



Exporting Textiles and Textile Products to the European Union – Frequently Asked Questions

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What kind of quotas and tariffs does the EU have on textile imports?

Quotas

There are no quotas on textile and apparel products made in the United States. Since the beginning of 2009, trade in textiles and clothing is fully liberalized and there are no longer any quantitative restrictions in the EU on textile and clothing exports including imports originating in China. (The European Union does maintain some quotas for the import of particular textile and clothing from Belarus. For more information consult the interactive site for determining EU quotas): http://trade.ec.europa.eu/sigl/info_textile.htm

Duties

Duty rates on textile and apparel products made in the United States are subject to the EU's Most Favored Nation rate (MFN). The overall average MFN tariff rate for textile and apparel products is 9%. For the current MFN duty rates see the EU's tariff website: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/dds2/taric/taric_consultation.jsp

Many third countries have tariff-free access to the EU market, either under the various preferential trade arrangements/agreements (e.g. with the accession countries, the Mediterranean countries, the non-EU countries belonging to the European Economic Area, the 69 Lomé countries), or under the Generalized System of Preferences, GSP (which provides for zero tariffs for least developed countries, and for tariff reductions of 15% for the remaining countries covered by that regime). <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/wider-agenda/development/generalised-system-of-preferences/>

Do I need an import license to export to the EU?

U.S. companies exporting textile products do not need an import authorization for the EU. Import authorizations are only necessary for products originating in countries subject to EU quotas.

Regulation 3030/93 is the basic legislation regulating imports of textiles into the EU and contains country-specific information. Companies should be aware that the Regulation and its annexes are constantly being amended. There is currently a proposal to repeal this Regulation: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/com/com_com%282014%290707_/com_com%282014%290707_en.pdf

What about customs?

Commission Regulation 2454/93 (Community Customs Code) is the basic legislation governing imports and customs for the entire EU. However, the ultimate authority regarding products imported into the EU is the customs authorities in the Member States. The customs treatment of textile and clothing imports to the EU depends on the country of origin. More information can be found at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1993R2454:20130131:EN:PDF>

So, do I need a certificate of origin?

No. The requirement for certificates of origin for US exporters was repealed when the EU amended the textile legislation with [Regulation 955/2001](#). However, a US exporter/producer must still declare the origin of the goods at customs and on any EU import paperwork for customs.

'Preferential origin rules,' however, still require certificates of origin, and this relates to the EU's preferential agreements (e.g. with the accession countries, the Mediterranean countries, the non-EU countries belonging to the European Economic Area, the 69 Lomé countries), or under the Generalized System of Preferences, GSP. This means that if the origin of textile goods come from these countries a certificate of origin would be necessary. For each of these, preferential trading agreements legislation exist defining origin of products. http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/rules_origin/index_en.htm

Does the imported textile product have to be labeled?

Textile products must be labeled or marked whenever they are put onto the market for production or commercial purposes (sale). The names, descriptions and details of a textile's fiber content must be indicated on products available for consumers. With the exception of trademarks or the name of the undertaking, information other than that required by the directive must be listed separately. Member States may require that their national language be used on the labeling and marking required by the directive. Care labeling is not mandatory, with the exception of exports entering Austria. Eco-labeling also is not mandatory, however, products must meet certain ecological criteria in order to include such labels. See below for further details. (A separate Market Report on Labeling is available from the Commercial Service)

Fiber content labeling

Textile products made available on the EU market have to comply with the requirements of [Regulation \(EU\) No 1007/2011](#). It stipulates for checks on whether the composition of textile products is in conformity with the information supplied. All products containing at least 80% weight of textile fibers, including raw, semi-worked, worked, semi-manufactured, semi-made, made-up products are covered by this legislation. The information which has to be provided relates to the composition of the textile product; only the fibre names listed in Annex I to the Regulation may be used for the purpose of indicating the textile fibre composition.

According to the Regulation, 'The labelling and marking of textile products shall be durable, easily legible, visible and accessible and, in the case of a label, securely attached.' In case of the presence of non-textile parts of animal origin, the labelling or marking saying 'Contains non-textile parts of animal origin' **has to be put on the product** and beside that, further specifications might be indicated on a voluntary basis, provided that they are not misleading for the consumer. No further requirements are specified, meaning that there is no need to specifically identify the components, such as leather or fur for example.

Care labeling

Unlike fiber content labeling, there is no harmonized EU legislation on care labeling. With the exception of Austria, it is not mandatory to include care labels when exporting to the EU. However, the European Textile Association recommends the use of care labels, as the manufacturer can be held liable under another EU Directive if a problem occurs. (Product Liability Directive – see below). In the EU, care labels can consist of symbols/logos only (i.e., ISO care labels); additional text is allowed, but not necessary. Companies exporting to certain countries may have to pay a fee to a national agency that protects these logos. (Since this is not an EU-wide issue, please check with the relevant Embassies' Commercial Service Office whether there is such a requirement in their respective Member States.)

European “Eco-label”

An increasingly important label is the European “Eco-label”, although its use is not mandatory. It was created in 1992 to encourage the production and consumption of goods and services that respect the environment. This label can be obtained for consumer non-food products. In the case of textiles, the label will be awarded to products if: substances with harmful effects on the aquatic environment and air have been limited during fiber production, the risk of allergic reactions has been reduced, the product does not shrink more than conventional products, the product is as color resistant against washing, drying friction and light exposure as conventional products. An independent organization, the European Eco-labeling Board (EUEB) awards the label following ecological criteria that take into consideration all the stages in the life of the product. While not required, companies may consider this label to improve consumer perception of the product. For more information refer to: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm

Origin marking

There is currently no harmonized mandatory origin labeling in the European Union. The issue has been debated for many years by the European institutions but a proposal from the European Commission has been rejected by the Member States.

What other legislation applies to textile imports to the EU?

Increasingly, EU legislation is having an impact on the import of textile products to the EU. Several directives related to the environment directly affect the European textile and clothing industry, such as those relating to waste management or to industrial emissions. Below is a list and explanation of some of this legislation.

Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH)

The sector is affected by the new [REACH Regulation](#) on chemicals, being a downstream user of a wide variety of chemical preparations. This new system requires enterprises that manufacture or import more than one ton of a chemical substance per year to register it in a central database. The information will be passed down the chain of production and downstream users will be required to provide information on use of chemicals. REACH can also bring business benefits by increasing innovation in leather chemicals.

Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC)

One piece of environmental legislation of relevance for the textile sector is the [Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control](#) (IPPC) Directive. This Directive aims at minimizing pollution from various industrial sources throughout the European Union.

Emission Trading System (ETS)

The European [Emission Trading System](#) also has effects on the textile sector. [Directive 2009/29/EC](#) improves and extends the greenhouse gas emission allowance trading scheme of the Community. In Annex I of the Directive you will find the defined categories of activities to which this Directive applies. In this particular framework, textile companies can be impacted by the ETS Directive if they have combustion installations with a total rated thermal input exceeding 20MW.

Biocides Directive

Whenever Biocidal products are added to textile products to confer them with specific properties (e.g. repel fleas, mites and mosquitoes or avoid allergens) the provisions of the [Biocides Regulation](#) have to be complied with.

Product Liability and Product Safety

Directive 85/374/EEC sets out the EU rules on product liability. The producer is liable for damages caused by a defect in the product. The victim must prove the existence of the defect and a causal link between defect and injury (bodily as well as material). A reduction of liability of the manufacturer is granted in cases of negligence on the part of the victim. A "development risk" can also free the manufacturer from liability. The statute of limitations is ten years.

The General Product Safety Directive (GPSD) (2001/95/EEC) aims to ensure that products placed on the market are safe, and places the obligation to place only safe products on the market on producers and to some extent on distributors. The products covered are those intended for consumers, or likely to be used by consumers, supplied in the course of a commercial activity or the provision of a service.

This directive, which came into effect on January 15, 2004, replaces Directive 92/59/EEC. An important element to the GPSD is the link to a list of voluntary European industry standards. If a manufacturer opted to use one of these standards, the product would be considered "safe" and in compliance with the directive. Other changes under the GPSD include an obligation of the producer and distributor to notify the Commission in case of a problem with the product, provisions for recall, the creation of a European Product Safety Network, and a ban on exports to third countries of products that are deemed unsafe in the EU. (A separate IMI on GPSD is available from the Commercial Service)

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/prod_legis/index_en.htm

Dye Standards

On September 11, 2003, EU Directive 2002/61/EC came into force, restricting the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances used in textiles. The Directive states that Azodyes which may release certain aromatic amines in detectable concentrations above 30 ppm in the finished articles or in the dyed parts may not be used in textile and leather articles which may come into direct and prolonged contact with the human skin or oral cavity, such as:

- clothing, bedding, towels, hairpieces, wigs, hats, nappies and other sanitary items, sleeping bags,
- footwear, gloves, wristwatch straps, handbags, purses/wallets, briefcases, chair covers, purses worn round the neck,
- textile or leather toys and toys which include textile or leather garments
- yarn and fabrics intended for use by the final consumer.

The full-text of the Directive can be found at:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:243:0015:0018:en:PDF>

References to the availability of the EU test method standards for azocolorants can be found at:

www.cenorm.be

More information

European Commission DG Trade's textile website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/economic-sectors/industrial-goods/textiles-and-footwear/>

European Commission DG Enterprise's textiles and clothing industry website:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/textiles/index_en.htm

European Commission's SIGL database:

<http://trade.ec.europa.eu/sigl/>

The European Apparel and Textile Organization:

<http://www.euratex.org>

U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Textiles and Apparel:
<http://web.ita.doc.gov/tacgi/OverSeasNew.nsf/alldata/Italy>

The U.S. Commercial Service in at the U.S. Mission to the European Union can be Phone:
32-2-811-4817; Fax: 32-2-8115151; or visit our website: www.export.gov/europeanunion

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