EU TRADE EXPLORER

Market evolution: Particle board and OSB (CN 4410) — 2015–2025

Introduction

This report analyses the European Union's extra-EU trade in particle board, oriented strand board (OSB) and similar boards (CN 4410) over the eleven-year window 2015-01 to 2025-12. It draws exclusively on the official data provided by the dashboard, from which all figures are taken, and covers exports, imports, the structural features of the EU industry, and the main shocks that have shaped trade flows. The analysis reveals a market where solid export growth was driven overwhelmingly by rising unit prices, where imports contracted sharply in volume after the loss of two major suppliers, and where a massive domestic production base has progressively lowered the sector's extra-EU openness.

Export expansion rides on unit price inflation and market diversification

Value growth far outpaces volume as unit prices climb 37 %

EU exports of CN 4410 to non-EU countries rose from €0.99 billion in 2015 to €1.41 billion in 2025, a 42.4 % increase Trade overview. Over the same period the exported quantity edged up by only 3.6 %, meaning that the average unit price shot from €368 to €506 per unit. The bulk of the export expansion therefore reflects price rises rather than additional market penetration by volume.

Indicator (exports)	2015	2025	Change
Value (€ million)	988	1,407	+42.4 %
Quantity (thousand units)	2,684	2,782	+3.6 %
Unit price (€ per unit)	368	506	+37.4 %

The United States and China emerge as the most dynamic non-EU outlets

Traditionally the United Kingdom was the dominant destination, remaining the top market throughout the period. However, China and the United States recorded extraordinary value growth. The surge in US imports after 2020 and China's steady climb reshaped the geographical pattern of EU exports Top partners.

Top export partners	2015 (€ million)	2025 (€ million)	Change (%)
United Kingdom	244	329	+35.2
China	46	147	+223.3
United States	13	95	+655.8
Switzerland	83	92	+11.3
Serbia	35	80	+128.6
Japan	64	70	+8.9
Türkiye	68	24	–64.7

The sharp contraction of exports to Türkiye and the rapid gains elsewhere contributed to a slight decline in export concentration, with the Herfindahl–Hirschman Index for exports falling from 906 to 877 Concentration HHI.

Import sourcing convulsed by sanctions and price swings

Belarus and Russia vanish as suppliers, tightening EU import origins

On the import side, total value barely changed (+0.1 %), but the imported volume collapsed by 31.2 %, from 1.05 million to 0.72 million units. The average import price consequently surged by 45.4 % Trade overview. The most dramatic supply-side event was the complete cessation of imports from Belarus and the Russian Federation from 2023, following sanctions. These two countries together had supplied around 30 % of import value in 2021. Their exit is detected as a clear supply shock Supply shocks.

Top import partners	2015 (€ million)	2025 (€ million)	Change (%)
Ukraine	62	87	+40.7
Switzerland	62	70	+12.7
United Kingdom	89	70	–21.3
Norway	35	53	+48.0
Belarus	28	0 (exit)	–100.0
Russian Federation	12	0 (exit)	–100.0
Türkiye	10	18	+86.9

With the removal of two large low-price suppliers, import concentration increased: the HHI for import value rose from 1,802 to 2,065, reflecting a heavier reliance on the remaining partners Concentration HHI.

Sharp price upswings in the United Kingdom and other residual partners

Beyond the supply shock, price shocks hit several key import origins. The most prominent was a spike in UK import prices in 2021, when the unit price jumped by 83 % while the quantity fell by 70 % compared with the 2019-2020 baseline. Switzerland recorded a similar, albeit smaller, price shock in 2022 Supply shocks. These price escalations, together with the loss of cheaper eastern supplies, explain why EU import unit values rose so fast even as volumes shrank.

A strong but inward-oriented domestic industry

Massive production base limits extra-EU exposure

EU production of CN 4410 has been large and relatively stable since 2016, with the annual quantity fluctuating around 34-40 million units and the production value reaching €9.8 billion in 2024 Production volumes. This huge domestic output dwarfs extra-EU trade flows; in 2024, exports represented only 14.7 % of production value, down from 25.5 % in 2015. The EU's net import reliance accordingly moved from –36.2 % in 2007 to –13.3 % in 2024, meaning the sector remains a net exporter but the surplus has narrowed considerably relative to domestic consumption Net import reliance. The overall trade intensity (extra-EU trade as a share of apparent consumption) fell from 44.9 % in 2007 to just 17.2 % in 2024, illustrating the sector's progressive pivot toward intra-EU and domestic sales Export propensity.

Specialisation concentrates in Eastern and Central EU member states

In 2025, export specialisation for CN 4410 was highest in Latvia (RSCA = 0.84), Luxembourg (0.84), Austria (0.64), Romania (0.55) and Croatia (0.49) Specialisation. These countries, often endowed with abundant wood resources and integrated panel industries, have reinforced their export-oriented profile. At the same time, the largest EU reporters for extra-EU exports in value terms are Austria, Germany, Romania, Spain, Italy and Latvia Top reporters. Spain and Italy, in particular, strongly expanded their extra-EU sales: Spain's exports grew by 176.6 % over the period, Italy's by 109.7 %. The geography of specialisation underpins the resilience and competitiveness of the EU panel industry, even as its orientation remains overwhelmingly domestic.

Conclusion

Over the last decade the EU’s trade in particle board and OSB has been marked by three dominant forces:

- Extra-EU export values grew robustly, but almost entirely because of price increases, not volume gains. The United States and China became critical growth engines, while the United Kingdom remained the largest single client.
- Imports shrank in volume after the supply shock triggered by sanctions on Belarus and Russia, and the remaining import sources experienced significant price spikes. This transformed the EU’s import basket into a more concentrated and expensive one.
- The EU’s own production capacity is massive, allowing the sector to absorb external shocks, but the decline in export propensity and trade intensity shows a clear reorientation towards internal markets.

The net result is a more insular and higher-price environment, with extra-EU trade playing a smaller relative role than at the beginning of the period. The structural strength of domestic producers is unmistakable, yet the withdrawal from global trade integration and the loss of formerly important eastern suppliers are the lasting hallmarks of this twelve-year evolution.

Generated on 2026-07-24 based on data from tradedashboard.eu

Auto-generated report: it accelerates, and sometimes misleads, human analysis. It cannot replace it in full.

If you need advice on European trade policy, or representation for your interests in Brussels, feel free to contact me at support@tradedashboard.eu. You can find my CV at this address.