

Where Does EU Waste Go?

By [Eurostat](#)

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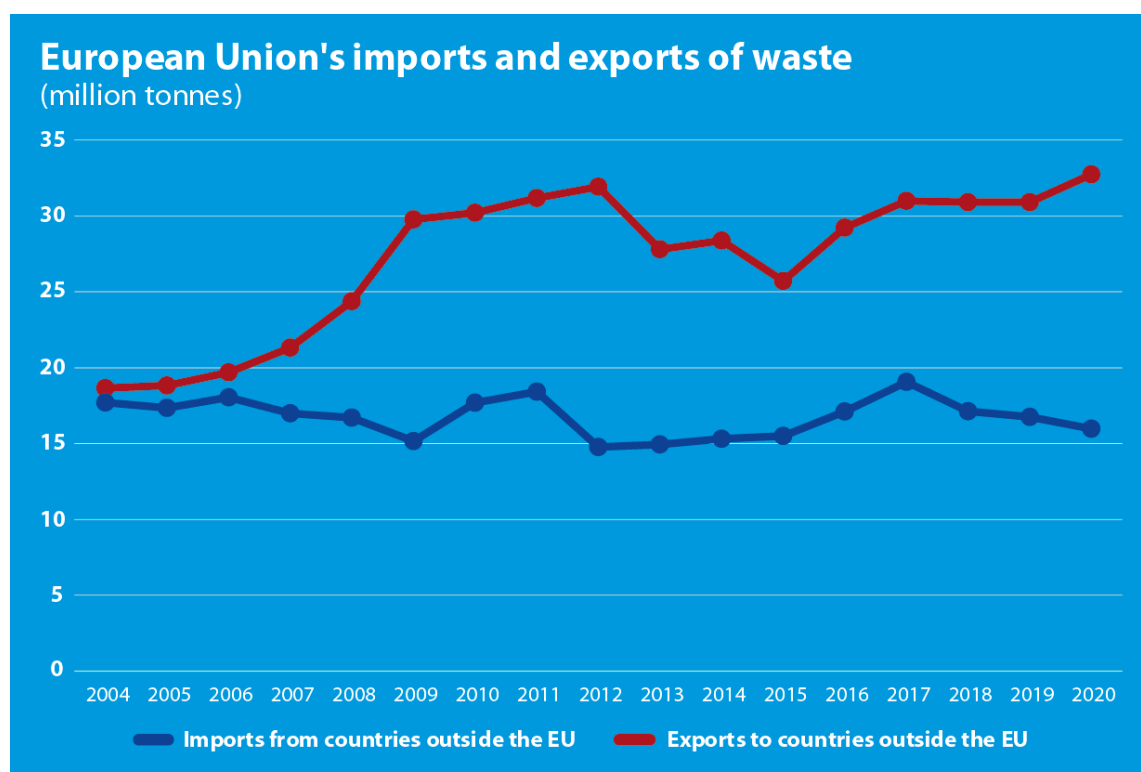
[Eurostat](#) 20 April 2021

Region: [Europe](#)

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In 2020, [EU](#) exports of waste to non-EU countries reached 32.7 million tonnes, an increase of three quarters (+75%) since 2004. In contrast, imports of waste from non-EU countries decreased by 10% since 2004, amounting to 16.0 million tonnes in 2020.

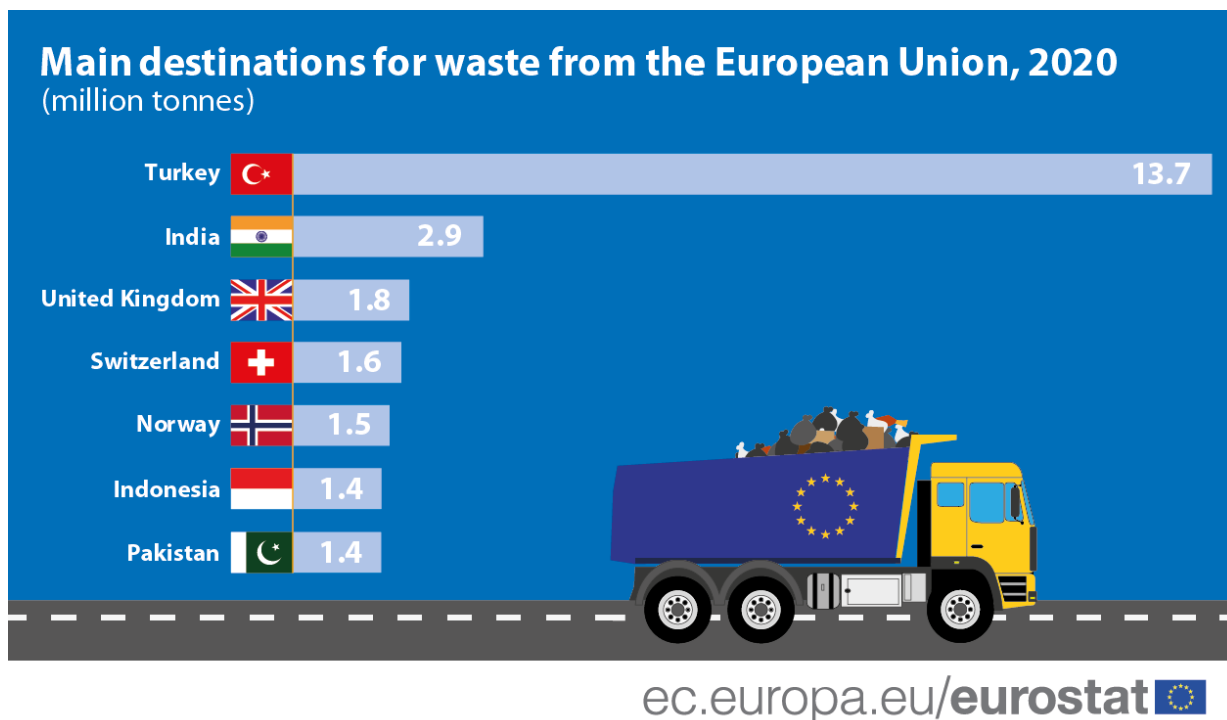


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Turkey: main destination for EU's waste exports

Turkey is the largest destination for waste exported from the EU, with a volume of around 13.7 million tonnes in 2020 – more than three times as much as in 2004. The second largest destination was India, which received almost 2.9 million tonnes of waste from the EU in 2020, followed by the United Kingdom (1.8 million tonnes), Switzerland (1.6 million tonnes), Norway (1.5 million tonnes), Indonesia and Pakistan (both 1.4 million tonnes).

In recent years, Pakistan has markedly grown as a destination for EU waste, with volumes increasing from 0.1 million tonnes in 2004 to 1.4 million tonnes in 2020. In sharp contrast, EU exports of waste to China have fallen from a peak of 10.1 million tonnes in 2009 to 0.6 million tonnes in 2020.

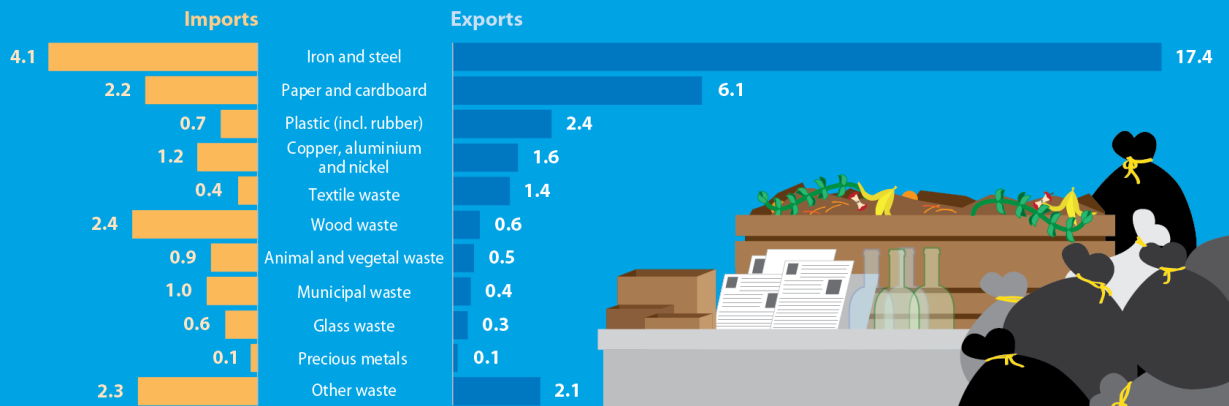


Ferrous metals waste accounts for half of all waste exports from the EU

In 2020, exports of ferrous metals waste (iron and steel) from the EU amounted to 17.4 million tonnes, accounting for more than half (53%) of all waste exports. The main destination was Turkey; with 11.8 million tonnes, Turkey received more than two thirds (68%) of the ferrous metal waste exported from the EU. Moreover, the EU imported 4.1 million tonnes of ferrous metal waste, with almost a third (32%) coming from the United Kingdom.

Although at a far lower level, considerable amounts of paper waste were also exported from the EU. The 6.1 million tonnes exported accounted for close to one fifth (19%) of the EU's waste exports in 2020. 1.6 million tonnes (26%) of this were destined for India, 1.2 million tonnes (20%) for Indonesia and 0.9 million tonnes (15%) for Turkey. However, there were also 2.2 million tonnes of paper waste imported to the EU, with the largest amount (0.9 million tonnes, or 41%) arriving from the United Kingdom.

Exports and imports of waste from/to the European Union, by waste category, 2020 (million tonnes)



Note: ranked on exports

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