



CBI  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

# CBI Product Factsheet

## Throws

*'Practical market insights into your product'*

Throws have become a very popular product over the past decade. The European market for throws can provide interesting opportunities to DC exporters who are able to stand out from the crowd. Offering added value by diversifying your product design, as well as focusing on traditional craftsmanship and sustainability, can lead you to a successful market entry.

### Product definition

*This section provides an overview of the products within the range of the general product view, as well as mentioning the common trade names of the product.*

A throw is a type of bedding and is a common accessory to furnishings. Throws are smaller than blankets and can also be used for extra warmth outside of the bedroom.

Classification of throws:

- **Harmonised System (HS)** Within the EU / EFTA, the following HS codes are used as indicators for the trade in throws:
  - 6301.2000: blankets (other than electric blankets) and travelling rugs, made of wool or of fine animal hair
  - 6301.3000: blankets (other than electric blankets) and travelling rugs, made of cotton
  - 6301.4000: blankets (other than electric blankets) and travelling rugs, made of synthetic fibres
  - 6301.9000: other blankets and travelling rugs
- **Prodcom:** the following prodcom codes are used to indicate European production of throws:
  - 1392.1130: blankets and travelling rugs made of wool or fine animal hair (excluding electric blankets)
  - 1392.1150: blankets and travelling rugs made of synthetic fibres (excluding electric blankets)
  - 1392.1190: blankets (excluding electric blankets) and travelling rugs made of other textile materials (excluding wool or fine animal hair and synthetic fibres)

### Product specifications

*This section gives an overview of the product's key specifications in terms of quality requirements, labelling, materials, design and packaging.*

#### Examples of throws



Source: [pamelahopedesigns.com](http://pamelahopedesigns.com)



Source: [michiganavemag.com](http://michiganavemag.com)

**Quality:**

- **Functionality:** Throws function mainly as decoration on a couch or sofa, but at the same time offer the warmth of a blanket. Being an easy and inexpensive way to add style to any interior, throws have become very popular accessories. Increasingly, they have been introduced into the clothing industry, since they can also be used as fashionable overcoats.
- **Raw material quality:** Most throws on the European market are woven, but can also be knitted and crocheted. Throws may consist of cotton, wool, fleece, silk and hemp. They can also be made of blended yarns.
- **Size:** Sizes of throws vary widely in the European market, matching the different bed sizes. Typical sizes for throws are:
  - 90cm x 200cm
  - 140cm x 200cm
  - 160cm x 200cm
  - 180cm x 140cm
  - 240cm x 100cm
  - 220cm x 230cm
  - 260cm x 220cm

Other sizes are also possible. During the early stages of collaboration, it is a good idea to communicate to your potential European buyer the sizes that you are able to produce.
- **Style:** Throws come in a wide variety of colours and patterns. Neutral or vibrant colours, striped or plain, throws can match every style.

**Labelling:**

- Labels for transport normally include information on the producer, consignee, composition of the product and the size of the product, number of pieces, box identification and total number of boxes, net and gross weight.
- The most important information on the product and packing labels of throws is: composition, size, origin and care labelling. For more information and illustrations of product labelling, please refer to 'Labelling of textiles' under 'Requirements you must meet'.

**Packing and Packaging:**

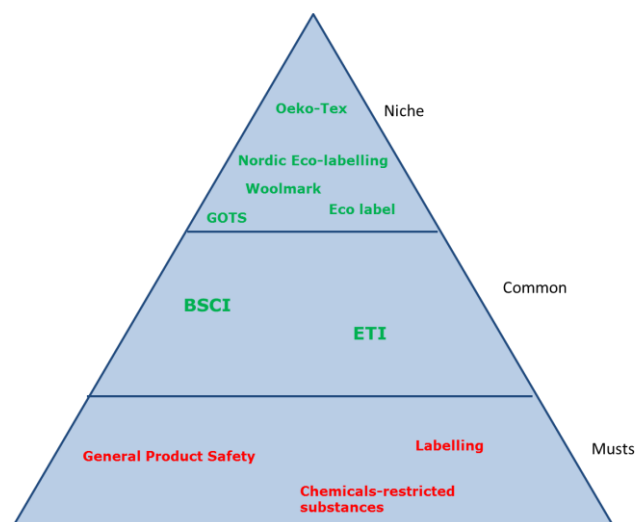
- When shipping your product to a client, the throws should be packed according to your buyers' instructions. Packaging usually consists of plastic wrapping to protect the fabric from water, solar radiation and staining. The packaging should be in dimensions and weight which are easy to handle. Standards are often related to labour regulations at point of destination and will have to be specified by the buyer.
- Throws are usually displayed unpacked, making attractive consumer packaging of minor importance. In general, consumer packaging can be simple in design, but needs to be protective. When supplying the mid-high or high-end segment, it is good marketing to have consumer packaging of the kind usually used for gift packaging. This should match the design, quality and price of the product sold. The exporter, however, is not always responsible for attractive consumer packaging.

**Example of shipment packaging****Example of consumer packaging**Source: [globaltextiles.com](http://globaltextiles.com)

## Buyer Requirements

*This section provides an overview and analysis of requirements that DC exporters face in the market for throws. The analysis includes legal requirements and non-legislative requirements.*

**Figure 1: Buyer requirements**



## Requirements you must meet

**General Product Safety:** The General Product Safety Directive states that all products marketed in the EU must be safe to use. It also forms a framework for all legislation established for specific products and issues. 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 throws, the General Product Safety Directive applies in addition, covering all other safety aspects which may not have been described exclusively in the product's specific legal requirements.

**CFA<sup>1</sup>:** Study the specific legal requirements listed to ensure the product does not cause any danger under normal use. Most buyers will require proof of the DC 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](#).

**CFA:** For a full list of legal requirements applicable to your product see the [EU Export Helpdesk](#) where you can identify your product code to obtain a list of applicable requirements.

**Chemicals - Restricted Substances:** The EU has restricted a great number of chemicals in products that are marketed in the EU. These are listed in the so-called REACH regulation (Regulation (EC) 1907/2006). If you dye your throws, make sure you do not use any of the [azo dyes](#) that release any of the 22 aromatic amines which are prohibited. The EU legislation lists the aromatic amines, not the azo dyes which release them. The vast majority of azo dyes are, therefore, legally acceptable.

Furthermore, for professional use, e.g. in the hospitality sector, throws need to be fireproof. However, several flame retardants have been restricted in the EU.

<sup>1</sup> Considerations for action

The *flame retardants* which have been restricted include Tris (2,3 dibromopropyl) phosphate (TRIS); Tris (aziridinyl) phosphineoxide (TEPA) and; Polybromobiphenyles (PBB), which have been prohibited in products intended to come into contact with the skin.

**CFA:** In relation to dyeing: Make sure your products do not contain any of the *azo dyes* which release the forbidden aromatic amines. Since the liability rests on the exporter, you have to ensure that your supply chain is in order with regard to dyes and chemicals. To test your products, use the official tests. You can find the tests on the [CEN website](#): CEN Textiles – Methods for the determination of certain aromatic amines derived from azo-colourants – Part 1: Detection of the use of certain azo-colourants accessible without extraction. Reference: EN 14362:2003 / EN 14362-1:2012.

**CFA:** Follow any 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 permitted only for products 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 EU 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 their fibre composition. Textile labels should be durable and tear resistant, easily legible, visible and accessible. The main purpose of the EU Regulation is to ensure that consumers, when purchasing textile products, are given an accurate indication of their fibre composition. There is no EU wide legislation on the use of symbols for washing instructions and other care aspects of textile articles, despite the importance given to that information by European consumers. You are advised, therefore, to follow ISO standards in this matter.

**CFA:** Know your own product and study the EU labelling rules to find out how your product should be labelled in the EU. 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 with it. 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.

## Common requirements

**Social performance:** Companies can differentiate themselves by introducing sustainability into their business practices. The means of offering sustainable products are numerous, ranging from recycling to certification and use of labels. Two retail initiatives have gained quite some ground especially in Western European countries:



The [Business Social Compliance Initiative \(BSCI\)](#) has been developed by European retailers to improve social conditions in sourcing countries. Suppliers to BSCI participants are expected to comply with the BSCI Code of Conduct. To prove compliance, your production process will be audited at the request of the importer. Once a company has been audited, it will be included in a database which 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 of people across the globe who make or grow consumer goods.

**CFA:** Since more and more European importers participate in BSCI and ETI, compliance with the BSCI and ETI codes of conduct is currently seen as a basic requirement. If you haven't done so already, you may want to look into the possibilities of improving your sustainability performance. This may not always result in an immediate grant of a certification or label, but familiarising yourself with issues included in the initiatives will give you an idea of what to focus on. Also see CBI's publication '[CBI Tailored Intelligence: the Sustainable Design market for Home Decoration and Home Textiles](#)'.



### Niche requirements

While sustainability is gaining ground, the actual use of certification is still not widespread in this sector. Nevertheless, there are several eco-labels used for textiles, including throws. 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 [EU Ecolabel](#) also looks to environmentally-friendly chemical options. The [Woolmark](#) brand provides consumers with guaranteed fibre content and an assurance of quality.

**CFA:** Check the possibility of sourcing organic cotton for your throws. Textile products that contain a minimum of 70% organic fibres can become GOTS certified.

**CFA:** Consider obtaining the Oeko-Tex® Standard 100 for your product since it is the world's leading eco-label for testing textiles for harmful substances and is quite popular among European producers.

**CFA:** Consider the EU Ecolabel for your product. The label is awarded only to products with the lowest environmental impact in a product range.

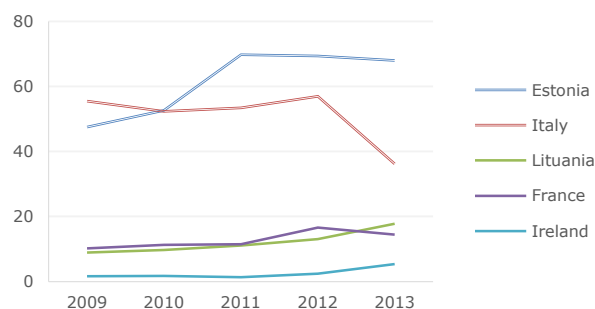
**CFA:** Consider obtaining a Woolmark licence for your company, since it is highly valued across the world.

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

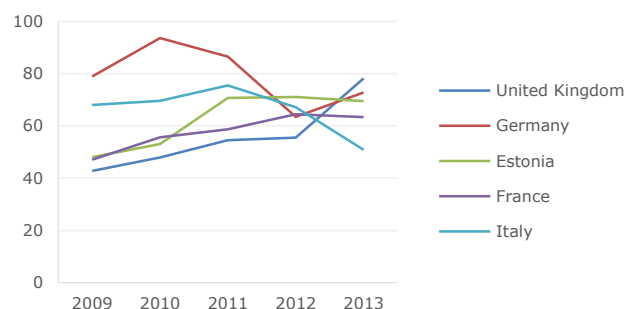
### Trade and Macro-Economic Statistics

*A statistical analysis of the major product developments and forecasts will be given, based on trade and macro-economic statistics. The statistical indicators being analysed are import, export, production and consumption statistics for blankets.*

As there are no specific HS and Prodcom codes for throws, trade data on a larger product group is provided, namely blankets. This data provides an indication of the European market for throws.

**Figure 2:** Leading producing countries of blankets in the EU/EFTA, values in € million

Source: Eurostat Prodcom (2014)

**Figure 3:** Leading consuming countries of blankets in the EU/EFTA, values in € million

Source: Eurostat Prodcom (2014)

**Increased European production of blankets**

European production of blankets increased in 2013, amounting to €285 million<sup>2</sup>. Between 2009 and 2013, European production remained stable, but a sharp drop in Italian production was noted in 2013. The main producer in the EU for 2013 was Estonia, with a production totalling almost € 68 million.

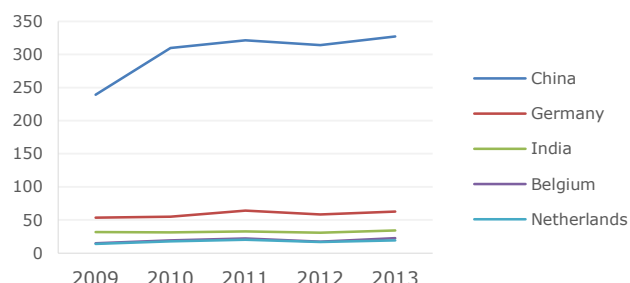
**Moderate decrease of consumption**

European consumption of blankets decreased, totalling € 519 million in 2012<sup>3</sup>. European consumption fluctuated slightly between 2008 and 2012 as a result of the ongoing economic crisis. After an increase in consumption between 2008 and 2011, consumption levels decreased in 2012 by € 34.2 million. The largest consuming European markets for 2013 were the United Kingdom, followed by Germany, Estonia and France. Despite the overall downward trajectory, Eastern European countries such as Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Poland, experienced significant increases in their consumption, demonstrating a shift of the market for blankets to Eastern Europe.

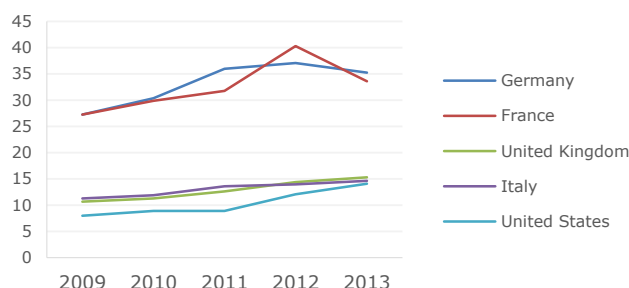
**CFA:** Be aware that the market for blankets may differ from the market for throws. In general, you should focus your exports of throws on Western European countries, where demand for exclusive handmade products is considered to be greater, and the consequences of the economic recession are less severe. Follow the developments in the emerging markets in Eastern European countries, since they may offer opportunities for DC exporters.

<sup>2</sup> Production data for 2013 of EU/EFTA cannot be provided due to data inconsistencies.

<sup>3</sup> Calculation of apparent consumption depends on production data. Therefore, apparent consumption data for 2013 of EU/EFTA cannot be provided.

**Figure 4:** Leading suppliers of blankets to EU/EFTA, value in € million

Source: Eurostat (2014)

**Figure 5:** Leading export destinations for EU/EFTA of blankets, value in € million

Source: Eurostat (2014)

**DCs gaining share in imports of blankets**

European imports of blankets have demonstrated a significant growth, mainly with those originating in China. More specifically, China has been the leading supplier for the last 4 years, accounting for more than 50% of total imports. In 2013, imports amounted to 633 million, 64% of which was sourced in DCs. Imports from other DC suppliers such as Thailand also increased. Emerging suppliers for 2013 included Peru, Nepal and Cambodia.

**Exports mostly directed to other mature markets**

European exports of blankets amounted to € 296 million in 2013. The main destinations were other mature markets in the European Union and the United States. There is a declining trend in exports, which can be attributed to the continuing effects of the economic crisis. Nevertheless, we see a reversing trend in the cases of the United Kingdom, Italy and the United States. The exports from these countries show a reserved but steady increase.

**CFA:** Competition from developing countries is considerable, since they supply most of the blankets imported into the EU. Make sure you differentiate your products by offering added value, i.e. craftsmanship and hand-made products.

**Market Trends**

*The trends section provides an overview of relevant market trends and forecasts in the market for throws.*

In the European market for throws, the most important trends relate to sustainability, traditional design and the increasing popularity of outdoor spaces, all of which prevail among designers and consumers.

**Extending the outdoor experience**

Outdoor spaces, such as gardens and terraces, are increasingly being considered an extension of the house, and are thus decorated accordingly. It is becoming common for different indoor activities to be transferred outside, especially during the summer months. So, living rooms, dining rooms and even kitchens can 'move' to the garden, together with the whole family. A throw can be the perfect accessory to extend the outdoor experience, especially for summer evenings and nights or autumn days. At the same time, it will create a cozy feeling.

**CFA:** Consider manufacturing your throws from wool or fleece to supply warm products to your customers. Designs and patterns should be simple and fashionable, matching the designs of outdoor decorations.

**Example of outdoor design**

Source: malarpaviljongen.se



### Sustainability

Consumer awareness of sustainable consumption is growing. Consequently, designers and producers increasingly focus on minimising the impact of their production on the environment. Specifically for throws, this means a shift to more sustainable raw materials for their manufacturing, such as organic wool or cotton. Additionally, sustainable practices can include milling the fibres without the use of chemicals and colouring them without toxic dyes.

**CFA:** Try to minimise your impact on the environment by using eco-friendly raw materials and by reducing your energy use. Being transparent in your production processes on these topics can gain the trust of potential European buyers.

**CFA:** Consider sourcing organic certifications for your throws, especially when you are targeting the high-end and middle-high segments of the market. Note, however, that sustainable raw materials also come at a higher cost price.

### Traditional design

Traditional craftsmanship, as well as ethnic designs, are very popular trends in the European market for throws. Consumers are impressed by the story behind the product, adding to its individuality and uniqueness. A successful example that can demonstrate the popularity of tradition among consumers is the Scottish or Norwegian style throws. Plaid patterns have also proved to be time-resistant and are very popular in the textile fashion industry.

**CFA:** Promote the traditional production method of your culture, which gives the product a story. Make sure that it comes across clearly to the consumer, perhaps by including a card in the throws' packaging, describing the product's unique story.

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

### Market Channels and Segments

*A description of the characteristics of different segments within the channel will be given.*

Please refer to [CBI Home Textile Channels and Segments](#) for a general overview of market segments, as market segments for throws do not differ significantly from this general overview. Also, refer to this document for more detailed information in order to learn more about the qualities used in the different segments.

To illustrate the different segments in the European market for throws, examples are presented in Table 1. In the low-end segment, throws are simple and inexpensive. In the middle segment, throws are manufactured with sustainable raw materials, such as organic cotton and wool. In the high-end segment, designer's quality is common and private labels are the standard.

#### Example of sustainability



Source: [treehugger.com](http://treehugger.com)

#### Example of traditional design



Source: [totallytartan.net](http://totallytartan.net)



**Table 1: Channels and segments in the throws market**

Low: affordable and practical	Middle: fashionable and functional	High: conceptual design
		
Source: houzz.com	Source: upstairsatpierrelafond.com	Source: Neeru Kumar

## Prices

This section provides an overview of the product's consumer prices on the European market.

There is a very wide price range within the European market for throws. Retail prices of throws can vary from €6 to €100 or more. The prices vary depending on the size, fabric and composition of the product, as well as the brand of the throw.

**Table 2: Indicative consumer prices of throws**

	Low end	Middle-low end	Middle-high end	High end
<b>Throws</b>	€6-€15	€20-€40	€40-€75	€100 or more

Your products will be sold to European consumers at 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. Besides energy, labour and transport costs, FOB prices depend heavily on the availability and cost of raw materials. In 2013, the average prices for many of the raw materials used for throws, such as cotton and wool, noted a moderate decrease. In the first months of 2014, this trend changed and the prices have continued to increase. Incidental hikes in the price of raw materials are not directly passed on to the consumer, but do exert pressure on exporters, importers and retailers' margins.

**Figure 6: Indicative price breakdown**

Source: ProFound (2014)

## Field of Competition

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

## Useful sources

*This section provides an overview of valuable references for DC exporters relevant to throws.*

### 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 throws are:

- [Maison & Objet](#) - Paris, France
- [Heimtextil](#) - Frankfurt, Germany
- [Ambiente](#) - Frankfurt, Germany

#### More information

CBI market information: Promising EU export markets.

EU Expanding Exports Helpdesk - <http://exporthelp.europa.eu> - go to 'trade statistics'.

Eurostat - <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/newxtweb> - statistical database of the EU.

Several queries are possible. For trade, choose 'EU27 Trade Since 1995 By CN8'. Use the guide 'Understanding Eurostat: Quick guide to easy comext'

([http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/newxtweb/assets/User\\_guide\\_Easy\\_Comext\\_20090513.pdf](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/newxtweb/assets/User_guide_Easy_Comext_20090513.pdf)) for instructions.

International Trade Statistics - <http://www.trademap.org> - you have to register

This survey was compiled for CBI by  
ProFound – Advisers In Development

in collaboration with  
CBI sector expert Steve Pepper

Disclaimer CBI market information tools: <http://www.cbi.eu/disclaimer>