

From timber and tar to paper and mobile phones - Finland

Country facts:

Population: 5,220. m

Main exports: Electrical and optical devices, Paper and cardboard products

Main imports: Machines, Vehicles, Finished Goods

The United Kingdom has traditionally been an important trade partner for Finland. The trade relationship first began in the late 19th century when UK was an important customer for Finnish tar and timber. After a surge in trade volumes led by Nokia, the trade between UK and Finland has been in a decrease for the last couple of years. According to the Finnish Customs, UK is currently fifth in export and sixth in import statistics. In the year 2003, UK held fourth position in both statistics.

In 2003, the volume of Finnish exports to UK were approximately £2, 560m, a decrease of 18% compared to 2002. In 2004, another decrease is likely. Paper and cardboard has retaken its position as the most important export article from Finland to UK with a share of 30% of total exports. Even though the export of mobile phones has decreased, it is still an important export article with 23% share of exports. The Finnish Customs Board estimated in 2002 that every sixth exported mobile phone was sold to UK.

Imports from UK to Finland in 2003 were approximately £1, 310 m, which was 9% less than in 2002. The principal import article was machinery and devices (47%). This includes computers of which UK was the most important supplier in the year 2002. Other important import articles included vehicles (17%) and chemical products (16%). Out of 137,000 cars imported to Finland, 21,000 came from UK.

Direct UK investments into Finland in 2002 amounted to £2,360m and investments the other way were £1,200 m

Every prudent business carries out market research and evaluation before attempting to break into a market. Acquiring knowledge of local laws, regulations and trading practices is an important element in order to obviate potential risk.

Sorainen Law Offices has a Helsinki office besides its offices in Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius. Sorainen lawyers work closely with Temple & Co Commercial Solicitors of Daventry (who were awarded the East Midlands Business News Legal Services Award 2004) in assisting UK businesses to enter the Finnish or Baltic markets, or trade with Finnish or Baltic companies, as well as in employment, corporate acquisitions, banking, and joint venture issues .

Contact Euan Temple at Temple & Co Commercial Solicitors, Daventry eft@templesols.com
www.templesols.com