

The European market potential for swimwear

The value of the European swimwear imports is estimated at €2.1 billion, making it an overall smaller apparel subsegment than other clothing categories. Women's and girls' swimwear imports account for 76.2% of this market, while men's and boys' swimwear items account for the remaining 23.8% share of the market.

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The best opportunities for the import of swimwear to the EU are in Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Spain. The Netherlands is currently growing the fastest (average annual growth of 16.5% since 2014) and Spain is growing the least (5.3%) out of these selected countries.

Currently, manufacturers have to decide if they prefer to go for high-quality denim products, which are becoming increasingly popular, or prefer to offer low-quality mass products for European clothing chains.

The sourcing of swimwear from developing countries is quite accepted by European countries, accounting for 13.4% of the total EU imports in 2019, and with annual growth of 11.1% over the last few years.

1. Product description

Swimwear is clothing that is worn mainly for sport activities as well as a free time cloth in summer times. The category includes bikinis, tankinis, swim shorts, swimsuits and diving clothing. Generally, the product category can be broken down into the following subsegments: Men's and boys' swimwear and women's or girls' swimwear.

The men's and boys' swimwear segment includes swimwear of synthetic and textile materials, knitted and crocheted and containing $\geq 5\%$ of the weight of rubber thread (HS Codes: 61123110, 61123190, 61123910, 61123990, 62111100).

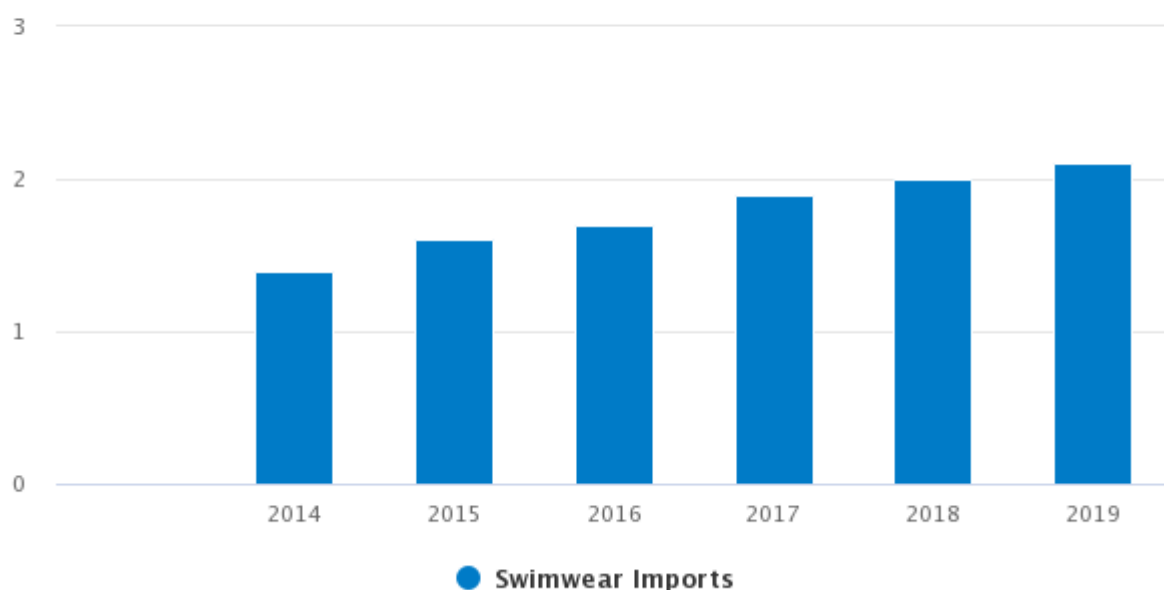
The women's and girls' swimwear segment includes swimwear of synthetic and textile materials, knitted and crocheted and containing $\geq 5\%$ of the weight of rubber thread (HS Codes: 61124110, 61124190, 61124910, 61124990, 62111200).

2. What makes Europe an interesting market for swimwear?

Europe is a significant global importer of swimwear. In 2019, the value of swimwear imports to Europe, including intra-EU imports, amounted to €2.1 billion, up from €1.4 billion in 2014, corresponding to roughly 434 million units of clothing in 2019 (up from 357 million in 2014). Over the last five years, the value of the EU's swimwear imports has grown at an average rate of 8.5% annually, which is higher than the 5.8% average growth of all EU apparel imports (as reported in a [demand analysis published by CBI in 2019](#)). The segment has shown a high and steady growth in the last five years, and the demand for swimwear is expected to continue growing again in 2021, after a decline in 2020 due to the coronavirus.

Figure 1: European Union Swimwear Imports

in € billion



Source: Eurostat

Women's and girls' swimwear is the larger product segment in swimwear, representing €1.6 billion in imports, and account for about 76.2% of the total segment value. Men's or boys' swimwear imports reached €509 million in 2019. However, both product segments are growing very equally; women's swimwear grew by 7.9% from 2014 to 2019, while men's swimwear imports grew by 5.2% during the same period.

Table 1: Swimwear imports to EU by segment, 2019 EUR value; % share of Swimwear; average five-year compound growth

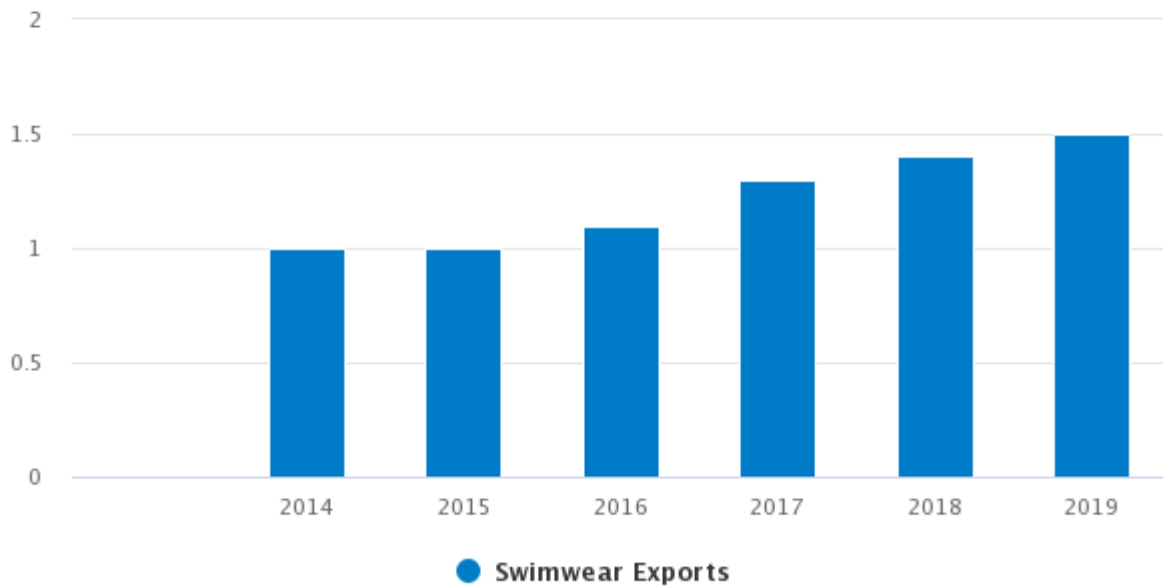
Segment	Value	% Share of swimwear	5-yr growth
Women's and girls' swimwear	€1.633 m	76.2%	↑7.9%
Men's and boys' swimwear	€509 m	23.8%	↑5.1%
All Swimwear	€2.142 m	100%	↑8.5%

Source: Eurostat

The EU is also a large re-exporter of swimwear apparel. In 2019, it exported €1.5 billion worth of swimwear products (up from €1.0 billion in 2014). The EU swimwear apparel export market has been growing at an average yearly rate of 9.9% between 2014 and 2019. The biggest EU exporters in 2019 were Germany (€295 million), France (€176 million), the Netherlands (€171 million), Italy (€166 million), the United Kingdom (€157 million) and Poland (€109 million). Together, these six countries represent over 70% of the EU's swimwear apparel exports. The Netherlands, Poland and Germany have seen the strongest export growth within this group, with an average yearly increase of 18.6% for the Netherlands, 18% for Poland and 11.1% for Germany. Over the same period, France, the United Kingdom, and Italy have seen single-digit growth.

Figure 2: European Union Swimwear Exports

in € billion

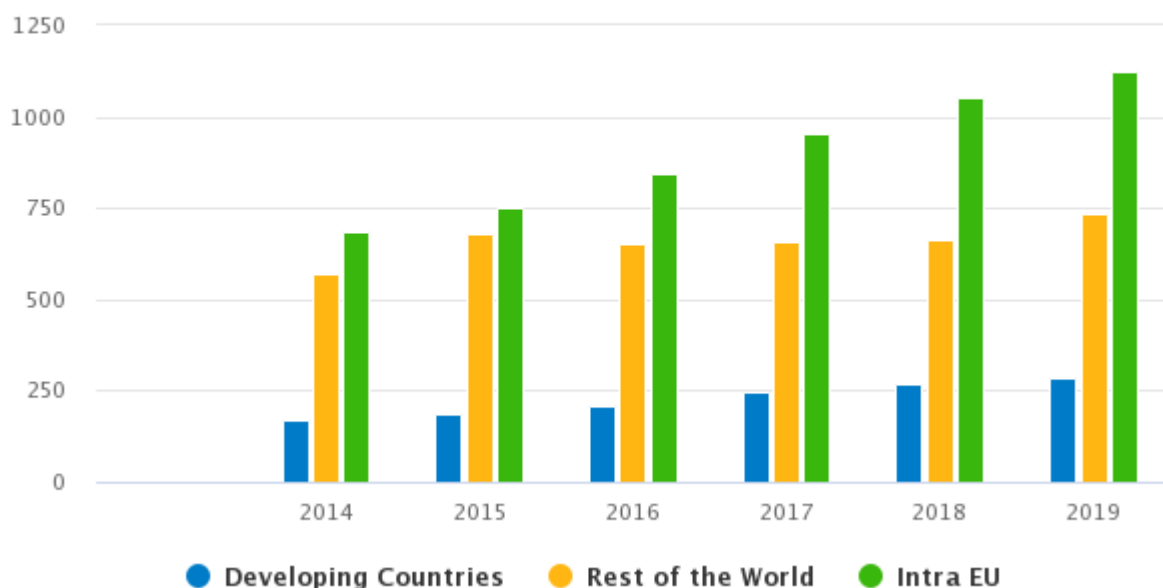


Source: Eurostat

Currently, the value of EU swimwear imports is evenly split between swimwear originating from inside the EU and swimwear originating from outside the EU, at 52.4% and 47.3% respectively. In 2019, developing country supplier contributed 13.4% of all swimwear imports into the EU in terms of value (up from 11.9% in 2014) and suppliers from the rest of the world accounted for 34.3% of the imports (down from 39.9% in 2014). The figures additionally show an increase of swimwear imports within the EU, while the imports from outside the EU is slowly decreasing. Nevertheless, the share of developing countries is recently growing at an annual average ratio of 11.1% since 2014 and is expected to gain further importance for the trade to the EU in the future.

Figure 3: European Union Swimwear Imports by Origin

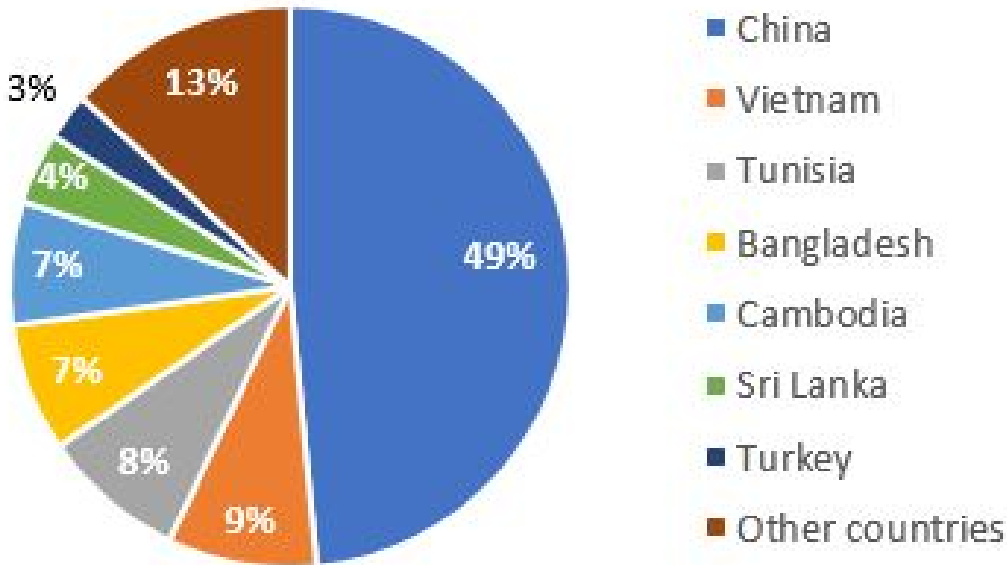
in € million



Source: Eurostat COMEX

Europe’s Extra-EU swimwear product exports are clearly dominated by China, owning alone nearly 50% of the imports from out of the EU. China is followed by Vietnam and Tunisia, owning each 9% and 8% of the market.

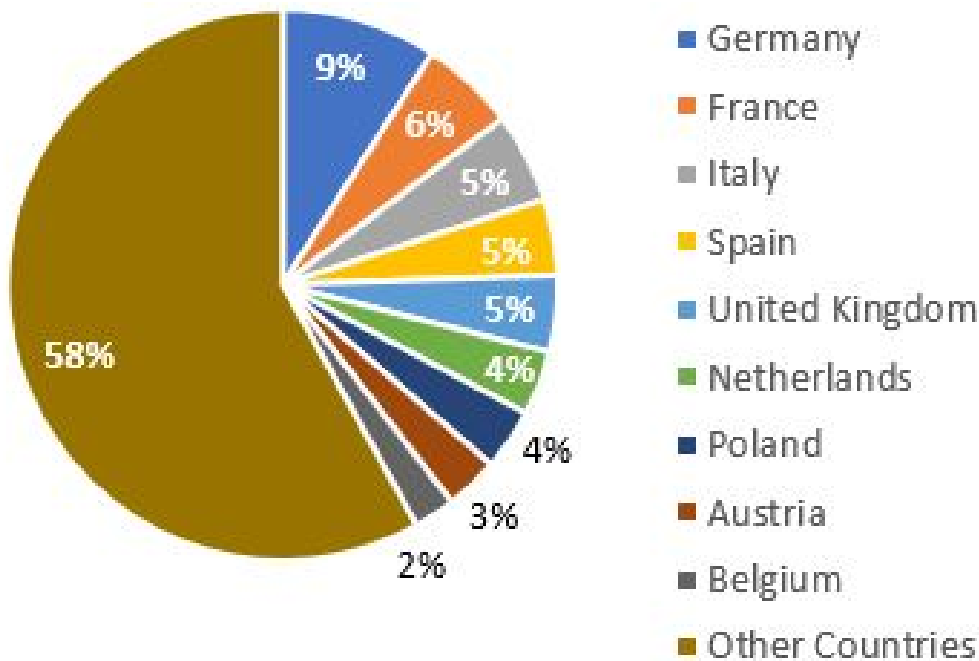
Figure 4: 2019 Extra-EU Imports of Swimwear by market share of exporting countries



Source: Eurostat

Figure 5 shows Intra-EU swimwear imports are led by Germany, followed by France, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Overall, the market is very fragmented between the different countries of the EU.

Figure 5: 2019 Intra-EU Imports of Swimwear by market share of exporting countries



Source: Eurostat

Table 2 shows the top 10 Extra-EU exporters to the European Union and the top 10 Intra-EU exporters to (other) countries in the European Union. These countries act in direct competition to each other, fighting for the biggest market shares in swimwear products.

The imports from out of the EU are clearly dominated by Asian countries. Out of the top 10 countries importing

to the EU from outside of the EU, Myanmar (56.3%), Vietnam (33.3%) and Cambodia (26.4%) are the top 3 exporting countries in terms of annual growth from 2014 to 2019. The only country of the top 10 experiencing a decline has been Hong Kong.

Table 2: Top 10 Extra-EU and Intra-EU Skirts & Dresses exporters to EU, 2019 EUR value; average yearly growth

Country	Value	5-yr growth	Country	Value	5-yr growth
Top Extra-EU Swimwear Exporters			Top Intra-EU Swimwear Exporters		
China	€495 m	↑ 2.2%	Germany	€198 m	↑ 13.8%
Vietnam	€88 m	↑ 33.3%	France	€119 m	↑ 4.8%
Tunisia	€84 m	↑ 0.3%	Italy	€114 m	↑ 7.9%
Bangladesh	€76 m	↑ 14.8%	United Kingdom	€97 m	↑ 18.6%
Cambodia	€73 m	↑ 26.4%	Spain	€96 m	↑ 5.8%
Sri Lanka	€41 m	↑ 17.0%	Netherlands	€81 m	↑ 21.9%
Turkey	€27 m	↑ 14.0%	Poland	€76 m	↑ 16.0%
Myanmar	€19 m	↑ 56.3%	Austria	€61 m	↑ 6.2%
Morocco	€16 m	↑ 10.1%	Belgium	€47 m	↑ 6.5%
Hong Kong	€13 m	↓ -8.5%	Czechia	€30 m	↑ 9.1%

Source: Eurostat

Impact of Coronavirus on the European apparel market in 2020

The Covid-19 epidemic is strongly influencing the sales and processes within all segments of the fashion industry. Europe is facing an [economic decline of more than 7%](#) in total. In most European countries, local shops had to close during lockdowns, depending heavily on the support payments by the governments, the offer of heavy discounts and a seamless shift to digital channels.

Swimwear has specifically been affected by the decreasing availability of fitness centres, swimming pools and beaches, as well as the travel regulations, preventing Europeans from spending their spring and summer holidays in the Southern countries. In the United Kingdom, the arrivals of new swimwear had decreased by 18% in March 2020 compared with March 2019, indicating further double-digit decreases for the apparel subsegment in the months to follow. In the meantime, [the prices for swimwear have decreased](#).

The trade decrease during the Covid-19 crises particularly affected apparel products coming from China. Since large parts of the swimwear imports to the EU come from China, the volume and value of imports in 2020 are

expected to be largely influenced by the situation. Due to the uncertainty concerning the availability of swimwear products from China in 2020, many European companies are reacting by [searching for new \(local\) suppliers](#).

Another specific trend originating from the crisis is the development of the so called “Staycation” style, which combines sports- and swimwear apparel designs and loungewear. As consumers are mostly isolating at home, they use [staycation fashion](#) to be still able to get any kind of sunlight on the balcony or in the own garden.

Digital sales cannot compensate the overall losses experienced by the fashion brands, and has led to a decrease in import orders. A total lockdown in important export countries like [China and Bangladesh did also influence the availability of orders until April 2020](#). Bangladesh is expected to experience a loss of roughly USD 6 billion due to major difficulties in delivering their products to the EU and US due to the coronavirus and [import restrictions](#). Digital marketplaces like Zalando, AboutYou and others have benefited from the situation, as reported in the [first quarter financial report by Zalando](#). During the coronavirus crisis, fashion shows, festivals, summits and other events (for example the [Swim Collective](#), [The Swim Show](#) in Miami and [several trade shows](#) in Paris) have been cancelled or postponed due to governmental regulations.

As shops have started to reopen in Europe in May 2020, most brands are slowly recapturing their business as usual. Nevertheless, the brands can hardly estimate how much and how quickly the market will recover in the near future, considering the strong dependency on the future progression of the disease. Once the spread of the pandemic has been limited, the import of swimwear is expected to return to its previous level or even higher. Leading brands in Europe do not expect a lasting change in consumer behaviour (as stated in [several interviews](#) with brand executives). Further tips and information on the impact of the Coronavirus have been collected in an analysis by CBI ([published in April 2020](#)).

Tips:

Analyse the strength and weaknesses of your company and then decide if you prefer to be involved in the simpler men’s swimwear segment or in the more complex women’s swimwear market, which undergoes stronger fluctuations in terms of trends.

Profit from the current dynamics in the market (also due to the coronavirus) and introduce yourself as a reliable supplier of swimwear. Highlight in particular the advantages of importing your products over Chinese products, since these are the most common products, but can currently only be imported to Europe to a limited extent.

Profit from the growth of the share of swimwear products from developing companies recently by presenting yourself as an equally interesting partner, maybe showing benefits in comparison to other growing countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Observe the changes and regulations concerning the coronavirus. Most regulations are made on a national and federal level and can become both a barrier and an opportunity for you. The market may need to be reorganised after the coronavirus crisis, which might be an interesting opportunity for you to enter new markets.

Read the CBI news article [“Running an apparel factory in times of coronavirus”](#), which contains specific information on where to find updates on coronavirus regulations for the top European Apparel importing countries.

Table 3: Top 10 EU importers of Swimwear, 2019 EUR value; average yearly growth

Country	Value	5-yr growth
Germany	€353 m	↑ 9.5%
France	€288 m	↑ 5.9%
United Kingdom	€276 m	↑ 8.2%
Italy	€222 m	↑ 7.4%
Netherlands	€202 m	↑ 16.5%
Spain	€109 m	↑ 5.3%
Belgium	€94 m	↑ 3.7%
Poland	€91 m	↑ 16.0%
Austria	€71 m	↑ 5.8%
Greece	€43 m	↑ 10.9%

Source: Eurostat

3. Which European countries offer most opportunities for swimwear?

Western European markets are larger importers of swimwear products than the Central and Eastern European markets. Table 3 shows the top 10 swimwear import markets in the EU. Germany is the biggest importer, but the Netherlands, Greece and Poland have higher growth rates. Poland remains the only Eastern European country in the top 10, with a robust average growth of 16% per year since 2014. The top six countries together account for 80.9% of swimwear imports in the EU, and saw average growth of 7.5% per year in the last five years.

Table 3: Top 10 EU importers of Swimwear, 2019 EUR value; average yearly growth

Country	Value	5-yr growth
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Netherlands	€202 m	↑ 16.5%
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Belgium	€94 m	↑ 3.7%
Poland	€91 m	↑ 16.0%
Austria	€71 m	↑ 5.8%
Greece	€43 m	↑ 10.9%

Source: Eurostat

The top 10 EU importers of swimwear from developing countries are shown in table 4. France stands out with a 23.6% share of imports from developing countries. None of the top 10 countries have experienced a decrease in import of swimwear from developing countries since 2014.

Table 4: Top 10 EU importers of Swimwear from the Developing Countries, 2019 EUR value; average yearly growth

Country	Value of Developing country imports	5-yr growth	Developing country share of imports
France	€68 m	4.4%	23.6%
United Kingdom	€59 m	11.3%	21.2%
Spain	€33 m	10.8%	17.1%
Germany	€32 m	17.7%	9.1%
Italy	€31 m	13.3%	13.7%
Netherlands	€28 m	17.2%	13.8%
Belgium	€12 m	0.7%	13.0%
Sweden	€6 m	40.7%	15.1%
Denmark	€3 m	192.4%	11.8%
Ireland	€2.7 m	36.1%	13.1%

Source: Eurostat

Germany

Table 5: 2019 Imports of Swimwear to Germany by segment with five-year growth, average import unit price and five-year price evolution

GERMANY	2019 Value (€)	5-year growth	Average unit price	5-year price change
Women's swimwear	€292 million	↑ 10.3%	€5.75	+€0.90
Men's swimwear	€60.9 million	↑ 6.1%	€5.20	+€1.21
TOTAL:	€353 million	↑ 9.5%	€5.65	+1.00

Germany is the largest swimwear import market in Europe. In 2019, the value of the swimwear imports amounted to €353 million (up from €242 million in 2014), corresponding to approximately 63 million units of clothing. In the last five years, the value of Germany's swimwear imports has grown at an average rate of 9.5% per year, while the import volume has grown by 5.3% per year. Popular swimwear brands from Germany include [Bruno Banani](#), [Lascana](#), [Adidas](#), [Anekdot](#), [Bogner](#), [Buffalo](#), [S.Oliver](#) and [About You](#).

Women's and girls' swimwear constitute the larger swimwear sub-segment in Germany, with 82.7% share of imports (up from 80.8% in 2014). Men's swimwear accounts for the rest of the market, whereas the price per unit for men's swimwear grew more than the women's sub-segment.

Both segments are growing significantly in Germany, but the women's swimwear subcategory is not only larger at this point, it is also growing faster than men's swimwear. Additionally, the price development has grown steadily over the last five years. As Germany imports 9.1% of its swimwear products from developing countries, making the imported value grow by 17.7% in the last five years, Germany offers interesting opportunities for further imports from developing countries.

France

Table 6: 2019 Imports of Swimwear to France by segment with five-year growth, average import unit price and five-year price evolution

FRANCE	2019 Value (€)	5-year growth	Average unit price	5-year price change
Women's swimwear	€222 million	6.5%	€4.76	+€0.15
Men's swimwear	€65.3 million	4.2%	€4.12	+€0.16
TOTAL:	€288 million	5.9%	€4.60	+€0.17

France is the second largest swimwear import market in Europe. In 2019, the value of its swimwear imports amounted to €288 million (up from €224 million in 2014), corresponding to approximately 63 million units of clothing. In the last five years, the value of France's swimwear imports has grown at an average rate of 5.9%

per year, while the import volume has grown by 5.2% per year. Popular swimwear brands from France include [Oxbow](#), [Pain de Sucre](#), [Kiwi Saint-Tropez](#), [Vilebrequin](#), [Eres](#), [Gili's](#) and [Ysé](#).

Women's swimwear constitutes the larger swimwear sub-segment in France, with an 82.7% share of the imports value (up from 79.8% in 2014), while men's swimwear products imports account for the remaining 22.7% (down from 24.8% in 2014).

While women's swimwear is the larger product sub-segment in terms of EU imports, the men's sub-segment is currently growing equally and offers similar opportunities for exporters. France is open for the import of swimwear, the country is importing 23.6% of its swimwear from developing countries, constituting a value of €68 million with average annual growth of 4.4% from 2014-2019.

United Kingdom

Table 7: 2019 Imports of Swimwear to the United Kingdom by segment with five-year growth, average import unit price and five-year price evolution

UNITED KINGDOM	2019 Value (€)	5-year growth	Average unit price	5-year price change
Women's swimwear	€209 million	8.5%	€6.27	+€2.49
Men's swimwear	€67.8 million	7.3%	€6.18	+€2.11
TOTAL:	€278 million	8.2%	€6.24	+€2.40

The United Kingdom is the third largest swimwear import market in Europe. In 2019, the value of its swimwear imports amounted to €278 million (unchanged from €186 million in 2014), corresponding to approximately 4.4 million units of clothing. In the last five years, the value of the United Kingdom's swimwear imports has grown at an average rate of 8.2% per year, while the import volume declined by 1.77% per year, showing that the absolute import values have been declining and the prices increasing. Popular swimwear brands from the UK include [Speedo](#), [Bravissimo](#), [Animal](#), [Curvy Kate](#), [YouSwim](#), [Kimberly London](#) and [Apollo Swim](#).

Women's swimwear products constitute the larger swimwear sub-segment in the United Kingdom with a 75.4% share of the import value (up from 74.4% in 2014), while men's swimwear account for the remaining 24.6% (down from 25.6%).

Both sub-segments are interesting for exporters around the world. Women's swimwear makes up the larger sub-segment, but men's swimwear is growing at a similar pace and shows the same amount of opportunities measured by the growth of import value, volume and the positive price development. The United Kingdom imports 21.2% of its swimwear imports from developing countries. Likewise, the country is very open for imports from developing countries, showing a growth of 11.3% from 2014 to 2019.

The United Kingdom left the EU in 2020 and the outcome of current trade agreements is still uncertain. The development could turn out to be positive or negative for exporters in developing countries.

Italy

Table 8: 2019 Imports of Swimwear to the Italy by segment with five-year growth, average import unit price and five-year price evolution

ITALY	2019 Value (€)	5-year growth	Average unit price	5-year price change
Women's swimwear	€131 million	5.9%	€4.19	+€1.65
Men's swimwear	€91.3 million	10%	€5.75	+€1.52
TOTAL:	€222 million	7.4%	€4.72	+€0.73

Italy is the fourth largest swimwear import market in Europe. In 2019, the value of its swimwear imports amounted to €222 million (up from €155 million in 2014), corresponding to approximately 47 million units of clothing. In the last five years, the value of Italy's swimwear imports has grown at an average rate of 7.4% per year, while the import volume has grown by 3.9% per year. Popular swimwear brands from Italy include [Diesel](#), [Calzedonia](#), [Arena](#), La Perla, Oseree and Fresh.

While the value of the women's swimwear sub-segment is twice as much as the value of men's swimwear, the men's swimwear segment is growing faster annually (10%) than the women's swimwear subsegment (5.9%). The men's segment grew especially strongly from 2018 to 2019, when the value increased by 38.1% and the volume by 14.8%, indicating a strong increase of price per unit.

Although the women's swimwear segment is the larger one, the segment of men's swimwear is growing faster and shows strong potential for the near future. Both segments appear very stable and show opportunities for exporters from outside of the EU. Italy imports 13.7% of its swimwear from developing countries, amounting to a value of €30 million in 2019. Since 2014, the ratio of imports from developing countries reached a growth of 13.3%.

Netherlands

Table 9: 2019 Imports of Swimwear to The Netherlands by segment with five-year growth, average import unit price and five-year price evolution

NETHERLANDS	2019 Value (€)	5-year growth	Average unit price	5-year price change
Women's swimwear	€159 million	17.9%	€5.10	+€1.70
Men's swimwear	€43.6 million	12.4%	€4.62	+€1.60
TOTAL:	€202 million	16.5%	€4.99	+€1.69

The Netherlands is the fifth largest swimwear import market in Europe. In 2019, the value of its swimwear imports amounted to €202 million (up from €94 million in 2014), corresponding to approximately 40.5 million units of clothing. In the last five years, the value of the Netherlands' swimwear imports has grown at an average rate of 16.5% in value, which is the most significant growth of the top 10 European countries importing swimwear. The growth rate of volume reached 7.3% from 2014 and 2019. Popular swimwear brands from the Netherlands include [Hunkemoller](#), [Lilly Rosa](#), [MamaMaria](#), Tommy Hilfiger and Protest.

Women's swimwear constitutes the larger swimwear segment in the Netherlands, with a 78.4% share of the

import value (up from 74.2% in 2014) and a growth of 17.9% in the last five years. Men's swimwear accounts for the remaining 21.6% in 2019 (up from 25.8% in 2014) and a growth of value by 12.4%.

Women's swimwear is the larger product sub-segment and is growing stronger than men's swimwear. The Netherlands imported 13.8% of its swimwear imports from developing countries, with a significant growth of 17.2% of imported product value annually from 2014 to 2019. Considering the positive price development, growth of import value and volume, the Netherlands is one of the most attractive import countries for exporters from developing countries.

Spain

Table 10: 2019 Imports of Swimwear to Spain by segment with five-year growth, average import unit price and five-year price evolution

SPAIN	2019 Value (€)	5-year growth	Average unit price	5-year price change
Women's swimwear	€145 million	6.9%	€4.51	+€0.40
Men's swimwear	€44.9 million	0.9%	€4.12	+€0.08
TOTAL:	€190 million	5.3%	€4.41	+€0.32

Spain is the sixth largest swimwear import market in Europe. In 2019, the value of its swimwear imports amounted to €190 million (up from €147 million in 2014), corresponding to approximately 43 million units of clothing. In the last five years, the value of Spain's swimwear imports has grown at an average rate of 5.3% per year, while the import volume has increased by 3.7% per year. Popular swimwear brands from Spain include [Mango](#), [XTG Extreme Game](#), [Lisa Marie Fernandez](#), [Luna Beach](#) and [Suro Swimwear](#).

Women's swimwear constitutes the larger swimwear sub-segment in Spain, with a 76.4% share of the import value (up from 70.9% in 2014) and a growth of 6.9% from 2014 to 2019. Men's swimwear accounts for the remaining 23.6% (down from 29.1% in 2014) and a growth of 0.9% since 2014.

The sub-segment of women's swimwear is larger and growing stronger than men's swimwear. Nevertheless, both segments show growth in value and volume, as well as in price development. Spain imports 17.1% of its imported swimwear from developing countries and is thus very open to collaboration with these countries. Likewise, the import from developing countries has grown by 10.8% since 2014. However, the Spanish market appears attractive and offers interesting opportunities for exporters from developing countries.

Tips:

Focus your export efforts on the top six markets: Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Spain, to target the biggest apparel and swimwear consumers in Europe and the biggest importers of apparel from the developing countries. Each of these countries have a high acceptance of Extra-EU suppliers.

Consider entering the women's swimwear segment first, as it is the larger segment for each of these markets, offering a lot of variety and entry options. Still, men's swimwear remains another interesting sub-segment, which is currently growing significantly, in several countries even faster than the women's segment.

Visit the websites of the most popular swimwear brands in Europe such as [Hunkemoller](#), [Speedo](#), [Diesel](#) and [Calzedonia](#) to understand the aesthetics of European swimwear. Especially women's swimwear fashion trends change quickly in terms of designs and preferred colours.

Visit websites and web shops, and check fashion magazines (for example [InTouch](#), [Vogue](#), [Glamour](#), [GQ](#) and [Men's Health](#)) from Europe to be up to date on current swimwear trends.

Keep an eye on the development after Brexit. If you are already an exporter to the United Kingdom, the Brexit could cause changes concerning the conditions of your trade agreements. For new exporters, Brexit might create new trade opportunities. [Visit the website 'get ready for Brexit'](#) for more information on Brexit and the impact on your business.

Apart from the six strongest countries in Europe, consider collaborating with Eastern European companies like Poland, Bulgaria and Romania, who are not part of the biggest importers of swimwear yet, but have shown very strong growth ratios over the last five years.

4. What trends offer opportunities or pose threats on the European swimwear market?

The European swimwear market follows the general apparel trends related to sustainability, technological innovation and increased emphasis on corporate and social responsibility. For more information, see the [CBI study on Trends in the Apparel market](#). Aside from these general trends, the swimwear market has its own, segment-specific trends:

Change in the types of women's swimwear

Apart from bikinis and swimsuits, high-waist pants have become increasingly popular. Swimsuits and bikinis [have bright colours](#) (like yellow, orange, pink, etc.) and [carry embroidery or elaborate patterns](#) like leopard, tropical and oriental designs. Recently, [belts](#) and [sleeves](#) have become part of modern bikini and swimsuit designs, making swimwear not just clothing for sportive activities, but also a fashion statement. Generally, bikini and swimsuit designs have become more elaborate and demanding in terms of manufacturing, crossing traditional standardised swimwear designs. In many cases, the conventional swimwear materials have been expanded using new materials like PVC, crinkle and (vegan) leather-effect materials.

Generally, the peak of the swimwear market is reached during the spring/summer season and undergoes significant changes concerning design trends. As such, manufacturers of swimwear need to stay up to date on the patterns, designs and accessories needed by autumn/winter before the summer season.



Advanced sportswear technology

Swimsuits and swim shorts for sportive swimming are often equipped with special technologies. For example, Land's End has introduced an "exclusive" new swimwear technology that knits varying levels of tension control into the lining of its swimsuits. Also, HeiQ partnered with Speedo for their new Fastskin line of suits with a drag reduction technology by modifying the surface of the fabric at a microscopic level. [Lycra LastingFit Technology](#) creates swimwear that provides a long-lasting fit in chlorinated water environments and protects from the degeneration resulting from sunscreen, pool water, heat and body oils. Additionally, women appreciate materials that support their feminine shapes throughout the wearing experience.

Considering the current fusion of professional sportswear and normal daily wear, complex sports technologies such as those used for swimwear are expected to be also increasingly integrated into swimwear for non-professionals. Additionally, consumers are always looking for a certain amount of comfort, which could be achieved through the integration of similar shaping technologies.

Rise of Digital Native Brands

Apart from the traditional wholesale model, which is dominated by lingerie and sportswear manufacturers, digital native brands focusing on swimwear and/or bikinis have become more popular. Many of these smaller brands promote the use of sustainable materials and "body positivity". Examples are the brands [Aerie](#), [Carve Designs](#), [Alpine Butterfly](#) and [GabiFresh](#).

These smaller brands mainly or solely act through digital channels and offer a broader variety of big sizes, as well as shaping designs that do not highlight the female's non-comfort zones. Due to the ongoing trend of body positivity and the growing number of overweight Europeans and the ease of sale and distribution through digital channels, the trend will surely expand its influence within the next years. Also, consumers are not afraid to purchase directly from the manufacturer anymore if this connected to enhanced transparency and better working conditions for the manufacturers' employees.

Swimwear as part of festival fashion

Apparel worn at music festivals often consists of upper or lower parts of swimwear or swimsuits in combination with summer streetwear. The swimwear often has floral prints and gets combined with denim hot pants and/or simple dresses and shirts. European music festivals are mostly scheduled for the summer season in Europe and happen all over the continent. Once the coronavirus crisis has been overcome, the festivals are expected to be scheduled again and swimwear will be an absolute part of the local dress code again.

Tips:

Adjust your women's swimwear styles according to the trends, for example, by introducing popping colours and supporting elaborate modern designs.

Invest time in the discovery of material technologies that could be used for swimsuits and bikinis.

Experiment with Direct-to-Consumer sales alongside your Business-to-Business activities. You can sell through your own web shop, existing online platforms or through social media. Consider opening an online shop to sell your swimwear directly to European consumers.

Be confident enough to show full transparency, especially on the work conditions of your employees, as well as material origins and ingredients and your CO² footprint.


Familiarise yourself with the latest fashion trends on social media by following the fashion influencers and/or leading European swimwear players in your product segment. Consult [Feedspot for the list of Top 100 European Fashion Bloggers](#).


Keep the sustainability trend in sight. Even known "old-school" brands are switching to sustainable materials to be able to advertise their eco-friendly approach. The demand for such products is expected to increase significantly in the future.


This study has been carried out on behalf of CBI by [M-Brain GmbH](#).

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