

American Hardwood Export Council Europe Market Report

March 2026



AHEC engage with Greek hardwood trade at Medwood show in Athens.

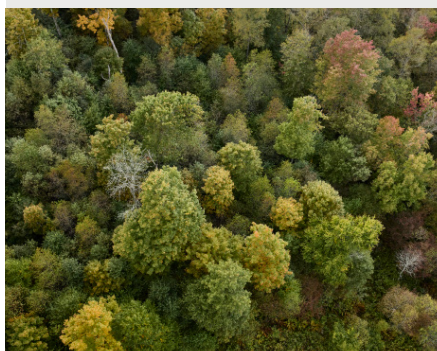
MARKET UPDATE



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MARKET UPDATE

U.S. hardwood exports to Europe maintain market share despite trade tensions

The U.S. exported 327,000m³ of hardwood lumber with a total value of \$230.3m to Europe in 2025. Export quantity was 1% less than the previous year, while export value increased by 2%. The relative stability of U.S. hardwood exports to Europe in 2025, which followed a 6% gain in trade volume the year before, bucked a wider downturn in European imports of hardwood lumber.

U.S. share of total EU27+ UK imports of sawn hardwood from outside the region was 22.4% in 2025, up from 22.1% the previous year and 15% in 2019.

U.S. hardwood exports to Europe were maintained despite trade tensions early in 2025. There were times in April and May when it seemed possible that retaliatory tariffs might result in the trade hitting a brick wall. But thankfully those concerns



Despite early tariff tensions, U.S. hardwood exports to Europe remained stable in 2025, bucking a wider decline in European hardwood imports.

had abated by the end of the year following tariff agreements reached with the UK in May 2025 and the EU in August 2025.

Overall, the performance of U.S. hardwood lumber in EU countries during 2025 mirrored quite

closely a main conclusion of the EU's Autumn 2025 Economic Forecast published in November. This notes that "in a striking reversal, the countries that suffered most during the eurozone crisis over a decade ago - Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Ireland, and Spain - are set to outperform countries such as Germany, Finland, and Austria that were once seen as economic models". That conclusion implies that in the next few years there will be new opportunities to increase U.S. hardwood exports in some countries previously regarded as on the periphery in Europe, but which look set now to become stronger drivers of growth.

While total European imports of hardwood lumber from the U.S. made moderate gains in 2025, imports of hardwood from other parts of the world continued to slide. Total EU+UK imports of hardwood lumber from outside this region fell 2% to 1.43 million m³ in 2025 following a 9% fall the previous year. Imports of tropical hardwood lumber were up 2% at 801,000m³ in 2025, but this followed a 14% decline in 2024 to the lowest level ever recorded. EU+UK imports of temperate hardwood lumber from countries other than the U.S. were 311,000m³ in 2025, down 11% on the previous year and less than one third of the level



EU+UK hardwood lumber imports from outside the region fell for a second consecutive year in 2025.

in 2021 when they exceeded one million m³. Since then, the war in Ukraine has led to a massive decline in imports from Russia, Ukraine, and other



non-EU countries in eastern Europe.

UK remains the most important market for U.S. hardwoods in Europe

With exports of 130,000m³ in 2025, 1% more than the previous year, the UK remained by far the single largest European market for U.S. hardwood lumber in 2025. The UK accounted for 40% of all U.S. hardwood lumber exports to Europe in 2025, up from 39% the previous year and 34% in 2023. The continuing strength of the UK market for U.S. hardwood is not mirrored by wider economic conditions in the country which were subdued in 2025. Strong early growth was fueled by services and manufacturing, but momentum slowed significantly in the latter half of the year, with Q4 growth of only 0.1%. UK annual construction output, which increased by 1.8% for the whole of 2025, also slowed dramatically towards the end of the year. Imports from the U.S. accounted for around 25% of all hardwood lumber imported into the UK in 2025, the same proportion as the previous year, and up from 21% in 2023. In volume terms, around 56% of all UK hardwood imports into the UK came from the EU in 2025, up from 55% the previous year. The share of UK hardwood lumber imports from the tropics was just 16% in 2025, down from 17% the previous year, continuing a long-term downward trend.

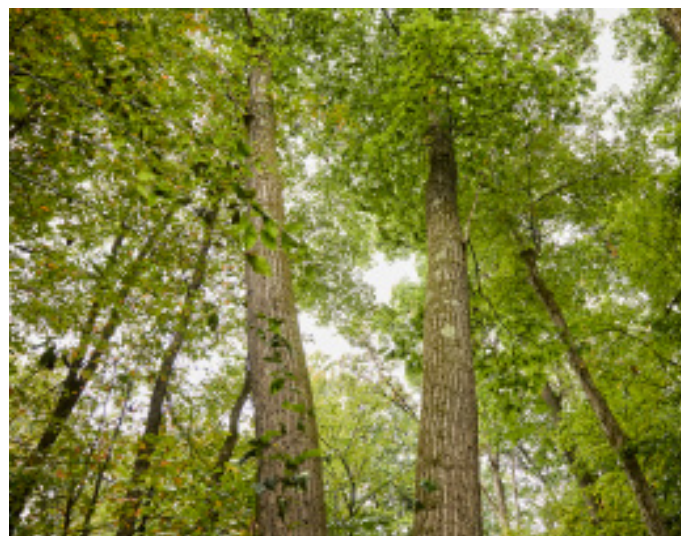


Red oak exports to the UK rebounded 57% in 2025, reflecting growing rising consumer demand.

U.S. exports of white oak to the UK were 75,200m³ in 2025, a decline of just 2% following a 50% increase the previous year. After a 20% dip in 2024, exports of red oak to the UK rebounded 57% to 7,183m³ in 2025, a strong indication of red oak becoming widely accepted in this market with more importers carrying stock in response to a growing demand. Exports of tulipwood to the UK rebounded 7% to 26,811m³ in 2025 after declining by a similar amount the previous year. Ash was stable in the UK at 8,100m³ in 2025, but walnut was down 19% to 6,100m³. Although the overall volume is still small at 2,160m³, there was a welcome 87% increase in maple exports to the UK in 2025.

UK hardwood importers trying to stay positive in challenging times

A recent AHEC survey of UK hardwood importers highlighted the fact these are challenging times and generally the mood was one of hope rather than optimism. For most, sales volumes are reasonable although a number complained that



UK hardwood importers report reasonable sales volumes despite a competitive market

competition for business is fierce and that has an impact on margins and profitability. Over the last year or so a few major importers have ceased trading, notably International Timber and more recently Arnold Laver which has helped boost sales for some importers we spoke to who have benefitted from this reduction in competition.

A number of contacts cited volatile trading conditions in terms of prices and availability from the U.S. with some comments that it is getting harder to fill gaps in stocks with just in time shipments. Others remarked that their customers felt the quality of white oak in the upper grades had fallen driving them back to more reliable but expensive sources of European oak.

In terms of market activity, demand from the UK joinery sector appears to be slowing after a period of good activity and there have been reports of some workshops going out of business in recent months. Some importers are bracing themselves for slower sales in the second half of the year if there are no signs of new economic growth and more construction activity. It should be noted that most of these discussions took place before it became evident that the war in the Middle East will have significant impact on global energy costs and for the UK it is likely to lead to inflation, higher borrowing costs and quite possibly an economic downturn at a time when the Government were hoping for stronger GDP growth.

Most importers reported no real sales activity for cherry, as one importer said there is just no demand for it from the joinery companies but believed AHEC should keep promoting it to architects. A couple of importers said that their



Importer reports that there is just no demand for cherry, but believed AHEC should keep promoting it.



All UK importers surveyed are now regularly stocking red oak, with demand and sales rising steadily over the past 18 months.

maple sales had improved over the last year with increased interest from kitchen manufacturers. On another positive note all the importers AHEC talked to said they were now regularly stocking red oak and that they had seen demand and sales increase over the last 18 months. Some also said that AHEC's campaign to promote red oak had helped to generate new business. In response to questions about AHEC's new American Hardwood Assured (AHA) program most respondents confirmed that they knew about AHA and were already receiving statements from some of their U.S. suppliers. While AHA helps satisfy their due diligence requirements for the UK Timber Regulation (UKTR) they were more skeptical that it would open new markets unless it was formally recognized for Government procurement and the BREAM green building code alongside FSC and PEFC. This is a part of the long-term strategy for AHA which is why there are plans to develop a Proof of Provenance standard that can be linked to the annual deforestation and legality risk assessments already developed and in place.

ACTIVITIES

AHEC promotes the AHA solution to Spanish hardwood importers

AHEC were in Madrid in March for the annual



meeting of the Spanish Timber Association (AEIM). AHEC's Executive Director addressed the meeting in Spanish and presented an update on the American Hardwood Assured (AHA) program. Overall, Spanish importers were impressed with the system and the detail it contains regarding the risks of illegality and any impact of deforestation. They also heard about the legal opinion that AHEC sought which supports the assumption that AHA meets the objectives of the EUDR and is a proportionate response. However, there is still a concern that no Spanish hardwood importer will be willing to be the first to stick their hand up and use AHA statements without greater assurance in EU guidance and from the Spanish regulator that they will be accepted. AHEC explained the strategy in place to work with European allies and the U.S. government to push a very minor but critical change in the definition of "plot of land" from a "single real estate unit" toward a jurisdictional approach emphasizing counties in the context of the U.S. hardwood forest. Since the meeting AHEC has secured an appointment in April to return to Madrid to meet with representatives of Spain's Competent Authority responsible for implementing EUDR. This will be an important opportunity to present the AHA solution and collect valuable feedback.

A survey carried out amongst AEIM members was presented at the meeting and indicated that most companies had seen slightly better trade in 2025 than the year before. Half of respondents were optimistic that their hardwood sales would increase in 2026. But the majority (over 75%) believe that substitute materials are continuing to take market share away from wood. Over 70% of companies said they had plans to diversify products and species during 2026. This was welcome news as promoting a wider range of U.S. hardwood species in Spain is an AHEC priority as over 85% of all lumber exports are made up of white and red oak.

AHEC meet with USDA's EUDR delegation during their tour of Europe

While in Madrid AHEC's Executive Director and Environmental Policy Director had the opportunity

to meet with the USDA's delegation who were touring Europe to meet with Government officials in key markets to discuss EUDR. The delegation was made up of USDA representatives from Washington and Brussels. AHEC were able to explain in advance of their meetings with EU government authorities where we are with AHA and our efforts to constructively engage with the EU, focusing particularly on Member State Competent Authorities and importing industry at a time when the European Commission has not been receptive. The USDA delegation was interested in the extent to which the AHA aggregate risk based jurisdictional approach



AHEC exhibited at the Medwood show in Athens for the first time in 2025, engaging with Greek hardwood importers and distributors.

could help EUDR compliance more widely elsewhere in the world. AHEC explained that a key strength of the approach is that it can, in principle, be universally applied to all sectors and all areas of the world. This contrasts with the simplifications so far made by the EC which have all been only to the benefit of internal EU producers.

AHEC engage with Greek hardwood trade at Medwood show in Athens

Medwood is a biannual event and the leading exhibition in the region for woodworking machinery, timber and associated products aligned with the furniture and joinery manufacturing industries. AHEC took the



opportunity to exhibit at the show for the first time to engage with the Greek timber industry. A major factor for taking part is Greece was one of the few European countries in 2025 to show growth in U.S. hardwood lumber exports. An increase of 22% to 7,801m³ compared to the previous year. This increase was largely driven by a surge in white oak shipments. There was a steady stream of visitors to the AHEC stand over the four days including importers, distributors and manufacturers. Most of the interest was in white and red oak and tulipwood (which is growing in this market). Overall, the feedback was very positive, the Greek economy is doing better than many other EU countries and hardwood importers reported a healthy demand from their wood working customers. One of the leading importers confirmed that 2026 had started very positively with sales up 15% in the first quarter compared to the same period last year. A few trade leads were collected which will be sent out to members shortly. There were discussions



about a possible grading workshop for the trade later in the year and the response to AHA was very positive with offers to connect AHEC with the relevant officials at the Greek Competent Authority.

NEWS

EUDR and AHA update

Recent feedback from the European Timber Trade Federation and the German trade association, GD Holz, appear to confirm that the European Commission is unlikely to be willing to change the current language of the law. Under last year's amendment regulation, the European Commission was required to propose further simplifications for the EUDR by the end of April. However, the Commission has reiterated that it does not intend to amend the EUDR again for this purpose. Instead, adjustments are to be made through FAQs and guidance documents. ETTF also reported that The European Commission has so far received approximately 150 position papers and 750 questions regarding the EUDR. All proposals calling for a change to the EUDR are being ignored. These comments go some way to explain why despite several approaches by AHEC to get an audience with EC officials to present the AHA solution there has been no response. AHEC is proposing a single correction to the legal text leaving no doubt that county-level geolocations can be accepted by EU regulators. That is to remove the phrase "within a single real estate property" from the definition of the "plot of land" for which geolocation data is required. As reported last month AHEC continue to target the EUDR Competent Authorities in key member states.

The latest AHA newsletter is now available, if you are not signed up to receive these then please register on the [AHA website](#). Please also encourage your customers to also sign up so they can be kept up to date with EUDR news and AHA developments.



EXCHANGE RATES

	18/12/25	31/01/26	28/02/26	31/03/26
1 EURO = \$	1.17	1.19	1.18	1.15
\$1 = EURO	0.85	0.84	0.84	0.86
£1 Sterling = \$	1.33	1.37	1.34	1.32
\$1 = Danish DKK	6.36	6.27	6.32	6.48
\$1 = Swedish SEK	9.31	8.85	9.03	9.44
\$1 = Czech CZK	20.74	20.43	20.52	21.24
\$1 = Hungarian HUF	339.96	320.01	318.44	331.34
\$1 = Polish Zloty	3.59	3.53	3.57	3.69
\$1 = Russian Rouble	80.01	75.58	77.09	80.16
\$1 = Turkish Lira	42.71	43.47	43.93	44.50

