EU TRADE EXPLORER

Market evolution: Wood and articles (CN 44) — 2015–2025

Introduction

The EU’s trade in wood and articles of wood (CN 44) between 2015 and 2025 was marked by a profound realignment of supply sources, a decoupling of volumes from values, and sharp price shocks. Overall, the trade balance remained strongly positive, rising from €6.0 billion to €9.1 billion, as export values grew faster than imports. This report identifies three dynamics that shaped the market: a geopolitical supply shock, a broad shift toward higher unit prices, and a cluster of volatility events in key export markets. The analysis draws exclusively on the data available on the EU Trade Dashboard; all figures can be verified via the linked dashboards.

1. A Geopolitical Supply Shock: The Disappearance of Russian and Belarusian Wood

Russian and Belarusian imports collapsed after 2022, virtually ceasing.

EU imports from the Russian Federation fell from €1.50 billion in 2015 to barely €0.2 million by 2025, a decline of 100 % (top partners by value). In volume terms, import quantities plummeted from 10.7 million tonnes to only 222 tonnes over the same period. An abrupt supply shock is visible around 2022-2023, when the baseline volume of roughly 11 million tonnes was replaced by near-zero flows (supply shock events). Imports from Belarus followed an identical pattern: from €430 million in 2015 to just €11 thousand in 2025, with quantities sliding from 5.1 million tonnes to 96 tonnes. The two partners together accounted for 21 % of EU wood imports in 2015; by 2025 their combined share was negligible.

Supplier	2015 value (€ mn)	2025 value (€ mn)	2015 quantity (kt)	2025 quantity (kt)
Russian Federation	1 497	0.197	10 658	0.222
Belarus	430	0.011	5 071	0.096

Ukraine managed to maintain significant volumes despite the war.

Ukraine, though also severely affected by the conflict, remained a critical supplier. Import values rose from €760 million in 2015 to €1 372 million in 2025, an 80 % increase, while quantities contracted moderately from 4.9 million to 2.7 million tonnes. The trend underlines that Ukrainian wood exports were rerouted or contracted at higher unit prices rather than being completely severed.

Norway, Brazil, and the United States emerged as alternative suppliers.

To fill the gap left by Russia and Belarus, the EU turned to other sources. Norway's wood exports to the EU more than doubled, from €485 million to €1 025 million (+111 %). Brazilian shipments grew by 62 %, reaching €701 million, while those from the United States increased by 33 % to €795 million. The import concentration (HHI by value) rose moderately from 852 to 943, indicating a slight shift toward a more concentrated supplier base despite the diversification (concentration).

2. Volume Contraction Meets Soaring Prices: The Inflationary Turn in Wood Trade

EU export volumes fell while values rose, driven by steep unit price increases.

Between 2015 and 2025, the total export value of CN 44 goods rose by 30.6 %, from €15.2 billion to €19.9 billion, while the exported volume shrank by 6.5 %, from 33.3 million tonnes to 31.1 million tonnes (overview trade). As a result, the average export unit price climbed from €457 per tonne to €639 per tonne (+39.7 %). The strongest gains occurred after 2020, with prices peaking at €652 per tonne in 2022 before settling somewhat lower.

Import unit prices nearly doubled, reflecting global wood product inflation.

The import side shows an even starker price surge. While import value increased by 17.4 % (€9.2 billion to €10.8 billion), the quantity imported plunged by 37.8 % (from 36.8 million tonnes to 22.9 million tonnes). Consequently, the average import unit price jumped by 88.9 %, from €250 to €471 per tonne. The trade balance therefore improved by 50.8 %, reaching €9.1 billion in 2025.

Indicator	2015	2025	Change (%)
Exports value (€ bn)	15.2	19.9	+30.6
Exports quantity (Mt)	33.3	31.1	–6.5
Export unit price (€/t)	457	639	+39.7
Imports value (€ bn)	9.2	10.8	+17.4
Imports quantity (Mt)	36.8	22.9	–37.8
Import unit price (€/t)	250	471	+88.9
Balance (€ bn)	6.0	9.1	+50.8

Semi-processed products like sawn wood and plywood recorded the sharpest price hikes.

Within the product mix, the largest import category, **sawn wood (4407)**, saw its unit price rise from €367/tonne to €741/tonne (+102 %), while the imported quantity fell from 6.1 million to 2.3 million tonnes. **Plywood (4412)** import prices moved from €676 to €812 per tonne (+20 %), and **fuel wood (4401)** prices doubled from €76 to €156 per tonne. On the export side, **builders’ joinery (4418)** consistently commanded the highest unit values (above €2 000/tonne), while sawn wood export prices grew from €344 to €537/tonne (+56 %) (product segment breakdown). The data confirm a broad-based inflationary environment in wood trade that affected both imports and exports.

3. Price Shocks and Volatility: Unstable Destinations and Export Disruptions

Major export markets Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria suffered abrupt price surges in 2021.

Several EU export destinations experienced isolated price shocks in 2021. In **Egypt**, the average export price jumped by 36.2 % relative to the baseline, while the quantity of EU wood shipped there dropped temporarily. **Saudi Arabia** recorded a 36.6 % price increase that year, and **Algeria** a 29.9 % rise. These events were detected as high-abnormality price shocks and largely subsided by 2023 (price shock events). Their concentration around 2021 suggests a temporary disruption, possibly linked to post-pandemic logistics or short-term supply imbalances.

China and the United States experienced marked price spikes amid fluctuating volumes.

China, the largest non-UK export destination, saw a 55.4 % price shock in 2022, driven by a plunge in export volumes from 16.3 million tonnes (2021) to 10.6 million tonnes. The unit price rose from €178 to €276 per tonne in a single year. The United States encountered an earlier price shock in 2020 (+57.5 %), when the EU export price soared from €496 to €781 per tonne, despite a fall in shipped quantities. Both markets illustrate how sudden volume reductions can trigger extreme price movements in specialised wood product trade flows.

Türkiye emerged as the most volatile export destination by volume.

Volatility analysis (measured by the coefficient of variation of annual quantity flows) reveals that exports to **Türkiye** exhibited the highest instability among top partners, with a CV of 0.85 (volatility overview). Export quantities to Türkiye collapsed from 1.6 million tonnes in 2015 to only 0.23 million tonnes in 2024, reflecting a steep, erratic downtrend. On the import side, the highest volume volatilities were in **Russia** (CV = 0.71) and **Belarus** (CV = 0.73), consistent with their supply exit.

Export destination	Shock year	Price shift (%)	Abnormality score	Value share in shock year
Egypt	2021	+36.2	269.1	4.2 %
Saudi Arabia	2021	+36.6	10.3	2.5 %
Algeria	2021	+29.9	6.3	2.6 %
China	2022	+55.4	4.8	13.1 %
United States	2020	+57.5	4.4	14.5 %

Source: top shock events

Conclusion

Over the decade to 2025, EU wood trade underwent a structural transformation. The nearly complete exit of Russian and Belarusian supplies forced a rapid reorientation toward Ukraine, Norway, Brazil, and the United States, while the overall import volume shrank by more than a third. At the same time, unit prices for both exports and imports surged, often dramatically, pushing the trade balance higher despite falling tonnages. The market witnessed a series of intense price shocks in export destinations between 2020 and 2022, underlining its sensitivity to supply chain disruptions. Looking ahead, the EU's wood sector appears to have maintained its trade surplus and diversified its sources, but the persistent upward pressure on prices and the volatility in key markets remain defining features of this commodity trade.

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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.