

Introduction

Europe is one of the largest markets of fasteners in the world. Demand for application specific products and price competition are dominant trends on the European fastener market. Options offering to customers are to supply relatively standard fasteners to European buyers in high volumes at low prices, or to specialise in customized manufacturing.



Analyzing the Annual Fastener Trade of the EU in 2021

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The Key Points for Entering the European Market

1- **Quality** is one of these key points, application-specific fasteners imported from outside of Europe may have a maximum defect rate of 50 ppm (parts per million). Sometimes, customers of the European distributors have even higher quality requirements (10 ppm instead of 50 ppm). In such a case, some European importers will even sort fasteners in their warehouses in order to reach the stricter 10 ppm requirement.

2- **Materials and design** are the other two key points, fasteners can be made of many different materials, such as steel, stainless steel or iron, brass, copper, aluminium, alloys, exotic materials such as cuprous and titanium. Oftentimes, iron and steel fasteners get coatings or treatments against corrosion. The coatings also depend greatly on applications and will be specified by buyers. On the other hand, considering the design, there are many forms, such as:

- Standard fasteners
- Internally threaded
- Externally threaded
- Non-threaded

In addition, there are also several application-specific designs, varying from self-drilling roof screws to aerospace-grade fasteners.

3- **Labelling and packaging** are the 3rd key point for being accepted by European buyers. Fasteners can be packaged in cartons or wooden boxes, depending on the sizes of parts. Outer packages should include brand names and type numbers.

Which European Market Offers Opportunities for Exporters of Fasteners?

< Imports >

European imports of fasteners increased by 2% between 2020 and 2021 to \$17.2 billion in 2021.

Importer	Dec. 2020	Jan. 2021	Feb. 2021	Mar. 2021	Apr. 2021	May 2021
EU	1,208,731	1,284,569	1,418,246	1,611,223	1,467,581	1,510,425
Growth		6%	10%	14%	-9%	3%
Importer	Jun. 2021	Jul. 2021	Aug. 2021	Sep. 2021	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021
EU	1,562,926	1,450,319	1,339,585	1,549,229	1,491,339	770,848
Growth	3%	-7%	-8%	16%	-4%	-48%

Notes: Numbers are in thousands USD. The number for November is not completed yet and the number for December is not published yet.



The country with the highest fastener imports within Europe was:

- Germany was the largest fastener import origin for EU. EU's import from Germany reached \$4.4 billion, making up 25% of all European import from other countries in 2021. In addition, imports from other countries in Germany increased 3% in comparison with those records in 2020. China (16%), Taiwan (15%) and Italy (11%) were the leading fastener suppliers to Germany.

Other European countries with large fastener imports as well were:

- France with \$1.76 billion imported fasteners ranked in the 2nd place. Germany (24%), Italy (15%), China (13%) and Taiwan (11%) were the leading fastener suppliers to France.
- Netherlands with \$1.28 billion imported fasteners ranked in the 3rd place. Germany (23%), Taiwan (18%) and China (13%) were the leading fastener suppliers to Netherlands.
- Italy with \$1.26 billion imported fasteners ranked in the 4th place. Germany (30%), China (23%) and Taiwan (9%) were the leading fastener suppliers to Italy.
- the Czech Republic with \$1.02 billion imported fasteners ranked in the 5th place. Germany (44%) and China (9%) were the leading fastener suppliers to Czech Republic.
- Spain with \$810 million imported fasteners ranked in the 6th place. China (22%), Germany (21%), Taiwan (12%), Italy (10%) and France (9%) were the leading fastener suppliers to Spain.

The large supply from China leads to relatively strong price competition. With the European market being flooded with so many unbranded, cheap and relatively low-quality Chinese manufactured fasteners, (low) prices are extremely important. This is especially the case for segments where brands are not important, basically for all products up to a DIN norm of 8.8. The higher-quality products, such as DIN 10.9 and 12.9, are still produced in Europe (but are also ready to be produced in Asia by some manufacturers).

In other words, most products for the professional market are still being produced in Europe, while the products for the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) construction segment are mainly sourced in low-cost countries such as China.

< Exports >

The total European export of fasteners increased by 2% between 2020-2021 to almost \$16.7 billion in 2021.

Exporter	Dec. 2020	Jan. 2021	Feb. 2021	Mar. 2021	Apr. 2021	May 2021
EU	1,134,393	1,368,814	1,441,560	1,585,764	1,432,991	1,460,646
Growth		21%	5%	10%	-10%	2%
Exporter	Jun. 2021	Jul. 2021	Aug. 2021	Sep. 2021	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021
EU	1,484,778	1,413,191	1,197,065	1,401,313	1,341,842	778,003
Growth	2%	-5%	-15%	17%	-4%	

Notes: Numbers are in thousands USD. The number for November is not completed yet. The number for December is not published yet.

Germany was the largest European exporter of fasteners (\$7.3 billion in 2021, 43% of all European exports). German exports to other countries were huge, thanks to the dominant position of Germany within the manufacturing industries and the fastener industry in Europe.

Other important exporters were:

- Italy (\$960 million, or equal to 13.2% of all European exports)
- France (\$630 million, or equal to 8.6% of all European exports)
- The Netherlands (\$480 million, equal to 6.6% of all European exports)

The export of European fasteners was mainly destined for other European countries. Note that this also includes some re-exports of imports originally from developing countries.

Other countries importing European fasteners include:

- China (11%), USA (8%) and France (6.4%), Poland (6.2%), Czech Republic (6.1%), Austria (6%), the Netherlands (5.1%), Switzerland (4.9%), Italy (4.2%), UK (4.0%), Hungary (3.8%) and Spain (3.4%) were the leading markets for exported fasteners of Germany.
- Germany (30%), France (15%) and USA (5%) were the leading markets for exported fasteners of Italy.
- Germany (15%) and Spain (13%) and USA (11%) were the leading markets for exported fasteners of France.
- Germany (43%) and Belgium (10%) were the leading markets for exported fasteners of the Netherlands.

Future

Industrial fasteners are likely to witness significant demand growth owing to high usage in electrical, automotive, and other industrial sectors. Invention of new features such as coatings to fasteners to protect them from abrasion and rust are further favouring industry players. Based on the prediction, European industrial fastener market is expected to ascend at over 4 percent CAGR through 2031. ■

