostalgic) and offer suitable-style frames. Reaching the right atmosphere in this market is more important than individual product excellence.

Whereas retailers provide much that is imitation-vintage, consumers (in all segments) are scouting (online and offline) for real vintage frames, either in the form of flea-market finds or exclusive, valuable pieces. These are appreciated for adding

a nostalgic atmosphere or for the level of craftsmanship. Again, such second-hand frames are freely mixed with newly bought items.

**Tip:**

- As a strategic aspect of marketing, developing country exporters must become aware of their target consumers, which can be the average consumer, or dedicated target groups such as young women, infants, or, beyond the consumer market, interior decorators for projects in the contract market. Alternatively, a moment in the seasonal calendar (Valentine, Easter, Christmas etc.) can be chosen as a way to position one's business in frames. Requirements are specific for each user aspect of the marketing Ps (product, price, place, and promotion) and can be studied through websites, magazines, retail, and trade fair visits.

Teenage girls decorate their rooms in bright colours, often in a romantic style. Frames reflect that choice of colour (acids, pinks and purples) and are often accessorised with beads, stickers, and the like. In addition, pocket mirrors are popular with this consumer group. The materials of the frames and accessories are inexpensive as this is a price-sensitive consumer.

Another segment to watch is the baby or infant bedroom. In mature countries, young children's bedrooms are a new source of status and as such will be meticulously decorated, sometimes even with designer furniture and accessories (in line with the clothing and shoes). Picture frames are an integral aspect of this, and soft pastels are recommended.

Frames are perfect as a gift to friends and relatives for occasions such as weddings, Valentine, Christmas, and births. Often the shapes (e.g. heart) and decorations (e.g. tree and snow) of the frames are adapted to the occasion.

Increasingly, consumers in mature markets are adopting what is termed a 'nomadic' lifestyle: they are travelling more, and may even have flexible work places and relations. Travel gear has exploded because of this, and small, portable frames may help to stay in touch with the near and dear, or to have a quick peek in the mirror.

Sustainability is top of mind in today's consumers, especially in such mature markets as Germany or the United Kingdom. However, in the category of picture or photo frames, there has hardly been any movement towards greener products, beyond the occasional frame in recycled wood or paper. The fair-trade segment, however, has traditionally been strong in this category, but their offer has not always reached mainstream markets. Therefore, it seems there is room for action.

**Tip:**

- 'Green' offers are rare in frames, so developing country exporters are able to open new segments using frames that are sustainable in terms of material use, clean production, socially-responsible practices, efficient transport solutions, and other formats that will help the consumer to feel good about your product's contribution to the planet and its people. Communicate the values you offer well, to help the importer to an additional selling point towards his customers. Where environmental or social certification is available and affordable, developing country exporters can consider starting the process, especially when a larger part of their production than frames can be

Generally, 'origin' is an important element in home decoration – 'folk' influences a.o. in home textiles, tableware and furniture, especially in the upper ends of the market are observed. Although exporters are invited to add a touch of their own culture in frames (a pattern, technique or material), strong ethnically-inspired products are not much in demand.

**Tip:**

- Adopt fair-trade values, as a way to become green. The idea of doing good fits in well with the theme of giving that is an aspect of frames.

As consumers are keen to collect (anything), but are also concerned to keep their homes clutter-free, frames are becoming organisers or display cabinets for preciously-loved objects or just the functional basics.

**Tip:**

- Think out of the box and see the frame as more than the border of a picture or mirror. Consumers are using it to box in their collections. Perhaps more uses can be designed by means of a designers' brainstorm in your workshop. Similarly, portability may be pondered by your design department, as may be the increasing need for frames to carry digital pictures. If your product is strongly cultural in the use of local beadwork, or a special material (e.g. fossilised wood), or decorations, designers need to make an effort to keep the end product in line with the taste of European consumers. Therefore, study the market and use that knowledge in the design process.

The global trend towards increased digitisation is not escaping photography either. Hence, the introduction of frames for digital pictures – still in a cheap plastic look, but ready to embrace some design.

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

## What requirements should picture and mirror frames comply with to be allowed on the European market?

### Musts

#### Product safety and Liability

The [General Product Safety Directive \(GPSD\)](#), which applies to all consumer products, states that all products marketed in Europe should be safe. The purpose of the legislation is to ensure consumer safety.

**Tip:**

- Consider implementing a management system or code of conduct in order to show to your buyer that you have taken appropriate safety measures.

The [Liability Directive](#) states that the European importer is liable for the products put on the European market. However, the importer can in principle pass on a claim to the producer/exporter.

**Tip:**

- Make sure your products are safe, to avoid product liability claims for defective products. Importers, in the end, may not choose to take you to court, but will charge costs for rejected products and, in case the damage is extreme, may consider not dealing with you anymore. In this way, the cost of losing a customer due to substandard products is quite high.

### Packaging

European [packaging and packaging waste](#) legislation restricts the use of certain heavy metals, among other requirements.

**Tips:**

- Reduce the amount and diversity of your packing materials by:
  - partitioning inside the cartons with the help of folded cardboard,
  - matching inner boxes and outer cartons better and standardising the sizes of each,
  - considering packing and logistical requirements already at the design stage of the products,
  - asking your buyer for alternatives.
- Consider using biodegradable materials, which may form a market opportunity or even a demand from your buyer.

The European Union sets requirements for [wood packaging materials used for transport](#) (WPM) such as packing cases, boxes, crates, drums, pallets, box pallets and dunnage (wood used to wedge and support non-wood cargo).

**Tips:**

- Avoid wooden crating and packing. They are increasingly banned by importers for their high cost of disposal, and are often unsustainable and costly. Investigate and source alternative packing materials that are economical and sustainable.
- If you do need to export products wrapped in or supported by wood packaging materials during transport, you have to make sure that your WPM complies with requirements.

**Wood preservatives**

The European Union has restricted the use of [arsenic and creosotes](#) as wood preservatives. Although these preservatives are not very commonly used anymore (especially not in consumer goods), you have to make sure that your products do not contain these hazardous substances.

**Tips:**

- As wood treated with creosote or arsenic compounds may not be placed on the European market, use safer alternatives for wood preservation (such as using heat or vacuum treatments).
- Link up with companies that are specialised in wood preservation.

**Timber/endangered species regulation**

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species ([CITES](#)) lays down provisions for the international trade of endangered species. The European Union has set additional import restrictions.

**Tip:**

- Before exporting your products to Europe, you should check with the CITES management authority of destination or with your importer, if there is any restriction that may impact the import into Europe.

The [FLEGT](#) action plan is designed to control the entry of timber into Europe from those countries that have entered into Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) with Europe. It makes it illegal to import certain types of timber from these countries unless that timber has a FLEGT licence, which evidences that the timber has been legally harvested.

**Tips:**

- Before exporting your products to Europe, you should check with the FLEGT management authority of destination or with your importer, whether there is any restriction that may impact the import into Europe.
- If your country is part of the VPA make sure you comply with their requirements to verify the legality of your timber product before entering Europe.

Under the [EU Timber Regulation](#) (EUTR), placing illegally harvested timber and products on the European market is prohibited. Only when your timber is proven legal, it is allowed to be imported into Europe. Wood carrying a FLEGT licence, or a CITES permit, is considered to comply with the EUTR.

**Tips:**

- As the responsibility of compliance with legal sourcing lies with your importing company, you can expect an increase in requests for information on products' details, origin, the legality etc.
- You may experience an increase in request for certification systems possibly allow for official legality verification in the future such as FSC.
- It is possible that European importers prefer to source timber from VPA countries that have FLEGT fully implemented.

**Other**

[Cadmium](#) compounds are carcinogenic agents, which are used in different applications. European legislation restricts the use of cadmium in the following three cases: (1) cadmium used as plastic pigment, (2) cadmium used as stabiliser in plastics, and (3) cadmium used as coating of metallic plates and surfaces.

**Tip:**

- Many frames are made of composites and plastics that can contain toxics. As these products may not be placed on the European market, only work with natural materials and make sure that your raw materials come from a reliable supplier and are tested sufficiently.

## Additional requirements

### Sustainability

Consumers are increasingly aware of the social and environmental circumstances during production. Consequently, requirements regarding sustainability and certification are increasingly important to buyers. Implementing a management system (e.g. ISO 14000 on environmental aspects or SA 8000 on social conditions), or using sustainably produced (FSC) materials may be a competitive advantage.

**Tip:**

- Think about sustainable production methods and consider certification because it adds value to your products. This is useful when targeting the higher market segments.

### Codes of conduct

European buyers may expect you to comply with their supplier codes of conduct. This can be the importer's own code of conduct or a code of conduct as a part of an initiative in which the importer is participating (e.g. BSCI).

The following are examples of initiatives regarding sustainability, possibly relevant if you want to export to Europe:



The Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) is 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 is audited, it will be included in a database that can be used by all BSCI participants.

**Tip:**

- Since more and more European importers participate in BSCI, you can expect that complying with the BSCI code of conduct will be seen as a basic requirement. Because it can harm your position on the market if you are far from complying with this initiative, you are advised to anticipate by performing a self-assessment, which is available at the website of [BSCI](#).

[ISO 14001](#) Certification scheme that provides generic requirements for an organisation's environmental policy.

**Tip:**

- This standard can be used to reduce the cost of waste management, and distribution costs and improve corporate image. Therefore, consider ISO 14001 certification which may form a market opportunity or even a demand from your buyer.

[SA 8000](#) Certification standard by Social Accountability International (SAI) for the improvement of working conditions

**Tip:**

- Consider SAI certification that may form a market opportunity or even a demand from your buyer.



Besides the social and environmental aspects of production, [Fair Trade](#) certification also covers a fair wage to labourers involved in the production of salad sets of wood.

**Tip:**

- Acquire fair trade certification to enter the fair trade segment. Compliance with fair trade norms will also make it easier to acquire other social and environmental norms, as it is the most integrated system for sustainability.



[FSC](#) certification ensures the environmentally appropriate use of the forest.

**Tip:**

FSC or similar norms for the sustainable management of wood or other raw materials will increasingly adopt a legal character or become a way to influence consumer choice. Exporters should build such values into their offer, even at the stage when they are optional in trade, to anticipate future demand.

## What competition do I face on the European picture and mirror frames market?

Please refer to [CBI Competition for Home Decoration & Home Textiles](#) and [CBI Top 10 Tips for Doing Business with European Buyers](#), because frames competitiveness does not differ significantly from this general overview.

## What do the trade channels and interesting market segments look like in Europe for picture and mirror frames?

Please refer to [CBI Market Channels and Segments for Home Decoration](#), because frames channels and segments do not differ significantly from this general overview.

### The European home decoration market offers products at any end of the market.

Frames can feature in the low, middle, and upper ends. However, given the nature of the product, picture frames are predominantly a *nice accessory* for the home, for which consumers will also pay a '*nice price*'. That means that the bandwidth of prices for frames is smaller than many other products in home decoration. Hardly any picture frame will be higher than some € 30 (consumer price), as it simply cannot offer too much in premium value (material, design) to warrant a luxury positioning. A few exceptions are possible (see high end under 'Product Specification'). Mirrors do reach premium status easier, but then it often involves mirrors with premium craftsmanship in glass and crystal, often without frame.

**Tip:**

- Know your market: the main distributors and brands, trade fairs, and consumer needs and apply your knowledge to drive innovation in production, market development, pricing strategies, investment in packaging and communication, etc. With so many segments being available (esp. mid market), it is crucially important to offer the exact benefits for that segment to convince the importer. In mature markets, the professional buyers are also very mature and will note at a glance when the exporter understands his market's requirements. Preparing well for trade fairs and other forms of introducing your range to the market is therefore an important success factor.

E-tailing is on the increase, with specialised e-commerce platforms or home decoration retailers with a B2C web shop offering frames for pictures and mirrors.

**Tip:**

- To accommodate the fast e-commerce trend, developing country exporters are challenged to change their business models to adapt the logistics requirements to individual end consumers rather than retailers requesting bulk. Packing and packaging, logistical systems and communication, and even the product design itself, may need to be reconsidered when exporters study the needs of e-tailers.

## Useful Sources

- Trade associations
  - Aid to Artisans - <http://www.aidtoartisans.org> - International Non-profit Organization for the craft sector
  - EFTA - <http://www.european-fair-trade-association.org> - European Fair Trade Association
  - WFTO - <http://www.wfto-europe.org> - World Fair Trade Organization
- Trade fairs are still the most important way to meet new clients within the home accessory sector. Therefore, your best options to meet potential British buyers are:
  - Ambiente (Germany) - <http://ambiente.messefrankfurt.com>
  - IMM (Germany) - <http://www.imm-cologne.com/>
  - Maison et Objet (France) - <http://www.maison-objet.com/>
  - Salone Internazionale del Mobile (Italy) - <http://salonemilano.it/>
  - Spring Fair (UK) - <http://www.springfair.com>



**CBI Market Intelligence**

P.O. Box 93144  
2509 AC The Hague  
The Netherlands

[www.cbi.eu/market-information](http://www.cbi.eu/market-information)

[marketintel@cbi.eu](mailto:marketintel@cbi.eu)

This survey was compiled for CBI by Globally Cool: creative solutions for sustainable business  
in collaboration with CBI sector expert Kees Bronk

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