

# User guide on European statistics on international trade in goods

2016 edition





**User guide on  
European statistics  
on international trade  
in goods** | 2016 edition

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## Abbreviations

BoP	Balance of payments
CN	Combined Nomenclature
EA	Euro area
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
GSP	Generalised Scheme of Tariff Preferences
HS	Harmonised System
IMTS	International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions
ITGS	International trade in goods statistics
PSI	Provider of statistical information
NSI	National Statistical Institute
SAD	Single Administrative Document
SITC	Standard International Trade Classification
VAT	Value added tax
VIES	VAT Information Exchange System

## Symbols

The following flags point out changes compared with the 2015 edition of the User Guide:

<b>New</b>	Flag pointing out new questions
<b>Rev</b>	Flag pointing out questions to which answers have been revised in order to reflect the latest changes.
<b>More</b>	Flag pointing out questions to which answers have been further elaborated.

# 1

## Introduction

### 1.1. What is the purpose of this User Guide?

The purpose of this User guide is to explain to a wide range of users how the statistics relating to trade in goods, both between EU Member States and with non-EU countries, are collected, compiled, processed and published at European level. Besides outlining the main concepts and definitions set out in EU legislation, it also provides some useful information on trade statistics produced at national level by the Member States.

The User guide is one of Eurostat's main reference documents to help non-expert users understand the nature and functioning of international trade in goods statistics (ITGS). Questions not answered by this guide can be addressed to the user support centre via the Eurostat website.

### 1.2. Which other documents should be read in conjunction with this guide?

Further guidance and metadata on ITGS are available from the following sources:

- The [International Trade Data Reference Metadata](#) in Euro SDMX Metadata Structure (ESMS) — Those metadata cover methodological, qualitative and quantitative information in a standardised structure.
- The Statistical Explained article [International trade in goods statistics – background](#) — This article answers some frequently asked questions on European ITGS.
- The [Quality Report on European statistics on international trade in goods](#) — This Report provides users with a tool to assess the quality of the international trade in goods statistics published by Eurostat. The data quality can be assessed against indicators covering the following components: relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, comparability and coherence.
- The [Compilers Guide on European Statistics on international trade in goods](#) — This Guide, which is a revised version of the 'Guidelines for the implementation of the Intrastat and Extrastat legislation', provides clarifications, often through concrete examples, to help the compilers to better interpret and apply the complex legislation on ITGS.
- The [Compilers guide on European statistics on international trade in goods by enterprise characteristics \(TEC\)](#) — The main objective of this Guide is to provide a comprehensive overview of the compilation of indicators on trade in goods by enterprise characteristics (TEC). It aims to serve as a methodological handbook providing the necessary definitions, instructions and methodological guidance for the regular compilation of TEC statistics.
- The [National requirements for the Intrastat system](#) — The Intrastat legislation allows the Member

States to choose to a large extent how they implement the Intrastat system, i.e. which trade data to collect from the parties responsible for providing statistical information (PSIs) and how. This Guide provides clarifications and recommendations to the PSIs on how to report under the Intrastat system, in accordance with the respective national requirements.

- The [‘Legislation’](#) page of the ‘International trade in goods’ section on Eurostat website — This page gathers all the legal acts relating to the European statistics in international trade in goods. Those acts are also accessible online on the [Eur-Lex website](#).
- The [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

### 1.3. Where to find everything on European ITGS? <sup>New</sup>

Eurostat website gives access to sections dedicated to specific statistical domains. One of these sections relates to international trade in goods statistics. Not only paths to access data are given but also info graphics tools providing pictures on main indicators, answers to frequently asked questions, descriptions of available data and publications as well as all available metadata including manuals, guidelines, quality reports, nomenclatures and legal acts.

#### Overview of the ‘International trade in goods’ page on Eurostat website

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/international-trade-in-goods>

##### Statistics Illustrated

##### Overview

- FAQ

##### Data

- Main tables
- Database
- Focus on Comext
- Focus on enterprise characteristics (TEC)

##### Methodology

- EU and national metadata
- Manuals and guidelines
- Quality monitoring
- Classifications
- Projects and studies

##### Publications

- News releases
- Statistics Explained

##### Legislation

##### Links

# 2

## Background information

### 2.1. What are European statistics on international trade in goods?

International trade in goods statistics (ITGS) published by Eurostat measure the value and quantity of goods traded between the EU Member States (**intra-EU trade**) and goods traded by the EU Member States with non-EU countries (**extra-EU trade**). 'Goods' means all movable property including electricity. 'European' means that the statistics are compiled on the basis of the concepts and definitions set out in EU legislation. 'National' statistics, i.e. statistics published at national level by the Member States, are compiled on the basis of national rules which may differ from EU rules.

European ITGS are the official harmonised source of information about exports, imports and the trade balances of the EU, its Member States and the euro area.

### 2.2. Who uses ITGS and what for?

#### 2.2.1. TYPES OF USERS AND REQUIREMENTS

As international trade forms a major part of the world economy, statistics on trade in goods are an instrument of primary importance for numerous public and private sector decision makers. For example, international trade statistics

- enable EU authorities to prepare multilateral and bilateral negotiations under the common commercial policy;
- enable EU authorities to evaluate the progress of the Single Market and the integration of EU economies;
- enable EU authorities to define and implement anti-dumping policies;
- constitute an essential source of information for balance of payments statistics, national accounts and economic studies; and
- help EU businesses conduct market research and define their commercial strategy.
- Statistics satisfy the users' needs in a variety of ways. Users may need either annual aggregated or detailed monthly data on products or partner countries. They may be interested in trade values in current prices or at constant prices. Alternatively, their interest may be in quantities rather than in values.

These examples, which are far from exhaustive, show the diversity of users and their requirements. Eurostat tries to meet these various needs and to adapt to a changing environment, such as changes due to globalisation.

### 2.2.2. USE OF TRADE DATA BY OTHER STATISTICAL FIELDS

One important use of international trade statistics in the majority of countries is as a data source for estimating the components of the balance of payments and the national accounts which relate to trade in goods. The most appropriate definitions for these components are agreed internationally in the *Balance of Payments Manual (Sixth edition)* (BPM6) published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2009 and in the *System of National Accounts — 2008* adopted by the United Nations.

The United Nations' [International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010 \(IMTS 2010\)](#) manual takes into account the recommendations of BPM6 and recommends a move towards harmonising different concepts. However, there are differences between the recommendations for international trade statistics and the goods account of the balance of payments in terms of, for example, coverage, valuation and some other specific aspects. These reflect both the differing priorities of users and the problems of data collection due to the more detailed requirements of international trade statistics.

It is outside the scope of this guide to discuss in detail the adjustments that need to be made to international trade statistics to convert them to figures on a balance of payments basis (where it is the trade statistics that are the source of the balance of payments figures). Users should nevertheless bear in mind that these adjustments may have a substantial effect on the figures, for example as a result of the different methods of valuation used for imports. More information is available in the publication '[Differences between Balance of Payments and Foreign Trade Statistics](#)'.

## 2.3. Who is responsible for European ITGS?

The EU Member States have the responsibility to compile European trade in goods statistics in line with the established rules and send them to Eurostat within the legal deadlines. The national authority responsible for ITGS in Member States is usually the national statistical institute, but in some Member States it may involve customs authorities and, for Belgium, even the National Bank. In practice, the division of responsibilities for collecting, processing and publishing trade data may be quite complex and vary from one Member State to another.

As the Statistical Office of the European Union, Eurostat has responsibility for overseeing and developing work on ITGS and for making the trade in goods statistics of the EU, its Member States and the euro area publicly available. In addition, Eurostat not only draws up the proposals for legislation and monitors its correct application but also provides methodological and technical assistance. This work is carried out in close cooperation with the Member States in working groups and task forces.

## 2.4. Where can I find the rules governing European ITGS?

The rules governing the European ITGS are set out in EU regulations. They incorporate the relevant international recommendations and provisions.

### 2.4.1. EU LEGISLATION ON ITGS <sup>REV</sup>

Generally speaking, EU law (the *acquis communautaire*) comprises primary and secondary legislation:

- The primary legislation consists of the Treaties, principally the Treaty on the European Union (the Maastricht Treaty, which entered into force in 1993) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (the former Treaty of Rome, which entered into force in 1958). The latest amendments were introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, which came into force in 2009.
- The secondary legislation consists of regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations and opinions based on the Treaties. Regulations are directly applicable in Member States, so national

laws are not needed to implement them.

**As regards the production of ITGS, the legislation aims at ensuring all Member States follow a harmonised approach.** It sets out the rules, concepts and definitions to be applied and the obligations of every stakeholder in European ITGS. The EU provisions apply directly to European statistics only; they do not regulate the methods of compiling data required for national purposes.

**The provisions on European ITGS are determined in several regulations and address intra- and extra-EU trade separately.** The main sets of legal acts are commonly known as ‘Intrastat legislation’ and ‘Extrastat legislation’. The basic regulations adopted by the European Parliament and the Council establish the essential rules governing ITGS. The implementing provisions are adopted by the European Commission and contain more detail on implementing certain articles of the basic regulations. The Commission can lay down implementing rules only for the articles for which it has been given the implementing power.

The latest revisions of the EU regulations on ITGS do not introduce major changes to the general concepts and principles but rather allow more possibilities for simplification in intra-EU trade and align the extra-EU trade statistics with the Union Customs Code. Both regulations also include articles on standardised procedures for quality reporting.

The EU regulations and classifications for international trade in goods are revised regularly to take account of changes in the economic and administrative environment as well as users’ needs.

Besides the Intrastat and Extrastat legislations, there is a range of other European legislation which has relevance to ITGS. These include the regulation relating to European statistics — Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council —, which provides a reference framework for all statistics including those for trade, the customs regulations — particularly the Union Customs Code — and regulations for product and country nomenclatures.

**All regulations relevant for the European statistics on international trade in goods can be consulted from the ‘[Legislation](#)’ page of the ‘International trade in goods’ section on Eurostat website.**

## Intra-EU trade

### *Basic regulation:*

Regulation (EC) No 638/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council

- amended by
  - Regulation (EC) No 222/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council
  - Commission Regulation (EU) No 1093/2013
  - Regulation (EU) No 659/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council

### *Implementing provisions:*

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1982/2004

- amended by
  - Commission Regulation (EC) No 1915/2005
  - Commission Regulation (EU) No 91/2010
  - Commission Regulation (EU) No 96/2010
  - Commission Regulation (EU) No 1093/2013

NB: This set of legal acts is commonly referred to as ‘Intrastat legislation’.

## Extra-EU trade

### *Basic regulation:*

Regulation (EC) No 471/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council

- amended by Regulation (EU) 2016/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council

### *Implementing provisions:*

Commission Regulation (EU) No 113/2010

Commission Regulation (EU) No 92/2010

- amended by Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1253

NB: This set of legal acts is commonly referred to as 'Extrastat legislation'.

### 2.4.2. COMPILERS GUIDE ON EUROPEAN STATISTICS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN GOODS

As its name suggests, this Guide is primarily addressed to the compilers of ITGS. Indeed, due to the complex nature of the legislation, there are needs for clarifications and even, to some extent, for interpretation — meeting these needs is the main objective of the Compilers Guide. The relevant legislation is explained in a systematic and comprehensive approach, often by providing concrete examples of good practice, so as to facilitate the application of the legal provisions and thus ensure harmonisation of compilation practices among EU Member States.

The Compilers guide also aims at promoting the best methods and practices through recommendations or encouragements complementing the legal requirements. The terms 'required', 'recommended' and 'encouraged' are consistently used throughout the document. The term 'required' refers to a legal requirement laid down by the EU legislation which Member States have to comply with. The term 'recommended' refers to a standard which Member States should follow to ensure the harmonisation and the good quality of ITGS. The term 'encouraged' indicates a desirable practice that is not part of the standard and, as such, its practical implementation will not be closely monitored by Eurostat.

Finally, the Compilers guide provides compilation rules which explain how a transaction or some of its aspects shall/should be treated (e.g. which code shall/should be used). Those which are binding are formulated using 'shall', while the other ones are formulated using 'should'.

### 2.4.3. INTERNATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROVISIONS RELEVANT TO ITGS

In addition to the EU legal requirements there are a number of international recommendations and conventions relevant to ITGS, although they do not generally have direct legal force. Many of these recommendations are contained in the [United Nations Statistics Division publication](#) 'International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions (IMTS 2010)' and the accompanying 'International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers' Manual' which are international reference publications on this subject. These documents are updated regularly so that they reflect changes in the international trade environment. The EU legislation has been aligned to the most possible extent with IMTS 2010.

A set of definitions concerning customs issues that are relevant for some data on trade statistics is given within the [Kyoto Convention](#) (International convention on the simplification and harmonisation of customs procedures).

A detailed knowledge of EU legislation and international recommendations is not required to use trade statistics. However, correct understanding of the data requires an understanding of the concepts, definitions and classifications set out in this guide which are derived from those laws and recommendations.



# 3

## Scope of ITGS

### 3.1. Special trade system or general trade system?

The UN IMTS manual defines two trade systems: general trade and special trade. Under the general trade system, the statistical territory includes customs warehouses, all types of free zones, free circulation area and premises for inward processing. The UN recommends implementing the general trade system for ITGS.

On the other hand, customs warehouses, all types of free zones and premises for inward processing are excluded from the statistical territory by the strict definition of the special trade system; thus only imports and exports of the free circulation area are recorded. The relaxed definition of special trade adds industrial free zones and premises of inward processing to the statistical territory. **The EU concept related to extra-EU trade follows the relaxed definition of the special trade system, whereas intra-EU trade is close to the general trade system.**

Note that some EU Member States publish their national figures using the general trade concept (see question [6.2.5 Why can European data differ from national data?](#) for more information).

### 3.2. How are the areas involved in ITGS defined?

As stated in IMTS 2010, the aim of international trade statistics is 'to record all goods which add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country by entering (imports) or leaving (exports) its economic territory'. At EU level, the 'economic territory' is the statistical territory of a Member State, which corresponds to its **customs territory with one exception** — the statistical territory of Germany includes Heligoland but the customs territory does not. So the EU ITGS record the flows of goods to and from the statistical territories of the Member States.

### 3.3. Which goods are included in ITGS?

'Goods' means all movable property including electricity. The Combined Nomenclature classifies the goods for which statistics are collected on the basis of around 9 500 product codes.

The goods and movements to be included in European ITGS are set out in the EU legislation but, in practice, there are inevitably some problems in defining exactly which goods are to be included since the legislation is not always explicit and needs to be interpreted. In particular, users should be aware that the following goods are included in ITGS:

- non-monetary gold;
- barter trade (although there could be some problems of valuation);
- goods on consignment (these are goods intended for sale but not actually sold at the time they cross the frontier);

- goods on financial lease (a financial lease effectively transfers ownership of the goods to the lessee);
- goods traded between companies under common ownership (although this may raise problems of valuation); and
- goods traded on government account.

Note that the goods recorded can be described as either 'Community' or 'non-Community' goods. It can generally be assumed that any goods which circulate between Member States and which are not under customs control are Union goods. These are said to be in 'free circulation'. Non-Union goods are those originating from outside the EU. If they have been subject to import formalities and released into 'free circulation', they become Union goods.

### 3.4. Which goods are excluded from ITGS?

Although they may physically cross the borders of Member States, there are some goods or movements to be excluded from ITGS because they do not 'add to or subtract from the stock of material resources' as defined in IMTS 2010. This is for instance the case of monetary gold and means of payment, goods for temporary use under certain conditions, goods for repair or software downloaded from the internet.

The full list of exclusions is given in Annex 1 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 113/2010 (extra-EU trade) and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1982/2004 (intra-EU trade). It can be found in Annex 1 of this guide.

### 3.5. Which transactions are outside the scope of ITGS?

Extra-EU trade statistics do not cover goods declared orally to customs authorities which are non-commercial, or which are of a commercial nature but have a value not exceeding the statistical threshold of EUR 1 000 and 1 000 kg.

Intra-EU trade statistics do not cover transactions between private individuals or very small businesses which are not subject to VAT obligations.

### 3.6. Which movements of goods are included in intra-EU trade? <sup>Rev</sup>

Intra-EU trade statistics record the movement of goods between Member States. By convention, goods entering the Member State are called **arrivals** and those leaving the territory are **dispatches**.

**Arrivals** in a given Member State include goods entering which:

- are in free circulation; or
- were placed, in another Member State, under the customs procedures for inward processing or, until April 2016, for processing under customs control.

**Dispatches** from a given Member State include goods destined for another Member State which:

- are in free circulation; or
- have been placed in the given Member State, under the customs procedures for inward processing or, until April 2016, for processing under customs control.

Note that goods are in free circulation either when they are entirely obtained/produced in the EU or when they are released for free circulation after importation from a non-EU country. In the latter case

the goods, after their release, may move freely within the EU and consequently they may be subject of recording in intra-EU trade statistics.

### 3.7. Which movements of goods are included in extra-EU trade? <sup>Rev</sup>

Extra-EU trade statistics record goods imported and exported by the EU from and to non-EU countries (note that movements of goods 'in transit' through a Member State are not recorded).

**Imports** into a given Member State include goods entering which are placed:

- under the customs procedure for release into free circulation, either immediately or after a period in a customs warehouse, either in the Member State of entry or after transfer to another Member State; or
- under the customs procedure for inward processing or, until April 2016, for processing under customs control (usually goods destined to be processed for subsequent re-export), either immediately or after a period in a customs warehouse.

**Exports** from a given Member State include goods which have been placed:

- under the customs procedure for export (final export, re-export following inward processing, etc.) in the originating Member State or following transfer to another Member State where customs procedures are carried out; or
- under the customs procedure for outward processing (usually goods destined to be processed for subsequent re-import).

Therefore, goods from a non-EU country imported into customs warehouses are not recorded unless they subsequently go into free circulation in the country of receipt (or are placed under the customs procedures for inward processing or, until April 2016, for processing under customs control). Conversely, outgoing goods from customs warehouses are not recorded as exports. This method of measuring international trade in goods is referred to as the **special trade system**.

The other method, the **general trade system**, is a wider concept and includes all goods entering or leaving the economic territory of a country with the exception of goods in transit (goods on the way to the Member State of destination, travelling directly through another country/Member State or stopping there for reasons related only to the transport of the goods). In particular, all goods imported into customs warehouses are recorded as imports at that stage whether or not they subsequently go into free circulation in the Member State of receipt. Similarly, outgoing goods from customs warehouses are included at the time they leave the Member State. Some Member States publish their national figures using the general trade concept.

### 3.8. What are 'Community' or 'Union' goods? <sup>New</sup>

The term '**Union**' was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty entered into force on 1 December 2009. It replaced the term '**Community**'. This change is reflected in all new legal acts from 2010.

The terms 'Union' or 'non-Union' goods are in general defined by customs legislation.

- **Union goods are in general goods entirely obtained/produced in the European Union or released for free circulation after importation from a non-EU country.** Those goods can move freely within the EU. They will be recorded in intra-EU trade statistics as soon as their move is not only transport-inherent. They will be recorded in extra-EU trade statistics in the case they leave the Union customs territory to be exported to a non-EU country.

- **Non-Union goods are goods which do not have Union goods status.** They are recorded in extra-EU trade statistics as imports if:
  - they enter the EU customs territory **and** are released for free circulation; or
  - they temporarily enter the EU customs territory for the customs procedure of inward processing.

#### Can non-Union goods be recorded in intra-EU trade statistics?

**Yes**, intra-EU trade statistics cover both Union and non-Union goods although non-Union goods do not refer to the usual case. Those non-Union goods have entered temporarily the EU and were placed under inward processing. They can move within the EU — cases where several Member States are involved in the inward processing — but still under customs supervision.

#### Can non-Union goods be recorded in extra-EU trade exports?

**Yes**, non-Union goods may also be recorded in extra-EU exports. It will be the case when non-Union goods put under inwards processing within the EU are exported after the processing.

Note that Union goods that are taken out of the EU customs territory usually lose their 'Union' status and become non-Union goods.

### 3.9. Are the goods in transit recorded in ITGS?

Goods in **simple transit** are not recorded while goods in **quasi-transit** are.

**Goods in transit** are goods entering and leaving a Member State with the exclusive purpose of reaching another Member State/country. They are excluded from the trade in goods statistics of the transit Member State as simply transported through the national territory or if they stopped in that Member State but only for transport reasons.

**Quasi-transit** occurs when goods are brought into or taken out of a Member State to be declared there as imports/exports for customs or tax purposes without this Member State having acquired ownership of the goods. Quasi-transit concerns imports/arrivals in a Member State of goods which are dispatched/ exported without changing ownership to a resident of that Member State. In contrast to simple transit, quasi-transit has to be recorded in European ITGS. However, some Member States exclude them from the results published at national level to enhance the economic relevance of their national figures.

# 4

## Data collection

### 4.1. Extrastat and Intrastat: two data collection systems for ITGS

Traditionally ITGS are based on the data collected by customs authorities on trade transactions between countries. Customs declarations are used for statistical purposes as the basic data source which provides detailed information on exports and imports of goods with a geographical breakdown. The developments and changes in customs systems therefore have direct implications for the compilation of statistical data. The harmonisation of customs procedures in the EU and introduction of the Combined Nomenclature (CN) and the Single Administrative Document (SAD) in 1988 have had a very positive impact on the development of trade statistics as well.

The first piece of EU legislation on ITGS was adopted in 1975; it provided general guidelines on data collection and obliged Member States to send their data to Eurostat. The advent of the Single Market on 1 January 1993, with its removal of customs formalities between Member States and subsequent loss of trade statistics data sources, required the establishment of a new data collection system: Intrastat. Intrastat was introduced by Council Regulation (EEC) No 3330/91 of 7 November 1991 on the statistics relating to the trading of goods between Member States. It has applied since 1993. Since then ITGS are based on two data collection systems: Extrastat and Intrastat.

Extrastat data on trade in goods with non-EU countries are collected by customs authorities and are based on the records of trade transactions in customs declarations, whereas Intrastat data are directly collected from intra-EU trade operators once a month.

The Intrastat system can be characterised as follows:

- data are directly collected from traders;
- it is closely interlinked with the VAT system relating to intra-EU trade to ensure the completeness and quality of the statistical data; and
- a system of thresholds is established to simplify data provision and reduce the overall burden on traders, particularly small ones.

### 4.2. Exceptions to the physical movement principle

As a matter of principle, international trade in goods statistics relate to the **physical movement of goods across the (national) border** of the reporting Member State. However, the following exceptions or particularities apply:

- **Trade in ships and aircraft** — For seagoing ships and medium and large airplanes, the physical movement is replaced by the transfer of the economic ownership of the ship/aircraft between a resident company and a non-resident one, irrespectively if the goods physically enter or leave the territory of the reporting Member State.

- The ‘economic’ characteristic was introduced in the Intrastat and Extrastat legislation in 2010 to respond to the needs of National Accounts and Balance of Payments, for which ITGS are one of the primary data sources.
- **Supplies to ships and aircraft** — The delivery of supplies to ships and aircrafts on the territory of the reporting Member State and which are destined to leave the territory of this Member State on-board are accounted as dispatches or exports to the Member State or non-EU country in which the economic owner of the ship or aircraft is resident. Note that this approach creates an asymmetry in ITGS as a mirroring acquisition by the ship or the aircraft falls outside the scope of ITGS, for simplification purposes.
- **Goods covered by the Single Authorisation for Simplified Procedure (SASP)** — This customs simplification allows that the customs declaration is provided in one Member State while the goods are located at the same time in another Member State, in which they have either arrived from a non-EU country (imports) or from which they are transported to a non-EU country (exports). Although the goods do physically cross the border of this Member State, the trade flow must be reported by the Member State where the customs declaration was lodged; consequently ITGS show only the latter Member State as the importing or exporting Member State.
- **Goods in transit** — It must be added, for clarification, that those cross border movements of goods which, for transport related reasons, enter a Member State with the aim of reaching another Member State or a non-EU country (transit) fall outside the scope of ITGS.

### 4.3. How are data collected?

For the compilation of extra-EU trade statistics, the standard data source is the **customs declaration** submitted by businesses and, in some cases, by private individuals involved in an international transaction of goods with a non-EU country. The customs declaration may be in paper form — the Single Administrative Document (SAD) — but is most commonly in electronic format.

For intra-EU trade, any VAT-registered business that trades goods with other EU Member States is required to provide information on its transactions. The information is obtained directly by the national authority responsible for the collection of trade statistics, using the various media available (in paper or electronic form). All businesses are legally required to provide information on their total sales and purchases to and from other EU countries on their **VAT returns**. The largest ones also submit **Intrastat declarations** on a monthly basis within a fixed deadline.

### 4.4. Who provides the statistical information?

For extra-EU trade, the providers of statistical information are all natural or legal persons lodging a customs declaration in a Member State on condition that the customs procedure is of statistical relevance.

For intra-EU trade, the providers of statistical information are all taxable persons reporting an intra-EU transaction whose annual trade value exceeds a certain threshold. This threshold is known as the ‘exemption threshold’ in the Intrastat system. Each Member State fixes its national thresholds, applicable separately to arrivals and dispatches.

### 4.5. How is the reporting country defined?

The reporting country is the country compiling and sending data to Eurostat. As a general principle, Member States should record an import when goods enter their statistical territory and an export when goods leave that territory, except if those goods are in simple transit. Goods should be recorded only when adding to or subtracting from the stock of national material resources or, in the context of extra-EU trade, when customs formalities are applied.

The 'Nomenclature of countries and territories for the external trade statistics of the Community and statistics of trade between Member States' — known as the '[Geonomenclature](#)' — is used to identify the reporting country.

## 4.6. How is the partner country defined? <sup>More</sup>

### 4.6.1. GENERAL RULE

<b>Extra-EU exports</b>	The partner country is the non-EU country which is presumed to be the destination of the goods, i.e. to which it is agreed between the parties of the export contract that the goods are to be delivered.
<b>Extra-EU imports</b>	<p>The partner country is the country of origin of the goods, as defined under Union customs legislation. These provisions provide for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• goods wholly obtained in a single country have their origin in that country;</li> <li>• where in the actual production of goods more than one country is involved, the goods originate in the country where the last substantial processing or working took place.</li> </ul> <p>For quite a number of goods, customs provisions have concretised the very general term 'substantial processing or working'; consequently, should in one country involved in the production, the conditions for 'substantial processing or working' not be met, the goods would keep their initial origin.</p>
<b>Intra-EU exports (dispatches)</b>	The partner country is the Member State which is presumed to be the destination of the goods, i.e. to which it is agreed between the parties of the export contract that the goods are to be delivered.
<b>Intra-EU imports (arrivals)</b>	The partner country is the Member State of consignment. This is the Member State from which the goods were actually dispatched to the Member State of arrival of the goods according to the export/import contract

Note that where goods for purely transport related reasons (including consolidation of freight) only pass through (transit) a country or a Member State, the entry into or the exit from this country has no effect on defining the partner country.

The 'Nomenclature of countries and territories for the external trade statistics of the Community and statistics of trade between Member States' — known as the '[Geonomenclature](#)' — is used to identify the partner country.

### 4.6.2. EXCEPTIONS

For a limited number of very specific goods the criterion for trade in goods is not necessarily related to cross-border movements of goods or their origin, but to different criteria.

**More information on the specific goods and movements can be found in Annex 2.**

- **Vessels and aircraft**

Due to the specificities of the maritime and aviation sector, the sole criterion for trade in goods is the **change of the economic ownership** of the vessel or aircraft. 'Economic ownership' in this context means the right of a natural or legal person to claim the benefits from the operations of the

vessel/aircraft and to also accept the associated risks.

Note that the 'economic owner' need not necessarily be the legal owner, as 'economic ownership' can also be acquired under certain leasing arrangements.

**Extra-EU exports** The partner country is the non-EU country where the new economic owner is established with his business activities. The economic ownership was transferred from a natural/legal person established in the reporting Member State.

Note that, for new vessels and aircraft, the reporting Member State is the country of construction.

**Extra-EU imports** The partner country is the non-EU country where previous economic owner was established with his business activities. The economic ownership was transferred to a natural/legal person established in the reporting Member State.

Note that, for new vessels and aircraft, the partner country is the country of construction.

**Intra-EU exports (dispatches)** The partner country is the Member State where the new economic owner is established with his business activities. The economic ownership was transferred from a natural/legal person established in the reporting Member State.

Note that, for new vessels and aircraft, the reporting Member State is the country of construction.

**Intra-EU imports (arrivals)** The partner country is the Member State where previous economic owner was established with his business activities. The economic ownership was transferred to a natural/legal person established in the reporting Member State.

Note that, for new vessels and aircraft, the partner country is the country of construction.

- **Goods delivered to vessel and aircraft**

The criterion for trade in goods is the **economic ownership of the vessel or aircraft to which the goods were delivered**.

**Extra-EU exports** The partner country is the non-EU country where the economic owner of the vessel or aircraft to which goods are delivered is established.

Note that, if the partner country is not determined, the code QS 'Stores and provisions within the framework of extra-EU trade' may be used instead of the real partner country.

**Intra-EU exports (dispatches)** The partner country is the Member State where the economic owner of the vessel or aircraft to which goods are delivered is established.

Note that, if the partner country is not determined, the code QR 'Stores and provisions within the framework of intra-EU trade' may be used instead of the real partner country.

- **Spacecraft**

Are concerned the satellites or components for space stations whose constructions are completed and which are therefore technically in a state that they can fulfil their mission on launching.



**The criterion for trade in goods is the change of the 'economic ownership' of the spacecraft and more precisely, the acquisition of economic ownership of the new spacecraft by the first economic owner.**

Note that

- the transfers of economic ownership of satellites which are in orbit are excluded from trade in goods statistics; and that
- the **launching** of the launching vehicle (rocket) or of a re-usable space shuttle is not covered by the specific provisions but is treated as a movement of a 'normal' means of transport.

**Extra-EU exports**      The partner country is the non-EU country where the new economic owner of the spacecraft is established.

**Extra-EU imports**      The partner country is the country of construction.

**Intra-EU exports (dispatches)**      The partner country is the Member State where the new economic owner of the spacecraft is established.

**Intra-EU imports (arrivals)**      The partner country is the Member State of construction.

- **Goods delivered to or from offshore installations which are stationary on the high sea**

The criterion for trade in goods is related to the area ('exclusive economic zone' - 'EEZ') where a given non-EU country or EU Member State has the exclusive right to exploit the seabed and subsoil.

The EEZ is conceptually considered as part of the respective Member State's or non-EU country's statistical territory, so that trade in goods to or from an offshore installation is considered as trade with the respective EU Member State or non-EU country.

Note that trade in goods between two offshore installations established in areas where two different countries have exclusive rights to exploit the seabed and subsoil shall also be recorded.

**In the case of goods obtained from or produced by an offshore installation**, i.e. products extracted from the seabed or subsoil, or manufactured/produced by the offshore installation:

**Extra-EU exports**      The partner country is the non-EU country to which are goods delivered from the offshore installation established in an area where the exporting Member State has the exclusive rights to exploit that seabed or subsoil.

**Extra-EU imports**      The partner country is the non-EU country from whose offshore installation are goods delivered to the importing Member State. The offshore installation is established in an area where this non-EU country has exclusive rights to exploit that seabed or subsoil.

**Intra-EU exports (dispatches)**      The partner country is the Member State to which are goods delivered from the offshore installation established in an area where the exporting Member State has the exclusive rights to exploit that seabed or subsoil.

**Intra-EU imports (arrivals)**      The partner country is the Member State from whose offshore installation are goods delivered to the importing Member State. The offshore installation is established in an area where the partner Member State has exclusive rights to exploit that seabed or subsoil.

**In the case of goods delivered to offshore installation**, i.e. products for the crew and for the operation of the engines, machines and other equipment of the offshore installation:

**Extra-EU exports** The partner country is the non-EU country to whose offshore installation goods are delivered by the exporting Member State. The offshore installation is established in an area where this non-EU country has exclusive rights to exploit that seabed or subsoil.

Note that the code QW 'Countries and territories not specified within the framework of extra-EU trade' may be used instead of the real partner country.

**Extra-EU imports** The partner country is the non-EU country from which are goods delivered to the offshore installation established in an area where the importing Member State has the exclusive rights to exploit that seabed or subsoil.

Note that the code QW 'Countries and territories not specified within the framework of extra-EU trade' may be used instead of the real partner country.

**Intra-EU exports (dispatches)** The partner country is the Member State to whose offshore installation goods are delivered by the exporting Member State. The offshore installation is established in an area where this partner Member State has exclusive rights to exploit that seabed or subsoil.

Note that the code QV 'Countries and territories not specified in the framework of intra-EU trade' may be used instead of the real partner country.

**Intra-EU imports (arrivals)** The partner country is the Member State from which are goods delivered to the offshore installation established in an area where the importing Member State has the exclusive rights to exploit that seabed or subsoil.

Note that the code QV 'Countries and territories not specified in the framework of intra-EU trade' may be used instead of the real partner country.

#### • Sea products

'Sea products' mainly cover:

- fish catch landed after catching; and
- fish catch processed on board of factory vessels at sea, with the processed goods landed afterwards.

For trade in sea products, the non-EU country or EU Member State where the economic owner of the catching vessel is established is also to be considered for certain flows.

**Extra-EU exports** *Where sea products having **Union status** are landed in a port of a non-EU country, the partner country is the non-EU country of landing.* They are extra-EU exports of the Member State where the operator of the catching vessel is established.

*Where sea products having **Union status** are transhipped at sea by the operator of the catching vessel to a vessel operated by a person resident in a non-EU country, the partner country is the non-EU country where the operator of the receiving vessel is established.* They are extra-EU exports of the Member State where the operator of the catching vessel is established.

<b>Extra-EU imports</b>	<i>Where sea products having <b>non-Union status</b> are landed in a port of a Member State, they are extra-EU imports of that Member State. <b>The partner country is the country of origin.</b> Additionally to the country of origin, it is collected the country where the operator of the catching vessel is established.</i>
<b>Intra-EU exports (dispatches)</b>	<p><i>Where sea products having <b>Union status</b> are landed in a port of a Member State, they are intra-EU dispatches of the Member State where the operator of the catching vessel is established and <b>the partner country is the Member State of landing.</b></i></p> <p><i>Where sea products having <b>Union status</b> are transhipped at sea by the operator of the catching vessel to a vessel operated by a person resident in another Member State, they are intra-EU dispatches of the Member State where the operator of the catching vessel is established and <b>the partner country is the Member State where the operator of the receiving vessel is established.</b></i></p>
<b>Intra-EU imports (arrivals)</b>	<p><i>Where sea products having <b>Union status</b> are landed in a port of a Member State, they are intra-EU arrivals in that Member State and <b>the partner country is the Member State where the operator of the catching vessel is established.</b></i></p> <p><i>Where sea products having <b>Union status</b> are transhipped at sea to a vessel operated by a person resident in a Member State, they are intra-EU arrivals of the Member State where the operator of the receiving vessel is established and <b>the partner country is the Member State where the operator of the catching vessel is established.</b></i></p>

## 4.7. How are goods classified?

Goods are classified by commodity code as set out in the EU Combined Nomenclature. In practical terms, when a business submits information on its trade, it has to provide the corresponding CN code for the goods traded. With about 9500 subheadings in the Combined Nomenclature, this can be a complicated task and may lead to misclassifications. When comparing ITGS at the most detailed level, product misclassifications are one of the main causes of asymmetry.

In the Combined Nomenclature, the full commodity code for a particular product can be broken down as follows:

- The first six digits are taken from the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System (known as the Harmonised System, or HS), developed and maintained by the World Customs Organisation. The Harmonised System is used worldwide by the majority of trading nations; it is reviewed and updated in five-year cycles (although exceptionally the time between updates may differ). It was introduced in 1988 and, since then, was revised five times: in 1996, 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017.
- The seventh and eighth digits of the EU Combined Nomenclature add a further subheading to the Harmonised System, applying customs tariffs which follow and support EU policies or provide valuable information to traders.

**Example** of the eight-digit CN structure

HS Chapter	18	Cocoa and Cocoa Preparations
HS Heading	18 06	Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa
HS Subheading	18 06 10	Cocoa powder, containing added sugar or other sweetening matter
CN Subheading	18 06 10 15	Containing no sucrose or containing less than 5% by weight of sucrose (including invert sugar expressed as sucrose) or isoglucose expressed as sucrose

The CN is revised annually to take into account new goods entering the market or outdated goods disappearing. Changes may be made as a result of requests from EU trade federations (sometimes representing Member States at national level) to reflect industry developments, or from European Commission Directorates-General to monitor EU policies, accommodate international requirements or respond to legal needs. Note that the CN is also used for making data available, together with other classifications of products.

## 4.8. When are movements of goods recorded?

General principle / exceptions (staggered consignment, industrial plants)

Theoretically, the reference period for the information on international trade in goods transactions should be the calendar month of dispatch/export or arrival/import of the goods. However, in practice the reference period for extra-EU trade is generally the calendar month during which the customs declaration is accepted by customs authorities. The reference period for intra-EU trade may be adapted in case of sales or purchases to the calendar month during which the VAT on the intra-EU supplies or acquisitions becomes chargeable.

## 4.9. How to choose which data to collect?

### 4.9.1. USING THRESHOLDS IN EXTRASTAT

Within Extrastat, the customs threshold defines the transactions to be declared. Under the EU legislation, statistical information relating to any transactions exceeding EUR 1 000 in value or 1 000 kg in net mass must be collected from the customs authorities. The customs threshold therefore cannot be fixed at a value higher than EUR 1 000 or a weight above 1 000 kg. In general, Member States apply lower customs thresholds.

As regards the data compilation, any customs declaration available is integrated into ITGS. The National Statistical Authority may nevertheless decide not to process transactions below EUR 1 000 or 1 000 kg at the most detailed level.

### 4.9.2. USING THRESHOLDS IN INTRASTAT

To reduce the burden on businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the Intrastat system is designed so that intra-EU traders' workload varies according to the annual amount of trade in which they are involved. To achieve this, each year Member States have to set thresholds for arrivals and dispatches that exempt businesses from providing statistical information or that limit the information collected. There are four types of thresholds, the first three of which are expressed in terms of the annual value of intra-EU trade:

<b>Exemption threshold</b>	Businesses below this threshold do not have to submit Intrastat declarations. When setting the threshold, Member States have to ensure that at least 97 % of their dispatches by value and 93 % (95 % up to 2013) of their arrivals by value are covered. Businesses above the threshold are the providers of statistical information (PSIs) in the Intrastat system.
<b>Simplification threshold</b>	This allows businesses with annual trade value above the exemption threshold but below the simplification threshold to provide only a limited set of data or use a simplified commodity code. The trade reported by these PSIs may cover at most 6 % of total trade.
<b>Statistical value threshold</b>	Member States may collect the statistical value from only some of their PSIs. Up to the 2013 reference year, the EU legislation required that the threshold be fixed in such a way that the statistical value is collected only from the biggest PSIs, whose overall share of total trade may not exceed 70 %. There is no longer a legal requirement as regards the threshold level since 2014.
<b>Individual transaction threshold</b>	Member States may decide not to collect detailed information for individual transactions. The EU legislation fixes the maximum level of the individual transaction threshold at EUR 200.

Intrastat data collection therefore does not cover 100 % of Member States' intra-EU trade. To achieve complete coverage, the loss of data due to the exemption threshold and to the lack of response from PSIs is made up through estimates.

## 4.10. What information is recorded for each transaction? <sup>Rev</sup>

The legislation defines what information is to be collected on each transaction of goods. Some statistical variables are mandatory, others optional. The main statistical variables are the following:

<b>Reference period</b>	When the customs declaration is the source for records on imports and exports, the reference period is the calendar year and month when the declaration is accepted by customs authorities. Within the Intrastat system, the reference period is in principle the calendar month of arrival or dispatch of the goods. However, for sales and purchases, the calendar month when the chargeable event for VAT purposes occurs may be used instead. The chargeable event relates to the issue date of the invoice.
<b>Importing or exporting Member State</b>	Except for some specific goods like vessels and aircraft, ITGS follow the physical movements of the goods. Member States should record an import when goods enter their statistical territory and an export when goods leave that territory except if those goods are in simple transit. Goods should be recorded only when adding to or subtracting from the stock of national material resources or, in the context of extra-EU trade, when customs formalities are applied.
<b>Partner country</b>	This is the last known country of destination for exports/dispatches, the country of origin for imports from non-EU countries and the country of consignment for arrivals from Member States.
<b>Product code</b>	Goods classified by commodity code as set out in the EU Combined Nomenclature.

<b>Statistical procedure</b> (only in extra-EU trade)	This relates to customs procedures and distinguishes between different types of imports and exports: imports/exports covered by the customs inward processing procedure and imports/exports covered by the customs outward processing procedure are distinguished from normal transactions or transactions not recorded from customs declarations.
<b>Preferential treatment</b> (only in extra-EU imports)	This indicates whether reduced or zero rates of customs duty apply to a transaction. In particular, the EU Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) enables the least developed and developing countries to access the European market and encourages them to become more established.
<b>Mode of transport</b>	This identifies the active means of transport (e.g. road, rail, sea) by which the goods leave/enter the statistical territory of a Member State for intra-EU trade and of the EU for extra-EU trade.  Note that the collection of the mode of transport for intra-EU trade flows became optional in 2001. Therefore the information is not available for all the EU Member States since January 2001 as reference month.
<b>Container</b> (only for extra-EU trade)	In addition to the mode of transport, for extra-EU trade, information is collected on whether or not goods are transported in containers (except for postal consignment, fixed transport installation or the own propulsion category).
<b>Nationality of the means of transport</b> (only for extra-EU trade)	In addition to the mode of transport, for extra-EU trade, information is collected on the nationality of the active means of transport of the goods when they leave/enter the statistical territory of the EU (except when the mode of transport is rail, postal consignment, fixed transport installations and own propulsion).  Note that the nationality of the means of transport became optional in 2010. Therefore the information is not available for all the EU Member States since January 2010 as reference month.
<b>Trade value</b>	This is the statistical value, i.e. the amount that would be invoiced in the event of sale or purchase at the national border of the reporting country. It is said to be a <b>FOB valuation</b> for exports/dispatches and a <b>CIF valuation</b> for imports/arrivals.
<b>Quantity</b>	This is the weight of the goods in kilograms without packaging; this quantity is referred to as the 'net mass'. For certain goods, a supplementary quantity is available. The supplementary unit varies according to the goods; it can be litres, number of pieces, carats, terajoules, square metres, etc.

## 4.11. What are the measurement units?

The volume of trade is expressed in value and quantity. The quantity is measured in kilos and, when it is relevant, in another unit depending of the nature of the goods (e.g. m<sup>2</sup>, carats or litres).

### 4.11.1. TRADE VALUE

In ITGS, the trade value corresponds to the **statistical value**, i.e. to the amount which would be paid in the event of sale or purchase at the time and place the goods cross the national border of the reporting Member State. It is said to be a **FOB type value** (free on board) for exports/dispatches and

a **CIF type value** (cost, insurance, freight) for imports/arrivals.

In the case of exports/dispatches, the statistical value includes only incidental expenses (freight, insurance) incurred on the part of the journey located on the territory of the exporting Member State. For imports/ arrivals, it includes only incidental expenses incurred on the part of the journey located outside the territory of the importing Member State. It does not include taxes on import or export, such as customs and excise duties or VAT.

In the case of **goods imported or exported for processing**, it is always the total value of the goods which should be reported, before and after processing, not just the value added by the processing procedure.

**In extra-EU trade**, the statistical value is based on the value determined for customs purposes; therefore there is generally no need to estimate it.

**In intra-EU trade**, only the value which was or would have been invoiced in the case of sale or purchase is systematically collected from the providers of the statistical information. Most Member States either do not collect the statistical value at all or collect the statistical value only from the PSIs whose annual trade is above a certain threshold. When not provided by the PSI, the statistical value is estimated by the national statistical authority. The estimation is based on the invoice value and other information collected, such as the delivery terms and the mode of transport.

Trade values are collected in national currency. In Eurostat publications, they are expressed in euro even for countries not belonging to the euro area. For those countries, the currency conversion is based on the monthly average of the conversion rates.

#### 4.11.2. NET MASS AND SUPPLEMENTARY QUANTITY

Except for a few goods under HS chapter 89 'Ships, boats and floating structures' and the product code 2716 00 00 'Electrical energy', quantity is expressed in kilograms. It reflects the **net mass**, i.e. the weight of the goods without any packaging.

For certain goods, a **supplementary quantity** is provided in addition to the net mass. This quantity is expressed in a unit which provides useful information. Supplementary units are units other than kilograms such as, for example, litres, numbers of pieces, carats, terajoules or square metres. For each CN8 code, the Combined Nomenclature indicates whether a supplementary quantity should be provided and, if so, in which supplementary unit.

Under the provisions on intra-EU trade statistics, where there is a supplementary unit laid down for a specific product code of the Combined Nomenclature, it is not mandatory to request the net mass from the PSIs. Member States can define whether the information about net mass is systematically collected for all CN8 codes or only for part of them. From the 2010 reference year onwards, the non-collected net mass is estimated by the national statistical authority.

## 4.12. Are there specific rules for particular types of goods or movements?

Although in most cases it is possible to record the physical movement of goods crossing borders from one territory to another, there are occasions when different criteria need to be used and/or when it may be difficult to collect the required data using standard declarations. There are also cases which present particular classification problems.

As a result there are specific harmonised provisions for the compilation of information relating to these goods, referred to as '**specific goods and movements**' in intra- and extra-EU legislation. The goods concerned and the related provisions are described briefly below:

<b>Vessels, aircraft and spacecraft</b>	Trade in sea-going vessels, aircraft and spacecraft cannot be measured as they cross borders for obvious reasons. Instead, the 'change of economic ownership' principle is used to determine when a transaction has occurred and also which partner country should be recorded. Additional data sources, such as maritime and aircraft registers, may be used to obtain this information.
<b>Electricity and gas</b>	It is particularly difficult to track this trade so other data sources, such as information from grid operators, may be used.
<b>Sea products</b>	'Sea products' means fishery products, minerals, savage and all other products which have not yet been landed by sea-going vessels. The partner country is determined on the basis of the economic ownership of the vessel. Because it is often difficult to capture this trade, additional data sources, such as fishery statistics, may be used.
<b>Goods delivered to vessels, aircraft and offshore installations</b>	For goods delivered to sea-going vessels and aircraft, the economic ownership of the vessel or aircraft is used to determine the partner country. The partner country for goods delivered to and from offshore installations is considered to be the one with exclusive rights to exploit the seabed. There is also a simplified coding system for recording the goods.
<b>Industrial plants</b>	There is a simplified coding system for recording the movement of components of industrial plant where certain conditions are met. These apply to both import and export flows in intra-EU trade but only to exports in extra-EU trade because of the duties applied to imports.
<b>Staggered consignments</b>	Where goods are delivered in more than one consignment it may be recorded only once, at the time the final delivery is made.
<b>Military goods</b>	Where goods are subject to military secrecy in the Member State concerned, less detailed information may be provided.

More information on the specific goods and movements can be found in Annex 2.



# 5

## Data compilation

### 5.1. How are EU trade data compiled?

Where not otherwise specified, the EU trade corresponds to the aggregation of the extra-EU trade flows of the EU Member States. More concretely, the EU trade flows are compiled as follows:

- **EU imports** = Sum of the extra-EU imports of the EU Member States
- **EU exports** = Sum of the extra-EU exports of the EU Member States
- **EU trade balance** = EU exports – EU imports

When an indicator on the intra-EU trade is published at EU level, the intra-EU exports are taken as reference; they are considered to be of better quality than the intra-EU imports for reasons inherent to the Intrastat data collection system.

### 5.2. How are euro area trade data compiled?

The trade of the euro area (EA) corresponds to the aggregation of the extra-EA trade flows of the EA Member States. More concretely, the EA trade flows are compiled as follows:

- **EA imports** = Sum of the extra-EA imports of the EA Member States
- **EA exports** = Sum of the extra-EA exports of the EA Member States
- **EA trade balance** = EA exports – EA imports

The 'extra-EA' area is composed of the non-EU countries and of the EU Member States not belonging to the euro area. This means that part of the intra-EU trade flows — the ones recorded by the EA Member States with the EU Member States not belonging to the euro area — play a particular role in the euro area's trade balance.

### 5.3. How are the trade balances of the EU Member States compiled?

The trade balance of a Member State corresponds to the difference between its total exports and its total imports, i.e. considering both its intra- and extra-EU trade. As the EU trade balance refers only to extra-EU trade flows, it does not correspond to the aggregation of the EU Member States' individual trade balances.

## 5.4. How does one account for the intra-EU trade data not collected?

As a result of the Intrastat thresholds and other simplification measures, estimates need to be compiled by the Member States to ensure full trade coverage. The statistics published by Eurostat include estimates for missing data as computed and provided by the Member States.

### 5.4.1. ESTIMATING MISSING TRADE

Estimates need to be made for data that cannot be collected because the trader is below the exemption threshold or that have not yet been collected because the trader is late in supplying the data. The main information sources used by the Member States to estimate missing data in intra-EU trade are the VAT returns and VAT recapitulative statements (VIES data) sent by intra-EU traders to the national tax administration. Data collected through Intrastat declarations are used to allocate estimated total values by product and partner Member States.

Under the Intrastat legislation, the estimates for any missing data — i.e. on trade below the Intrastat exemption thresholds, and/or due to missing Intrastat declarations — must be compiled at least by HS2 codes and partner Member State. Missing data are even estimated at a more detailed level — HS4 or CN8 codes — by some Member States. In Eurostat's publication of data, estimates compiled at chapter level can be identified through product codes including the letters M or Y (see Annex 3).

Note that the legislation in principle excludes trade carried out by private individuals or very small businesses which are not subject to VAT obligations. As a result no estimates are made to balance this loss of information.

### 5.4.2. ESTIMATING STATISTICAL VALUE

In intra-EU trade, most Member States either do not collect the statistical value at all or collect it only from PSIs with an annual trade amount exceeding a 'statistical value threshold'. When not provided by PSIs, the statistical value is estimated by the national statistical authority.

This authority estimates the statistical value by adjusting the collected trade value. This adjustment consists in adding or removing the incidental expenses for the relevant part of the journey. If incidental expenses are not known, they may be assessed on the basis of costs usually payable for transport and insurance services.

Note that trade values published by Eurostat reflect only statistical values.

### 5.4.3. ESTIMATING NET MASS

Under the Intrastat legislation, where there is a supplementary unit laid down for a specific CN product code it is not mandatory to request data on net mass from the PSIs. Member States can then decide to collect the net mass for all CN8 codes or only for some. Since the 2010 reference year the net mass not collected is estimated by the national statistical authority.

To support the Member States, Eurostat has established European average conversion factors for all the CN8 codes with a supplementary unit. These conversion factors were established on the basis of EU historical trade data after filtering out outliers. For the majority of the codes the factors are weighted averages, but for some codes (mostly for wood products) industry estimates were applied. Technical conversion factors (unit mass) based on physical characteristics of the commodity were established where possible (for example, the weight of one litre of mineral water equals one kilogram). 'Value per kg' conversion factors have also been established. However, the 'unit mass' conversion factors should be used in priority wherever possible as the supplementary quantity is usually better correlated with the net mass. Member States are however free to use either the list of conversion factors provided by Eurostat or any other estimation method they deem more suitable.

## 5.5. How does one account for the extra-EU trade data not collected?

Under the Extrastat legislation, Member States must compile estimates for delayed or incomplete records at least by HS2 code and partner country. In Eurostat's publication of data, estimates can be identified through product codes including the letters M or Y (see Annex 3).

## 5.6. Why are some of the ITGS confidential?

### 5.6.1. WHAT ARE 'CONFIDENTIAL DATA'?

As a general definition, data used by national and EU authorities for producing statistics are considered confidential if statistical units can be identified, either directly or indirectly, and information about individuals or businesses is disclosed as a result.

The precise operational criteria determining which statistical data are considered confidential are fixed by each Member State in the light of national legislation or practices. The classical way to avoid disclosing confidential information is to hide the real product code and/or the real partner country code.

### 5.6.2. WHICH RULES APPLY?

**Principle of passive confidentiality** — Member States have to take appropriate measures only if requested to do so by companies which feel that their interests would be harmed by publication of the data. This principle is recommended by the United Nations in its IMTS 2010 publication and set out in the EU legislation for **detailed statistics on intra- and extra-EU trade**. It has the great advantage of limiting the loss of information for users and thus making the data more useful.

**Principle of active confidentiality** — Under this principle, confidential data are automatically hidden by the national statistical authority if certain criteria are met, without the company needing to send a request. In ITGS, this principle applies only to the [data by enterprise characteristics](#) (i.e. by size, sector of economic activity or level of concentration).

**Criteria for granting confidentiality** — The choice of the criteria to be met by the company is left to the Member States. The most common criteria are the following:

- the number of companies on the market is limited, e.g. fewer than three companies contribute to a single data cell; or
- the company is in a dominant position on the market (by representing, for instance, at least 75 % of the total trade) or is at least an important stakeholder contributing to a single data cell.

Note that criteria are the same for granting or not the confidentiality under both principles, passive and active. The difference stands on whether or not the provider of the statistical information has to play an active role.

### 5.6.3. TO WHICH DATA ELEMENTS DOES CONFIDENTIALITY APPLY?

Confidentiality can apply to the product code and/or the partner country. Information about a product or partner may be considered commercially sensitive by the provider of the statistical information for the trade value, the quantity or the unit value (value/quantity) which can be considered a proxy for the price.

When confidentiality is granted, data are hidden at the detailed level, which means that the trade is not allocated to the real product code and/or the real partner. It is nevertheless included in the total trade of the Member State and even, wherever possible, allocated to the real chapter (i.e. to the real HS2 code). This minimum level of provision is set out in the EU legislation: 'Member States shall

transmit data declared confidential to Eurostat so that they may be published at least at chapter level of the CN provided confidentiality is thereby ensured’.

#### 5.6.4. HOW DOES CONFIDENTIALITY APPLY TO PARTNER COUNTRIES?

The real partner country code is replaced by a specific code used for ‘countries and territories not specified for commercial or military reasons’. A distinction is made between intra-EU trade (code QY) and extra-EU trade (code QZ). The example below illustrates how confidential partners can be hidden. In this example, the trade with Germany and Japan is confidential and so hidden when the data are published.

Examples of partner country confidentiality

Partner code and label		Values declared	Public values
<b>DE</b>	Germany	1 000	0
<b>IT</b>	Italy	500	500
<b>JP</b>	Japan	3 000	0
<b>CA</b>	Canada	200	200
<b>QY</b>	Countries and territories not specified for commercial or military reasons in the framework of intra-EU trade	0	1 000
<b>QZ</b>	Countries and territories not specified for commercial or military reasons in the framework of extra-EU trade	0	3 000
<b>1010</b>	Intra-EU trade		1 500
<b>1011</b>	Extra-EU trade		3 200

#### 5.6.5. HOW DOES PRODUCT CONFIDENTIALITY APPLY? <sup>REV</sup>

The real product code is replaced by a specific code dedicated to confidential trade. The EU legislation requires disseminating at least the real chapter (i.e. the real HS2 code) provided confidentiality is thereby ensured. It is therefore only in exceptional cases that confidential trade is disseminated under chapter 99.

In complement to the chapter minimum legal requirement, it is recommended to keep maximum information on the goods by indicating, wherever possible without disclosing the confidentiality, the real HS4 or HS6 code and/or the real SITC code at one-, two- or three-digit level.

In Eurostat database (Comext), the ‘confidential’ eight-digit codes are identified by the letter ‘S’ indicated between the third and the eighth position.

##### Examples:

17SSS061	Confidential information about trade in Chapter 17 ‘Sugars and sugar confectionery’ and in SITC group 061 ‘Sugars, molasses and honey’
17SSS999	Confidential information about trade in Chapter 17 ‘Sugars and sugar confectionery’ and in unknown SITC group
3004S541	Confidential information about trade in HS4 code 3004 ‘Medicaments (excluding goods of heading 3002, 3005 or 3006) consisting of mixed or unmixed products for

	therapeutic or prophylactic uses, put up in measured doses (including those in the form of transdermal administration systems) or in forms or packings for retail sale' and in SITC group 541 'Medicinal and pharmaceutical products, other than medicaments of group 542'
30SS541	Confidential information about trade in Chapter 30 'Pharmaceutical products' and in SITC group 541 'Medicinal and pharmaceutical products, other than medicaments of group 542'
2711S34S	Confidential information about trade in HS4 code 2711 'Petroleum gases and other gaseous hydrocarbons' and in SITC group 34 'gas, natural and manufactured'
2711S999	Confidential information about trade in HS4 code 2711 'Petroleum gases and other gaseous hydrocarbons' and in unknown SITC group
840734SS	Confidential information about trade in HS6 code 8407°34 'Of a cylinder capacity exceeding 1000 cm <sup>3</sup> '
8407S713	Confidential information about trade in HS4 code 8407 'Spark-ignition reciprocating or rotary internal combustion piston engines' and in SITC group 713 'Internal combustion piston engines and parts thereof, n.e.s.'
84SS5713	Confidential information about trade in Chapter 84 'Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof' and in SITC group 713 'Internal combustion piston engines and parts thereof, n.e.s.'
99SS541	Confidential information about SITC group 541 'Medicinal and pharmaceutical products, other than medicaments of group 542'
99SS999	Confidential information, unknown product

## 5.7. What data are sent to Eurostat and when?

Once data have been collected, checked and processed by the Member States, they are sent to Eurostat.

The **Intrastat legislation** requires Member States to provide Eurostat with:

- monthly aggregated data (for each flow: total intra-EU trade value and, for Member States belonging to the euro area (EA) only, total intra-EA trade value plus total extra-EA trade value broken down by 1-digit SITC code) no later than 40 days after the end of the reference month;
- monthly detailed data by 8-digit CN code no later than 70 days after the end of the reference month; and
- annual data by enterprise characteristics no later than 18 months after the end of the reference year.

The **Extrastat legislation** requires Member States to provide Eurostat with:

- monthly detailed data by 10-digit codes for imports (8 first digits corresponding to the CN subheadings and 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> digits to further subdivisions used for the application of EU measures concerning imports) and by 8-digit codes (CN subheading) for exports within 40 days after the end of the reference month;
- detailed annual data by enterprise characteristics (i.e. by size, sector of economic activity or level of concentration) within 18 months after the end of the reference year; and
- aggregated annual data by invoicing currency within three months after the end of the reference year but only once every two years (first transmission: 2010 data by 31 March 2011; second transmission: 2012 data by 31 March 2013, etc.).

## 5.8. When are data revised and considered as final?

International trade in goods statistics, like many published statistics, must balance the need for timely information with the need for accuracy. The detailed data sent for a given month are subject to the possibility of later revision as a consequence of errors, omissions or — particularly with the Intrastat system — late declarations by the providers of the statistical information. When monthly results already sent to Eurostat are subject to revision at national level, revised results are to be transmitted no later than the month after they become available.

Data are revised frequently according to national needs and practices. However, Member States should provide Eurostat with final detailed data at the latest by October following the reference year. At that time data become 'final' and should not be revised further except in exceptional and well-justified cases.

The impact of a revision will depend very much on the data user and what use they make of the data. To aid both the monitoring of revisions and users' understanding of their impact, Eurostat and Member States have agreed on thresholds to define different levels of revision at the aggregate level.

Metadata reports are published each month showing the revision to EU and euro area aggregates and to individual Member State data. The reports show how much the data have changed since their previous publication ('Subsequent data publications') as well as since they were first published ('first and last data publications'). The reports contain explanations of the agreed revision levels and indicate for individual Member States which level the revision is classified as. The latest version of those reports can be found on the ['Focus on Comext'](#) page of the 'International trade in goods' section on Eurostat website.

All the latest revisions sent by the Member States are included in the monthly updates.

## 5.9. What are the main reasons for revising data?

Revisions are made to improve data quality. They generally aim at correcting erroneous data, improving the completeness of the data (by limiting data omissions) and replacing estimates by collected data.

Revisions may also occur as a result of implementing new estimation methods. In ITGS, data are estimated when not collected because of:

- simplification provisions: intra-EU trade below the Intrastat exemption threshold, statistical value and net mass in intra-EU trade;
- failure by the providers of the statistical information: missing or partial Intrastat declarations or partial or incomplete records in customs declarations; or
- missing information from traditional data sources: trade in gas and electricity for which the quantity is collected via statistical declarations or additional data sources but the statistical value needs to be estimated. The partner country may also be subject to adjustments in order to apply the general definition (country of destination for exports, country of consignment for intra-EU imports and country of origin for extra-EU imports).

Finally, revisions may occur when new legal provisions are not fully implemented on time. Such cases are exceptional and represent non-compliance with the EU legislation.

Note that the practice in balance of payments statistics of re-compiling time series when methodological changes occur does not apply in ITGS. Changes in concept and definitions introduced by new legal provisions on intra- and extra-EU trade in goods apply only to future reference periods.

## 5.10. What data does Eurostat compile?

Most trade in goods data published by Eurostat are compiled by the Member States, including the estimates for missing data. The only data compiled by Eurostat are the unit value and volume indices. Eurostat also seasonally adjusts some time series in connection with its monthly news release.

### 5.10.1. UNIT VALUE AND VOLUME INDICES

Data provided by Member States to Eurostat are in current prices, which are prices relevant to the reference period concerned. For several analyses it is satisfactory to work in those values and, if needed, to convert the series of values into an index form following a simple arithmetic operation.

However, the development over time of the value of trade flows is determined by both the quantities sold and price variations. For a number of analytical purposes it is then necessary to distinguish between these two elements and in particular to measure movements in the volume of trade estimated in the constant prices of some previous base years. It is therefore desirable to have some measure of how price movements in international trade have developed.

Information on values and related quantities is therefore taken from ITGS themselves to estimate a set of deflators which are then used to calculate unit value indices and derive estimates of volumes. Intra- and extra-EU trade statistics are used at their most detailed level — eight-digit CN subheadings by partner country — for calculating indices. The fluctuations in ‘unit values’, which are derived from current price values divided by quantities for each flow, are used as indicators of price variations.

Although the calculation system uses weights which are changed annually, for the convenience of users the published indices are based on reference years that are normally changed every five years. The current reference year for the unit value and volume indices is 2010. Data are available monthly as an index (2010=100) showing the percentage change from both the previous month and the same month of the previous year.

Unit value and volume indices are calculated for the various aggregates. Volume indices are also adjusted for working days and seasonal variations.

Indices are compiled separately for imports and exports. Trade flows ratio is also provided to show...

Unit value indices are available in euro, national currency for Member States not belonging to the euro area and US dollars. The first compilation step consists in compiling unit-value indices from trade values all expressed in euros. The indices in euro are then converted in national currencies and US dollars.

### 5.10.2. DATA ADJUSTED FOR WORKING DAYS AND SEASONAL COMPONENTS

Data provided by Member States to Eurostat are not adjusted for seasonal components or the number of working days. As with most economic data, however, interpretation of monthly or quarterly time series is made more difficult by regular seasonal fluctuations. For instance, trade in many agricultural products is highly seasonal and month to month fluctuations are often dominated by these seasonal factors. Monthly and quarterly data are also affected by the varying lengths of months (and in particular the number of working days they contain) and the effects of public holidays whose dates may change from year to year: Easter is the prime example.

One partial solution to the effects of seasonality on comparisons over time is to make comparisons only with the same month or quarter of the previous year. But this is not a completely satisfactory procedure since it cannot provide a proper measure of the fluctuations in an aggregate number through a year which does not equally depend on the fluctuations in the previous year.

To deal with this problem, a range of procedures has been devised to estimate and then remove the seasonal (including working day and holiday) effects from time series. The series on trade in goods are processed by the JDemetra+ tool developed by Eurostat. JDemetra+ carries out corrections for

working days and applies a method of seasonal adjustment known as SEATS. The parameters and the models are revised once a year. ARIMA and regression coefficients are updated for each monthly release. Under special circumstances, such as a sudden economic slowdown, seasonal factors may be frozen until changes can be properly incorporated into the model. A full technical discussion of the methods available and the criteria for the choice is available on the [Eurostat web page dedicated to seasonally adjusted data](#).

Series of values, as well as volume indices, are compiled as sets of raw series, as adjusted series to take the number of working days and seasonal variations into account, and as trends. Unit value indices are not adjusted for the number of working days and seasonal variations due to their modest seasonality.

All series are calculated from the same dataset taken at one point in time. As a consequence, for example, volume indices are equal to the value movements divided by the unit value indices. In addition, the more aggregated seasonally adjusted series are formed by the addition of their components (for example, the Member States' series comprise the aggregate data for the EU and the euro area).

All data adjusted for working days and seasonal components can be found under the '[International trade in goods – short-term indicators](#)' domain on the Eurostat website.

## 5.11. Conversion in other product nomenclatures <sup>New</sup>

Data provided by Member States to Eurostat are based on the Combined Nomenclature as regards the classification of the goods. However, Eurostat disseminates data according to other product nomenclatures:

- the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC);
- the Classification of Products by Activity (CPA);
- the Broad Economic Activities (BEC); and
- the classification of goods for transport statistics NSTR/Rev.1.

All classifications and correspondence tables are available on Eurostat's metadata server [RAMON](#).



# 6

## Data quality

### 6.1. Accuracy

#### 6.1.1. HOW ACCURATE ARE ITGS?

As in all statistical work, a balance has to be struck between the resources devoted to checking and the likely benefit. With many millions of individual data elements forming the basis of trade statistics it is impossible to achieve complete accuracy. This leads to two important recommended actions for users:

- The first is to become aware of the margin of inaccuracies in the data used. This is particularly important for the commodity codes. The structure of the Combined Nomenclature is detailed and, while it is supported by very precise explanatory notes, choosing the right code is not always easy. A further major problem which may lead to inaccurate statistics, and that is certainly a constraint on the use of detailed data, is the practice of hiding confidential information.
- The second recommendation for users of detailed information is that they should consider themselves part of the checking procedure. In practice they will often have specialist knowledge that allows them to assess the plausibility of published data. Eurostat and the national statistical authorities generally welcome any comment on data they publish.

#### 6.1.2. HOW IS DATA QUALITY CHECKED AND MONITORED?

The prime responsibility for assuring the accuracy of the published trade data rests with national statistical authorities. They have access to the detailed data, often at the individual transaction level, which facilitates many checking procedures. They are in contact with the traders to follow up incorrect or doubtful declarations and ask for clarification or correction if needed. Some checks are quite basic. They ensure that declarations have been fully completed, the codes entered are valid and the correct units have been used. Other checks are more sophisticated and assess the plausibility of the basic data, and sometimes of aggregates, both in themselves and in comparison with other variables (for example past data).

Further checks are carried out by Eurostat each month, essentially to ensure that the requested data have been communicated satisfactorily. Eurostat has also developed a data quality monitoring system, as required by the legislation, to ensure that the ITGS meets a high quality standard. Under this, the Member States are required to document their methods and practices and provide Eurostat annually with a set of quality indicators. A summary quality report focusing on the key quality indicators and covering all the Member States is prepared and published by Eurostat annually.

Mirror exercises are other types of checks which can be carried out under the auspices of Eurostat or by Member States. The aim is to compare trade flows between two countries as measured by both of them (comparison of country A's exports to country B with country B's imports from country A). This is a useful method for identifying recurring problem areas which may result from errors in reporting or from methodological differences.

### 6.1.3. WHAT ARE THE MAIN CAUSES OF ERRORS IN REPORTING?

Errors often arise when trying to capture movements of goods or trade activities about which little information is available or which are inherently complex to measure, such as:

- **Goods that by their nature are difficult to classify** — Errors may arise in the product code allocated due to the complexity of the classification (around 9500 subheadings in the CN), for instance for chemical or pharmaceutical products.
- **Processing trade valuation** — Errors arise when the processing costs are reported rather than the trade value corresponding to the total amount which would be invoiced if the goods were sold or bought.
- **Product with embedded services** — Errors arise when the total amount of the contract (transaction including the supply of goods and services) is reported rather than the value of the goods alone.
- **Repairs versus processing** — Repairs should be excluded from trade in goods statistics but processing should be included. Errors may arise when the distinction between repairs and processing is difficult to make.
- **Quasi transit** — Intrastat declarations may be missing for goods imported from a non-EU country for immediate dispatch to another Member State or goods imported from another Member State for immediate dispatch to a non-EU country.
- **Triangular trade** — trade involving three Member States through sales/purchase contracts but with physical movement of goods between only two of them. A problem arises when the trade is reported according to the sales/purchase contract rather than the physical movement.

### 6.1.4. WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF QUASI-TRANSIT OR THE SO-CALLED 'ROTTERDAM EFFECT'?

Trade flows of the EU Member States may be overvalued because of the quasi-transit trade. However the trade balance of the concerned Member State is not impacted as the quasi-transit should increase by the same amount as the intra- and extra-EU trade flows (extra-EU imports followed by dispatches to the Member State of actual destination or arrivals from the Member State of actual export followed by extra-EU exports to the country of actual destination).

The quasi-transit is known to impact mostly the Member States with big ports at the external border to the European Union and in particular the Netherlands. This is why its impact on figures is known as the 'Rotterdam effect'. In case of imports, the goods destined to other EU Member States arriving in Dutch ports are recorded, according to Community rules, as extra-EU imports by the Netherlands (the country where goods are released for free circulation) and as dispatches from the Netherlands to the Member States of actual destination even though there is no link with economy of the Netherlands.

The quasi-transit is known to impact more the imports but exports are also affected. In exceptional cases, the customs clearance occurs not in the actual Member State of export but in the Member State of exit, i.e. in the Member State from which the goods are taken out of the EU customs territory.

### 6.1.5. WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE INTRASTAT SIMPLIFICATION MEASURES?

The Intrastat legislation completely exempts traders with a low intra-EU trade value from any statistical reporting or allows the collection of simplified information. Member States nevertheless have to achieve the coverage rate required by the legislation: data must be collected directly from traders for 97% of the dispatches in value and 93% of the arrivals (95% before 2014). The data not collected must be estimated but not at the most detailed level. The EU legislation states that estimates are to be allocated at least by chapter (HS2 codes) and partner Member States.

Member States may also decide not to collect the statistical value of goods. In such cases, the statistical value is to be estimated by the national statistical authority. In general, estimates are based on additional information like the delivery terms or the mode of transport. The information needed may also be collected through trader surveys.

Traders may also be given the possibility to report simplified information for small transactions below EUR 200.

Finally the net mass may not be collected for goods allocated to CN8 codes with a supplementary unit like the litre or the number of pieces. The net mass not collected is to be estimated by the Member States.

All these measures affect the data accuracy at the most detailed level, but full coverage of trade is still ensured. This amounts to a trade-off between data accuracy and the burden on businesses.

## 6.2. Comparability over space, over time and across domains

### 6.2.1. WHY DO ASYMMETRIES ALWAYS EXIST?

Asymmetries occur when the declaration of the importer in country A is not consistent with the declaration of the exporter in country B. Asymmetries come either from errors in reporting or from differences in the concepts and definitions applied by the partner countries. Some of the asymmetries of a methodological nature could disappear thanks to further harmonisation in national practices; others will continue as they are linked to basic principles for compiling ITGS which are unlikely to change (e.g. CIF/FOB valuation).

### 6.2.2. WHAT ARE THE METHODOLOGICAL CAUSES OF ASYMMETRIES?

The most common causes of methodological asymmetries are the following:

- **simplified product reporting** — Where the EU legislation allows simplified codification of goods for certain transactions, some Member States apply the simplifications but others do not;
- **Only export/dispatches to be reported** in the case of supplies to ships and aircraft;
- **different approaches to estimating or compiling trade data** for specific goods and movements not covered by customs or statistical declarations, such as gas, electricity, vessels or aircraft;
- **confidentiality** — It is possible that data are considered confidential by only one of the two partners. However, the application of the confidentiality procedures should not impact the results at total trade level;
- **time lag** — The same operation can be recorded under a different reference period because of transport times or processing delays;
- **CIF/FOB valuation** — Imports are valued on a CIF basis and exports on a FOB basis. This causes a systematic asymmetry as the value of the imports should then be higher than the value of the mirror exports;
- **differences in methods** and data used to estimate missing trade;
- **different practices in the treatment of revisions;**
- **currency conversion;** and
- **other methodological differences** such as definition of partner country, definition of statistical territory, trade system (special or general).

Users should be aware of these possible causes of asymmetry. Comparison of the sources selected may also be affected by other factors such as how old, how detailed or how up to date the information available is. It is worth noting that Eurostat's database is based on a monthly data flow that allows revisions to be included on a regular basis.

### 6.2.3. WHY IS THE INTRA-EU TRADE BALANCE NOT EQUAL TO ZERO?

Considering that the intra-EU trade data are based on common and largely harmonised rules, one might expect the intra-EU trade balance to be zero or at least close to it. However, it is worth underlining that a perfect match is made impossible first of all by the CIF/FOB approach: the import value should be higher than the mirror export value as it includes extra transport costs. A close match could nevertheless be legitimately expected given that trading partners within the EU are often neighbouring countries, but deliveries to vessels and aircraft are another methodological reason preventing this: such movements of goods create asymmetries in intra-EU ITGS as specific legal provisions state that only dispatches are to be reported.

At global level, most methodological reasons for asymmetries disappear. The remaining issues are in data reporting (e.g. missing Intrastat declarations, trade in specific goods like sea-going vessels and aircraft not being properly captured).

### 6.2.4. WHY ARE BREAKS IN TIME SERIES UNAVOIDABLE?

Periodic changes in concepts and definitions are necessary to meet user needs. When such changes occur, time series are recompiled backwards to the extent possible but breaks cannot always be avoided.

The continuity of ITGS time series has been affected by the following changes:

- 2017** Combined Nomenclature impacted by the fifth revision of the Harmonised System
- 2014** For intra-EU imports, minimum coverage from collected data reduced from 95 % to 93 % of total trade value
- 2013** Change in the definition of intra- and extra-EU trade due to Croatia's EU accession on 1 July 2013
- 2012** Combined Nomenclature impacted by the fourth revision of the Harmonised System
- 2010** Introduction of the concept of change in economic ownership to record trade in vessels and aircraft and determine the partner country allocation for sea products and deliveries to vessels and aircraft (based on the economic ownership of the vessels/aircraft)  
Reporting Member State and partner country for goods delivered to and from offshore installations determined by the exclusive rights of a country to exploit seabed or subsoil of the area (exclusive economic zone) where the offshore installation is established  
Estimates for non-collected net mass made mandatory
- 2009** For intra-EU imports, minimum coverage from collected data reduced from 97 % to 95 % of total trade value
- 2007** Change in the definition of intra- and extra-EU trade due to the EU accession of Bulgaria and Romania on 1 January 2007  
Combined Nomenclature impacted by the third revision of the Harmonised System
- 2006** Repairs excluded from the scope of extra-EU trade  
Collection of net mass in Intrastat no longer mandatory if a supplementary quantity is collected

<b>2005</b>	Repairs excluded from the scope of intra-EU trade Collection of net mass in Intrastat no longer mandatory for a specific list of CN8 codes for which a supplementary quantity is collected
<b>2004</b>	Change in the definition of intra- and extra-EU trade due to the EU accession of the Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia on 1 May 2004
<b>2002</b>	Combined Nomenclature impacted by the second revision of the Harmonised System
<b>1996</b>	Combined Nomenclature impacted by the first revision of the Harmonised System

### 6.2.5. WHY CAN EUROPEAN DATA DIFFER FROM NATIONAL DATA?

Discrepancies between Eurostat data and national data may exist due to the application of different concepts and definitions. The table below shows the methodological discrepancies by Member State.

When there is no methodological reason for discrepancies, it should nevertheless be kept in mind that data revisions may also alter the comparability of European and national data, at least for a transitional period. According to the EU legislation, revised data should be communicated to Eurostat within one month each time a revision occurs at national level.

Methodological differences between European statistics and national statistics

	General Trade System	Exclusion of quasi transit	Inclusion of repairs	Country of origin	Other <sup>(1)</sup>
Belgium		*			*
Bulgaria		*		*	
Czech Republic				*	
Denmark	*	*			
Germany				*	*
Estonia					*
Ireland	*		*	*	
Greece					
Spain	*			*	*
France				*	*
Croatia		*			
Italy					
Cyprus	*				
Latvia		*			
Lithuania					
Luxembourg		*	*		
Hungary		*			*
Malta	*	*		*	
Netherlands		*			
Austria		*		*	*
Poland		*		*	
Portugal					
Romania					
Slovenia		*			*
Slovakia		*		*	*
Finland				*	
Sweden					
United Kingdom	*	*	*		*

(<sup>1</sup>) The other conceptual differences are the following:

Belgium	Returned goods are excluded from national statistics.
Germany	Additional statistical procedures are included in national statistics.
Estonia	Extra-EU imports at national level are by country of consignment.
Spain	Ceuta and Melilla are included in national statistics.
France	Goods delivered to sea-going vessels and aircraft are excluded from national statistics.
Hungary	Extra-EU imports at national level are by country of consignment.
Austria	Goods covered by Single Authorisation for Simplified Procedures (SASP) are included in national statistics.
Slovenia	Trade by non-residents which is not connected with activity on the Slovenian market is excluded from national statistics.
Slovakia	Import data are valued on a FOB basis.
United Kingdom	Extra-EU imports at national level are by country of consignment; non-monetary gold is excluded from national statistics until December 2013 as reference month.

Source: Member States' national quality reports

### 6.3. Why do ITGS differ from trade in goods in BoP and national accounts?

Although most Member States compile the goods account of their balance of payments from their ITGS, adjustments need to be made to meet the different definitions. In practice, these adjustments aim to convert trade in goods statistics to the basis required for the national accounts. This is because flows of goods and services are defined, in terms of coverage, in virtually identical fashion in the manuals relating to national accounts and balance of payments.

The adjustments needed address differences in coverage, the treatment of particular operations, the valuation of transactions (conversion of import value from CIF to FOB) and the time the transactions are recorded. In addition, as already mentioned, some Member States make adjustments to deal with the incomplete coverage of their trade statistics.

These adjustments are not discussed further in this guide but are set out in the publication '[Differences between Balance of Payments and Foreign Trade Statistics](#)'. It should, however, be stressed that it is necessary to distinguish carefully between the two methods of calculation to avoid confusion and to note that ITGS provide the most suitable dataset for the measurement of physical flows of goods.

### 6.4. Where can I find more information on the quality of European ITGS?

It should be underlined that 'quality' does not cover only the accuracy and comparability of the statistics but also their relevance, timeliness, punctuality, clarity, accessibility and coherence. All the different quality dimensions are covered exhaustively by the [Quality Report on European statistics on international trade in goods](#). The purpose of this report is to provide users with information on the different factors affecting statistics so that they can assess the data quality for themselves.

# 7

## Data publication

### 7.1. What classifications are used?

#### 7.1.1. COMBINED NOMENCLATURE AS PRIMARY PRODUCT CLASSIFICATION

The main classification for the European ITGS is the **Combined Nomenclature (CN)**. This is the primary nomenclature as it is the one used by the EU Member States to collect detailed data on their trading of goods.

The CN is based on the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System (managed by the World Customs Organisation (WCO)). The Harmonised System (HS) is an international classification at two, four and six-digit level which classifies goods according to their nature. It was introduced in 1988 and, since then, was revised five times: in 1996, 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017. It is usually revised every five years.

The CN corresponds to the HS plus a further breakdown at eight-digit level defined to meet EU needs. It includes around 9500 eight-digit codes and is subject to annual revisions that ensure it is kept up to date in the light of changes in technology or patterns of international trade in goods.

In Eurostat's dissemination, the CN is extended with some alphanumeric codes (see Annex 3) that cover confidential or estimated trade as well as trade for which a breakdown at 8-digit level is not possible because of simplification measures.

#### 7.1.2. OTHER PRODUCT CLASSIFICATIONS

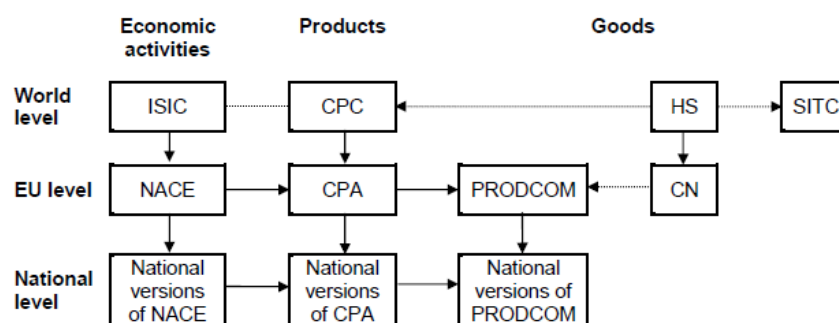
Eurostat manages correspondence tables enabling the transposition of data collected according to the Combined Nomenclature into other classifications like the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), the Classification of Products by Activity (CPA), the Broad Economic Activities (BEC) or the classification of goods for transport statistics NSTR/Rev.1. All classifications and correspondence tables are available on Eurostat's metadata server [RAMON](#).

**Standard  
International Trade  
Classification  
(SITC), Revision 4**

This classification is used to provide aggregated data (short-term and long-term indicators). The SITC (managed by the United Nations) is correlated with the subheadings of the Harmonised System. Aggregated data on trade are often presented in the one- and two-digit categories of the SITC. An example of a one-digit category (section) is 'chemical products' and of a two-digit category (division) 'medicinal and pharmaceutical products'. SITC Rev. 4 was accepted by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its thirty-seventh session (March 2006). It comprises 2 970 basing headings which are amalgamated into 262 groups, 67 divisions and 10 sections.

<b>Broad Economic Categories (BEC)</b>	This classification is used to provide aggregated data (short-term indicators). The BEC (also managed by the United Nations) permits the conversion of international trade data based on the SITC into end-use categories. The BEC has 19 basic categories that can be aggregated to approximate the three basic classes of goods (capital, intermediate and consumption goods). This enables trade statistics to be considered jointly with other sets of general economic statistics — such as national accounts and industrial statistics — for national, regional or global economic analysis.
<b>Classification of Products by Activity (CPA)</b>	The CPA is a European version of the United Nations' Central Product Classification (CPC), but arranged so that each product heading is assignable to a single heading of the European activity classification, the NACE Rev. 2. CPA enables trade statistics to be considered jointly with other sets of general economic statistics — such as national accounts, employment statistics and industrial statistics — for productivity analysis, links with input-output tables and the impact of trade on employment.
<b>Nimexe</b>	Before the introduction of the Combined Nomenclature in 1988, ITGS were based on a product classification called Nimexe. This is no longer used but users may come across some historic series using this classification.
<b>NSTR-rev.1</b>	The 'Nomenclature uniforme des marchandises pour les Statistiques de Transport, Révisée' is used to publish detailed trade in goods data by mode of transport. This classification is used since 1 January 1989. It comprises 99 chapter headings and 10 sections.
<b>Other classifications</b>	Other classifications are often mapped to CN to produce data from a given economic perspective (e.g. high tech products).

The following schema illustrates how various international, European and national classifications relevant to trade statistics relate to each other. Each arrow indicates a relationship between a reference classification and a classification derived from it. Solid arrows show classifications linked by structure. Dotted arrows and lines show classifications linked through conversion tables.



Where:

**ISIC:** United Nations' International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities

**NACE:** Statistical classification of economic activities in the EU

**CPC:** United Nations' Central Product Classification

**CPA:** European Classification of Products by Activity

**HS:** Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System, managed by the World Customs Organisation

**CN:** Combined Nomenclature, the European classification of goods used for trade in goods statistics

**SITC:** United Nations' Standard International Trade Classification, an international classification of goods used for trade in goods statistics

**PRODCOM:** Classification of goods used for statistics on industrial production in the EU

Source: [CPA 2008 Introductory guidelines](#)



### 7.1.3. GEONOMENCLATURE AS COUNTRY CLASSIFICATION

The ‘Nomenclature of countries and territories for the external trade statistics of the Community and statistics of trade between Member States’, known as the ‘**Geonomenclature**’, is used to collect and disseminate trade in goods data. It is the only country nomenclature used in Eurostat publications to identify both the reporting country and the partner country.

The Geonomenclature is managed by Eurostat. It is subject to periodic revision to take account of geopolitical changes. Every country — EU Member States and non-EU countries — is identified on the basis of two-letter alphabetical codes. Eurostat has also defined geographical zones including North America, the Near and Middle East, Oceania and the Polar regions. The geographic zones cover the whole world without overlaps. Countries can also be grouped by common economic features (e.g. EU, euro area, EFTA countries). The evolution of this nomenclature takes into account the tariff policy needs of the European Union. Consequently it may differ from other international geographical classifications.

### 7.1.4. NACE AS CLASSIFICATION BY ACTIVITY

The Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community, commonly referred to as NACE, is used to produce detailed data by enterprise characteristics (i.e. by size, sector of economic activity or level of concentration).

NACE was introduced in 1993. It is the classification by activities used in the EU. It is derived from the United Nations’ International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC) but is more detailed.

NACE is correlated with CPA: each CPA product — whether transportable or non-transportable goods or services — is assigned to one single NACE activity. This linkage to NACE activities gives the CPA a structure parallel to that of NACE at all levels. It allows trade in goods data to be presented by activity sector. However, results of transformations from product to activity classification should be interpreted with caution given that any business belonging to a given NACE code can produce goods belonging to another CPA code (for example, a hotel that provides restaurant services). The trade by enterprise characteristics (TEC) datasets show the results of combining NACE- and CN-based data.

## 7.2. What is the difference between ‘aggregated’ and ‘detailed’ published data?

The difference mainly stands on the nomenclature used to classify the traded goods and on its level of details. Moreover aggregated data include special compilations of data like indices and seasonally adjusted data

**Aggregated data** refer to macroeconomic indicators for the EU and euro area. Data are aggregated by broad product categories, both monthly (**short-term indicators**) and annually (**long-term indicators**). Broad product categories are defined as one-digit codes of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) or aggregates (CAP: capital goods, INT: intermediate goods, CNS: consumption goods and CTR: consumption goods plus motor spirit and passenger motor cars) of the Broad Economic Categories (BEC).

**Detailed data** refer to the most detailed level of the following product nomenclatures: the Combined Nomenclature (CN), the SITC, the BEC, the Classification of Products by Activity (CPA) and the Standard Goods Classification for Transport Statistics/Revised (NSTR). Detailed data also contain aggregations at higher levels.

### 7.3. Which indicators are available for aggregated data?

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Short-term indicators</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gross and seasonally adjusted value (in million euro) for exports, imports and trade balances;</li> <li>• growth rates for exports and imports based on gross and seasonally adjusted values</li> <li>• unit-value indices;</li> <li>• gross and seasonally adjusted volume indices;</li> <li>• ratio of export and import indices; and</li> <li>• growth rates for gross and seasonally adjusted indices.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Long-term indicators</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trade value (in billion euro);</li> <li>• shares by reporting country or by main trading partners;</li> <li>• unit-value indices;</li> <li>• volume indices; and</li> <li>• shares by invoicing currency.</li> </ul>  |

### 7.4. Which indicators are available for detailed data?

- trade value (in euros);
- trade quantity (in kilograms); and
- trade quantity in supplementary units like, for example, litres or square metres (published for some goods according to the Combined Nomenclature).

### 7.5. What are the basic statistical fields?

Eurostat publishes ITGS through different datasets. The frequency at which the data are compiled (data periodicity) and the product nomenclature differ depending on the dataset, but the following statistical fields are always available:

- reporting country: country or geo-economic area such as EU-28 or euro area;
- reference period: month or year;
- trade flows: import and export;
- product according to the relevant classification; and
- partner country: EU Member State, non-EU country or geo-economic area.

### 7.6. What additional statistical information is available?

#### 7.6.1. STATISTICAL PROCEDURE MORE

In extra-EU trade, goods may be transferred from a Member State to a non-EU country, or the other way round, under customs control, and then return to the country of departure. EU legislation requires these movements to be classified under specific statistical procedures derived from customs

procedures. For instance, this breakdown allows users to distinguish, for a given imported product, the share of the import which is transformed and re-exported and the share which is imported definitively.

Prior to any analysis and interpretation, it should be noted that the application of a procedure is independent of the nature of the transaction concerned (purchase/sale, processing under contract, etc.). In particular, some of the goods traded for processing, in the more general economic sense of the term, are included under normal imports and exports.

The different statistical procedures are the following:

- **Code 1 — normal imports and exports** are mainly goods exported definitively, or released into free circulation, either directly or via a customs warehouse.
- **Code 2 — The inward processing procedure** makes it possible to import goods temporarily so that they can be processed (transformed) and then to export the resulting products, while benefiting from an exemption from duties, levies or checks which would be carried out under the trade policy normally applicable to imported goods. Data are available separately on (i) imports for inward processing and (ii) exports after inward processing. Note that code 2 has replaced codes 5 'Inward processing (suspension)' and 6 'Inward processing (drawback)' from January 2010 as reference period.
- **Code 3 — The outward processing procedure** makes it possible to export goods temporarily for processing and to import the resulting products with a full or partial exemption from duties and levies. Data are available separately on (i) imports after outward processing and (ii) exports for outward processing.
- **Code 9 — The 'not recorded from customs declaration' procedure** relates solely to **imports or exports** for which the customs declaration is not the data source. It is especially relevant under the 'specific movements' provisions, for example on sea-going vessels and aircraft, where the flows relate to the change of economic owner (and not the physical movement as is generally the case) and the data are therefore obtained from data sources other than customs declarations.

### Tip for Comext users

Codes 5 'Inward processing (suspension)' and 6 'Inward processing (drawback)' were closed in December 2009 to be replaced by code 2 'inward processing'. Code 7 'Economic processing arrangements for textiles' was also closed in December 2009.

Users interested in getting total trade values whatever the reference period should aggregate all statistical procedure codes from 1 to 9 (including so codes 5, 6 and 7). There will be no double counting as there is no code overlapping.

### 7.6.2. MODE OF TRANSPORT MORE

Trade data by mode of transport are very important for many purposes, including formulation of transportation policy, monitoring of international transport routes and assessment of the impact of trade on the environment.

#### Definitions

- For extra-EU trade, the mode of transport corresponds to the active means of transport (e.g. road, rail, sea) by which, on export, the goods are presumed to have left the statistical territory of the European Union and, on import, the goods are presumed to have entered the statistical territory of the European Union.
- For intra-EU trade, the mode of transport corresponds to the active means of transport by which, on dispatch, the goods leave the national statistical territory of the exporting Member State and, on arrival, the goods enter the national statistical territory of the importing Member State.

### Data availability

- For extra-EU trade, data by mode of transport are available from January 1999 according to the 'Nomenclature uniforme des marchandises pour les Statistiques de Transport, Révisée' (NSTR) and from January 2000 according to the Harmonised System (HS6, HS4 and HS2 codes). Note that data relating to the EU aggregate correspond to the aggregation of the extra-EU trade values (in euros) and quantities (in tonnes and 100 kg) reported by the EU Member States.
- For intra-EU trade, data by mode of transport are only partially available due to the fact that not every EU Member State collects the information. Data are available for the following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia.

### Codification

The different modes of transport are the following:

- Code 1 = Sea transport
- Code 2 = Rail transport
- Code 3 = Road transport
- Code 4 = Air transport
- Code 5 = Postal consignment
- Code 7 = Fixed transport installations
- Code 8 = Inland waterway transport
- Code 9 = Own propulsion.

NB: Code 0 is reported when the mode is unknown or not applicable.

**More on code 5 'Postal consignment'** — Code 5 is reported in cases where the means of transport is unknown and goods are transferred by a postal service, i.e. postal operators authorised by a Member State to provide services governed by the Universal Postal Union Convention. Goods transported by private courier services are also included into this category in cases where the active means of transport is unknown.

**More on code 7 'Fixed transport installations'** — Code 7 applies to installations for continuous transport such as pipelines or electric power lines.

**More on code 9 'Own propulsion'** — Code 9 applies to means of transport (mainly aircraft and ships) which are themselves the subject of the trade transaction and cross the border under their own propulsion. In cases where these means of transport are carried on other means of transport (e.g. lorries, vessels, trains), the code corresponding to the other means of transport is reported.

### 7.6.3. ELIGIBILITY AND TARIFF REGIMES <sup>MORE</sup>

Imports by tariff regime are of particular interest to users monitoring trade policies and looking for information on the share of duty-free imports and/or preferential imports into the EU. Tariff preferences are applied to extra-EU imports with, in particular, a distinction made between the most favoured nation (MFN) tariffs and preferential ones.

Goods can be imported into the EU under different trade regimes depending on the product and the country of origin. The main trade regime is the MFN which applies, in principle, to all countries. But there are other regimes that provide a specific country or group of countries with a preferential tariff for all or part of their products. The best known is the [Generalised System of Preferences for developing countries](#) but there are also other [bilateral or multilateral agreements](#).

To provide information on the share of duty-free and/or preferential imports into the EU from a theoretical and practical perspective, data are presented under two classifications: the **Eligibility** and **Tariff regime**. The cross-tabulation of these classifications provides data from both perspectives,

showing which regime the goods could be imported under (MFN or preferential) and which regime/duty they were actually imported under (zero, non-zero). It could be the case that EU importers do not ask for benefitting from preferences because they are not informed or they do not dispose of the certificate of origin or, considering the small value of the import, they prefer to pay the normal rate — no preference or MFN rate — instead of producing administrative documents.

**Eligibility** The eligibility reflects the tariff status as indicated in the TARIC database on the first day of each month. NB: Changes occurring during the course of the month are not taken into account.

Eligibility codes in the Comext database are the following:

- E1 = ONLY MFN (MFN rate equal to zero or no preference)
- E7 = GSP AND/OR PREFERENCES (GSP and/or Preferences and MFN non zero)
- EZ = UNKNOWN

**Tariff regime or Use** The tariff regime (or use) reflects the preference as reported in data transmitted by the Member States to Eurostat (source: customs declarations, box 36 of the Single Administrative Document) combined with the duty rate and possibly adjusted.

Tariff regime codes in the Comext database are the following:

- U10 = MFN ZERO
- U11 = MFN NON-ZERO
- U70 = ANY PREFERENCE ZERO
- U71 = ANY PREFERENCE NON ZERO
- UZZ = UNKNOWN

The tariff regime is adjusted in order to correct any inconsistencies like, for instance, a request of GSP tariff rate for imports from USA. The following adjustments apply:

- When the product is eligible for 'MFN zero' rate, 'GSP zero' and 'Preference zero' are converted into the tariff regime 'MFN zero';
- When the combination of eligibility and reported preference is most likely to be wrong, the tariff regime becomes 'Unknown';

#### 7.6.4. GSP TRADE FOR GRADUATIONS

The new dataset on graduation is of particular interest to users monitoring trade policies and looking for information on product graduation under the GSP Regulation.

Pursuant to the Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council (GSP Regulation), the tariff preferences of the general arrangement of the Generalised Scheme of Tariff Preferences ('GSP') are suspended ("graduation"), in respect of products of a GSP section originating in a GSP beneficiary country, when the average value of Union imports of such products over three consecutive years from that GSP beneficiary country exceeds the product graduation thresholds. The graduation thresholds set by the GSP Regulation for 2014-2017 are 14.5% for textiles and articles of apparel and clothing accessories ("textiles") and 17.5% for all other sections. The thresholds shall be calculated as a percentage of the total value of Union imports of the same products from all GSP beneficiary countries. Graduation takes place every three years. Commission Regulation 1213/2012 lists the GSP products and countries for which the tariff preferences have been suspended for the period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2016. More information can be found under this [link](#).

The dataset on graduation provides all the data needed to assess the status of all product sections in all GSP countries in light of the product graduation criteria of the GSP Regulation.

### 7.6.5. GSP TRADE FOR VULNERABILITY

The new dataset on vulnerability is of particular interest to users monitoring trade policies and looking for information on the vulnerability of trade partner countries for the purposes of the GSP Regulation.

The special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance (GSP+) provides additional tariff preferences to developing countries which are vulnerable when exporting to the EU. The GSP+ scheme supports these countries to assume the special burdens and responsibilities resulting from the ratification of 27 core international conventions on human and labour rights, environmental protection and good governance as well as from their effective implementation.

Pursuant to the Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council (GSP Regulation), a country is considered vulnerable in case of a lack of diversification and insufficient integration within the international trading system. The relevant provision (Annex VII) lays down that a vulnerable country means a country:

(a) of which, in terms of value, the seven largest GSP sections of its exports into the Union of GSP+ products represent more than the threshold of 75 % in value of its total GSP+ imports, as an average during the last three consecutive years; and

(b) of which the imports of GSP+ products into the Union represent less than the threshold of 6.5 % in value of the total imports into the Union of GSP+ products originating in GSP countries, as an average during the last three consecutive years.

More information can be found under this [link](#). The dataset on graduation provides all the data needed to assess the vulnerability of all GSP countries.

### 7.6.6. TRADE BY ENTERPRISE CHARACTERISTICS (TEC) <sup>MORE</sup>

TEC data combine ITGS with the characteristics of businesses actively engaged in importing and exporting such as size, sector of economic activity or level of concentration. This allows for deeper analysis of the impact of trade on employment, production and value added, essential in a globalised world where economies are increasingly interconnected.

The reporting of ITGS by enterprise characteristics requires Member States to produce a dataset independent of their monthly trade statistics. This requirement was included in the revised Intrastat and Extrastat Regulations that came into force from the reference years 2009 and 2010 respectively. Statistics on trade by enterprise characteristics are compiled once a year by linking intra- and extra-EU trade micro-data with [business register](#) data.

#### Available datasets

**1. Trade by activity sector and enterprise size class** — Trade by activity sector and employment size class shows the contributions of economic activities and size classes (measured in terms of number of employees) to total trade. This allows the impact of international trade on employment to be analysed and the importance of small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) to be estimated.

**2. Concentration of trade by activity** — International trade being typically dominated by a few businesses, this indicator shows the share of the total trade accounted for by the top 5, 10, 20, etc. companies.

**3. Trade by partner country and activity** — Trade by partner country shows how many companies were trading with certain partner countries or country zones, and the value they accounted for. This indicator enables the most typical export or import markets to be identified.

**4. Trade by number of partner countries and activity** — Trade by number of partner countries shows how geographically diversified the export markets are. For imports, it shows the number of countries from which goods are imported.

**5. Trade by commodity and activity** — Trade by commodity and activity sector allocates the trade of each commodity to the activity of the trading enterprise. This indicator shows which sectors were involved in the trading of each product group.

**6. Trade by type of trader** — This indicator provides information on how traders are involved in international trade. It shows the number of companies trading within only one flow or in both flows and the trade value these companies account for.

**7. Trade by type of ownership** — The type of ownership is referring to the concept of control and to affiliation of an enterprise. It indicates whether an enterprise is domestically or foreign controlled and, if domestically controlled, whether it has affiliates abroad or not. This indicator can be used to analyse the impact of globalisation on international trade and to estimate the importance of multinational companies for trade.

**8. Trade by export intensity** — Export intensity categorises enterprises according to the importance of foreign markets in their sales. It refers to the share of exports in total turnover.

**9. Trade by activity sector** — In comparison with indicator 1 on trade by activity and enterprise size class, this indicator provides more details on the activity sector (2- or 3-digit level) but does not contain information about the enterprise size.

**10. Trade by partner country and size class** — This indicator aims to give insights into the internationalisation of small- and medium sized enterprises. It complements indicator 3 on trade by partner country and activity by applying the same detailed breakdown of partner countries but categorising enterprises by size class instead of activity sector.

### Reporting countries

Data are available for all the **EU Member States** as well as for **Iceland** and **Norway** (from the reference year 2010 onwards).

Note that only datasets 1 to 5 are provided by all the reporting countries. The country coverage is partial for indicators 6 to 10 as the information is provided on a voluntary basis.

### Reference periods

- From 2009 as reference year for data relating to the intra-EU trade
- From 2010 as reference year for data relating to the extra-EU trade

Note that some data are already available from the reference year 2005 onwards but only for some Member States as they were provided on a voluntary basis.

### Timeliness

Annual data by enterprise characteristics shall be provided by the reporting countries to Eurostat no later than 18 months after the end of the reference year. This means that data relating to the reference year Y (e.g. 2014) shall be provided by 30 June Y+2 (e.g. June 2016). The transmitted data are disseminated by Eurostat with a time lag of a few months, i.e. usually by October.

### Classifications

- Geonomenclature as regards the countries
- NACE as regards the activities — NACE Rev 1.1 for data up to the reference year 2007 and according to NACE Rev. 2 for data for the reference year 2008 onwards
- CPA as regards the products

### Where to find everything on TEC data

All reference documents and relevant information on TEC data can be found on the '[Focus on enterprise characteristics \(TEC\)](#)' page of the 'International trade in goods' section on Eurostat website. In particular, the **Compilers guide on ITGS by enterprise characteristics** provides the necessary definitions, instructions and methodological guidance for the regular compilation of TEC statistics.

### 7.6.7. INVOICING CURRENCY

The invoicing currency is the currency in which the commercial invoice is drawn up. Data by invoicing currency can be used for instance to explore the use of the euro in the EU's international trade, to compare it with the role of the United States dollar (USD) or to analyse the role of the euro in the euro area and in the EU. These statistics are very useful to central banks, including the European Central Bank, for comparing the euro with other major international currencies. These data are also used by financial market segments or foreign investors.

Data are available

- by three product groups: Raw materials without oil (SITC sections 0-4, excluding division 33), Oil (SITC division 33) and Manufactured products (SITC sections 5-8)
- and by four currencies: euro, national currencies of EU Member States not belonging to the euro area, US dollar and 'other' (i.e. aggregated group of currencies of all non-EU countries except the United States).

Shares by invoicing currency are calculated, within each product group, on the total flow.

These statistics are compiled by Member States and provided to Eurostat once every two years. The first reference years for which statistics by invoicing currency are available are 2010, 2012 and 2014. The next reference years will be 2016, 2018 and so on.

Note that data by invoicing currency are made available as 'long-term indicators'. They can be found under this [link](#).

## 7.7. When are data updated?

- **Short-term indicators** are updated monthly on the date of the news release (about 46 days after the end of the reference month). The first release of short-term indicators is announced in advance in the [Release Calendar for Euro Indicators](#).
- **Long-term indicators** are updated generally twice a year — once when complete results are available for the last reference year (usually in March of the following year) and once when the annual data become more stable (towards the end of the following year).
- **Statistics by statistical procedure and mode of transport** are updated every month on the date of the news release. The **Easy Comext update calendar** can also be consulted on Eurostat website under the page '[Focus on COMEXT](#)'. In addition, the Comext database contains a separate dataset which is updated daily, giving users immediate access to the most recently revised data.
- **Statistics by tariff regime** are updated twice a year (usually in April and September). They include monthly data for the latest half-year.
- **Statistics for GSP countries** showing their share in EU imports (datasets on GSP trade for Graduations and Vulnerability) are updated monthly on the date of the news release. They include annual data since 2009.



- **Statistics by enterprise characteristics** are updated once a year (usually in October) with a new reference year. Historical data are exceptionally revised.
- **Statistics by invoicing currency** are updated every two years (usually in April) with a new reference year. Historical data are exceptionally revised.

## 7.8. Does Eurostat publish ITGS only for EU Member States?

Eurostat's mission is to be the leading provider of high quality statistics on Europe. Nevertheless, thanks to specific agreements, Eurostat also publishes trade in goods data for the non-EU countries listed below:

<b>EFTA countries</b>	Aggregated and detailed data are published monthly for Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.
<b>Candidate countries</b>	Aggregated and detailed data are published monthly for Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.  Note that datasets on candidate countries are extended to potential candidates, namely: Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo.
<b>Mediterranean countries</b>	Detailed data are published for Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia. Data are published monthly, except for those on the Occupied Palestinian Territory which are published annually.
<b>West Balkans countries</b>	Detailed data are published monthly for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia (up to June 2013), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

# 8

## Data access

Eurostat is responsible for publishing ITGS for the European Union and euro area to meet the needs of a wide spectrum of users. These range from businesses, media, universities and private individuals to other departments of the European Commission, other European institutions, national authorities and the European Central Bank.

As not every type of user needs the same tools to access data or is interested in the same products, Eurostat has designed a system directing users to the appropriate data sources and providing them with the information needed to understand and interpret the statistics.

All data, metadata and electronic publications are accessible free of charges via the Eurostat website.

### 8.1. How can I access data online?

The Eurostat website is the only place the European ITGS are published. The data are accessible through different paths, the main one being the 'Data' page of the 'International trade in goods' dedicated section.

The screenshot shows the Eurostat website interface. At the top, there is a breadcrumb trail: "European Commission > Eurostat > International trade in goods > Data". Below this is a navigation bar with tabs for "News", "Data", "Publications", "About Eurostat", and "Help". The "Data" tab is selected. The main content area is titled "INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN GOODS" and "DATA". It contains several sections: "Statistics illustrated", "Overview", "FAQ", "DATA" (with a red arrow pointing to it), "Main tables", "Database", "Focus on Comext", "Focus on enterprise characteristics (TEC)", "Methodology", "EU and national metadata", "Manuals and guidelines", "Quality monitoring", "Projects and studies", "Classifications", "Publications", "News releases", "Statistics Explained", "Legislation", and "Links". The "DATA" section is expanded, showing text about "Main tables", "Database", and "Information available in all datasets".

European Commission > Eurostat > International trade in goods > Data

News Data Publications About Eurostat Help

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN GOODS DATA

Statistics illustrated

– Overview

FAQ

– DATA

Main tables

Database

Focus on Comext

Focus on enterprise characteristics (TEC)

– Methodology

EU and national metadata

Manuals and guidelines

Quality monitoring

Projects and studies

Classifications

– Publications

News releases

Statistics Explained

Legislation

Links

The ITGS **Main tables** are predefined tables focusing on annual (long-term) and monthly (short-term) indicators for the EU, its Member States and the euro area. They are refreshed automatically when data are loaded into the databases. Data are available only for a limited range of products (e.g. SITC aggregates).

The **'Database'** entry point offers users a more advanced tool for selecting and extracting data, with the possibility of creating tailor-made tables and to customise the navigation tree to display newly added datasets, latest updates or the most recently visited datasets. All trade in goods data can be accessed through 'Database', i.e. not only the detailed data but also all short and long-term indicators.

Accessible through the 'Database' entry point but also through direct links, **Comext** deserves a special focus as Eurostat's reference database for detailed statistics on international trade in goods.

A special focus is also given to **ITGS by enterprise characteristics** as bringing new perspectives on international trade in goods.

**Information available in all datasets**

International trade in goods statistics are published through different datasets. The frequency at which the data are compiled (data periodicity) and the product nomenclature differ depending on the dataset, but the following statistical fields are always available:

- reporting country: country or geo-economic area such as EU-28 or euro area;
- reference period: month or year;
- trade flows: import and export;
- product according to the relevant classification; and
- partner country: EU Member State, non-EU country or geo-economic area.

**Indicators available for aggregated and detailed data**

**Aggregated data** refer to macroeconomic indicators for the EU and euro area. Data are aggregated by broad product categories, both monthly (**short-term indicators**) and annually (**long-term indicators**). Broad product categories are defined as one-digit codes of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) or aggregates of the Broad Economic Categories (BEC).

**Detailed data** refer to the most detailed level of the following product nomenclatures: the Combined Nomenclature (CN), the SITC, the BEC, the Classification of Products by Activity (CPA) and the Standard Goods Classification for Transport Statistics/Revised (NSTR). Detailed data also contain aggregations at higher levels.

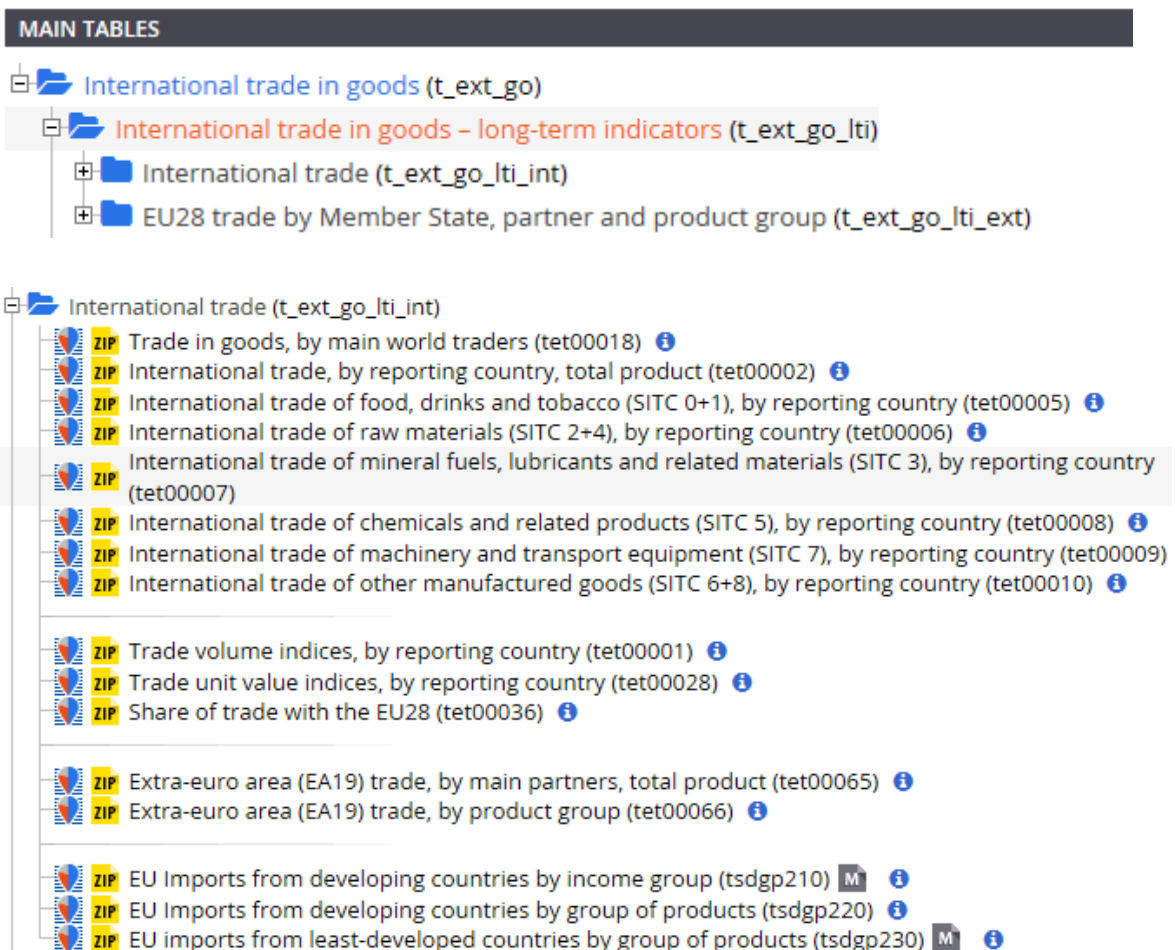
### 8.1.1. 'MAIN TABLES' VERSUS 'DATABASE'

The so-called '**Main tables**' are predefined tables focusing on key indicators. They are refreshed automatically when data are loaded into the databases. The ITGS Main tables include key indicators for the EU, its Member States and the euro area both annually (long-term indicators) and monthly (short-term indicators). Data are available only for a limited range of products (e.g. SITC aggregates).

The '**Database**' entry point offers users a more advanced tool for selecting and extracting data. Users can define tailor-made tables from the various datasets available. The navigation tree can also be customised to display newly added datasets, latest updates or the most recently visited datasets. All trade in goods data can be accessed through 'Database', i.e. not only the detailed data but also all short and long-term indicators. Data can be extracted using the Data Explorer Interface or the Easy Comext Interface.

### 8.1.2. ITGS 'MAIN TABLES' — LONG-TERM INDICATORS

Long-term indicators refer to annual data aggregated according to the major SITC groups (1-digit codes from 0 to 9). Data are available from 1999 as reference year.



EU28 trade by Member State, partner and product group (t\_ext\_go\_lti\_ext)

- ZIP Intra-EU28 trade, by Member State, total product (tet00047) ⓘ
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade, by Member State, total product (tet00055) ⓘ
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade, by product group (tet00062) ⓘ

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- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of food, drinks and tobacco (SITC 0+1), by Member State (tet00063) ⓘ
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of raw materials (SITC 2+4), by Member State (tet00064) ⓘ
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials (SITC 3), by Member State (tet00056)
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of chemicals and related products (SITC 5), by Member State (tet00058) ⓘ
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of machinery and transport equipment (SITC 7), by Member State (tet00059)
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of other manufactured goods (SITC 6+8), by Member State (tet00060) ⓘ

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- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade, by main partners, total product (tet00035) ⓘ
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of food, drinks and tobacco (SITC 0+1), by main partners (tet00034) ⓘ
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of raw materials (SITC 2+4), by main partners (tet00033) ⓘ
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials (SITC 3), by main partners (tet00032)
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of chemicals and related products (SITC 5), by main partners (tet00031) ⓘ
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of machinery and transport equipment (SITC 7), by main partners (tet00030)
- ZIP Extra-EU28 trade of other manufactured goods (SITC 6+8), by main partners (tet00029) ⓘ

---

- ZIP Extra-EU imports by Member State, shares by invoicing currency, 2014 (tet00067) ⓘ
- ZIP Extra-EU exports by Member State, shares by invoicing currency, 2014 (tet00068) ⓘ

### 8.1.3. ITGS 'MAIN TABLES' — SHORT-TERM INDICATORS

Short-term indicators refer to monthly data aggregated according to the major SITC groups (1-digit codes from 0 to 9) and high-level BEC products (CAP, CNS, CTR and INT). Data are available from January 1999 as reference month.

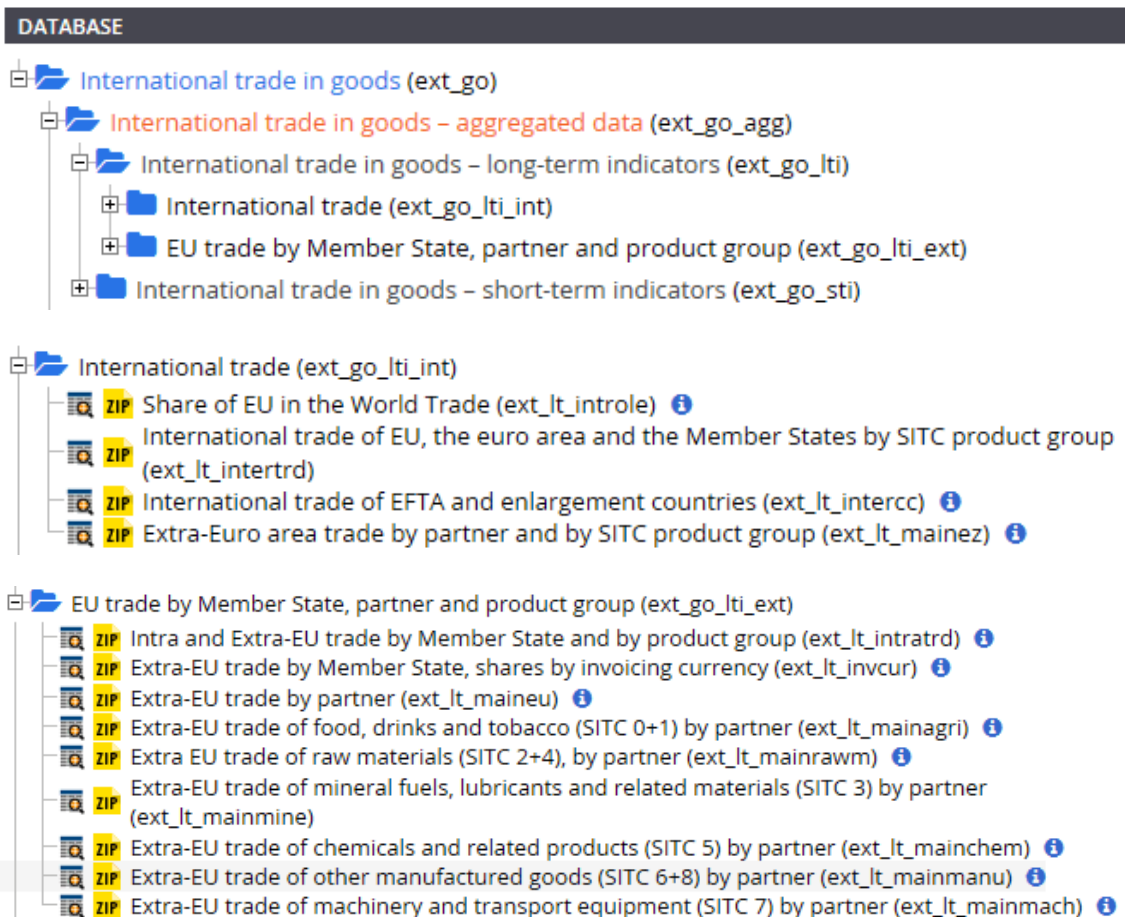
#### MAIN TABLES

International trade in goods (t\_ext\_go)

- International trade in goods – long-term indicators (t\_ext\_go\_lti)
- International trade in goods – short-term indicators (t\_ext\_go\_sti)
  - ZIP Imports of goods - total (teiet110) ⓘ
  - ZIP Imports of goods - food, drinks and tobacco (teiet120) ⓘ
  - ZIP Imports of goods - raw materials (teiet130) ⓘ
  - ZIP Imports of goods - mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials (teiet140) ⓘ
  - ZIP Imports of goods - chemicals and related products (teiet150) ⓘ
  - ZIP Imports of goods - other manufactured products (teiet160) ⓘ
  - ZIP Imports of goods - machinery and transport equipment (teiet170) ⓘ
  - ZIP Exports of goods - total (teiet010) ⓘ
  - ZIP Exports of goods - food, drinks and tobacco (teiet020) ⓘ
  - ZIP Exports of goods - raw materials (teiet030) ⓘ
  - ZIP Exports of goods - mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials (teiet040) ⓘ
  - ZIP Exports of goods - chemicals and related products (teiet050) ⓘ
  - ZIP Exports of goods - other manufactured products (teiet060) ⓘ
  - ZIP Exports of goods - machinery and transport equipment (teiet070) ⓘ
  - ZIP Balance of trade - EU and euro area aggregates (teiet210) ⓘ
  - ZIP Unit value of exports (teiet300) ⓘ
  - ZIP Unit value of imports (teiet310) ⓘ

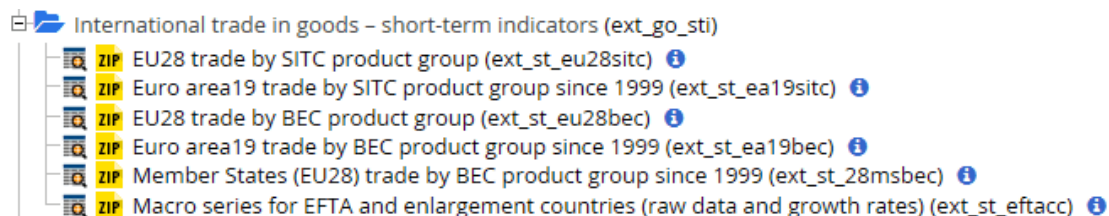
### 8.1.4. ITGS 'DATABASE' — LONG-TERM INDICATORS

Long-term indicators refer to annual data aggregated according to the major SITC groups (1-digit codes from 0 to 9). Data are available from 1999 as reference year.



### 8.1.5. ITGS 'DATABASE' — SHORT-TERM INDICATORS

Short-term indicators refer to monthly data aggregated according to the major SITC groups (1-digit codes from 0 to 9) and high-level BEC products (CAP, CNS, CTR and INT). Data are available from January 1999 as reference month.



### 8.1.6. ITGS 'DATABASE' — DETAILED DATA

Detailed data for the EU Member States and the EFTA countries are directly accessible from the navigation tree:



More detailed data are available via the '[Traditional international trade database access \(Comext\)](#)'. Note that an overview of the Comext datasets is provided in [Annex 5](#).

### 8.1.7. EASY COMEXT AND COMEXT ANALYTICAL INTERFACES







































































The 'Database' entry point gives access to several datasets classified under the folders 'International trade data' (under which can be find the aggregated data) and 'International trade detailed data'. The last heading under the latter folder concerns access to the traditional Easy Comext database, a tailor-made application for ITGS and Prodcom statistics. Easy Comext can also be accessed directly at <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/newxtweb/> or through an internet search for 'Easy Comext'. The [Easy Comext user guide](#) explains step-by-step how to make a data extraction.

Users needing to extract huge amounts of data should use Comext Analytical which is accessible through the Easy Comext interface but requires a login ('Login' button).

Both Easy Comext and Comext Analytical are powerful tools of particular value to regular users performing frequent extractions, often with a large volume of data or with very precise requests. Users can filter and create tailor-made queries which can be saved and modified at any time. Users can also define aggregations and functions (e.g. calculation of the value to quantity ratio to approximate the price). The extracted data can be visualised in the form of tables or graphics, downloaded or sent automatically by e-mail.

**The Easy Comext datasets are listed below and a short description of their content is given in [Annex 5](#).**

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

- EU Trade Since 1988 By CN8 (DS-016890)   
- EU Trade Since 1988 by HS2, 4, 6 and CN8 (DS-045409)   
- EU Trade Since 1988 By HS6 (DS-016893)   
- EU Trade Since 1988 By HS2-HS4 (DS-016894)   
- EU Trade Since 1988 By CN Sections (DS-058342)  
- EU Trade Since 1999 by HS2,4,6 and CN8 (Daily Updated) (DS-057380)  
- EU Trade Since 1988 By SITC (DS-018995)   
- EU Trade Since 1988 by BEC (DS-057555)  
- EU Trade Since 1988 By CPA\_2002 (DS-056992)  
- EU Trade Since 1988 By CPA\_2008 (DS-057009)  
- EU Trade Since 1988 by BEC#CPA (DS-058397)  
- EXTRA EU Trade Since 1999 By Mode of Transport (NSTR) (DS-022469)   
- INTRA EU Trade Since 2010 By Mode of Transport (NSTR) (As is) (DS-058814)  
- EXTRA EU Trade Since 2000 By Mode of Transport (HS6) (DS-043328)   
- EXTRA EU Trade Since 2000 By Mode of Transport (HS2-HS4) (DS-043327)   
- Adjusted EU-EXTRA Imports by tariff regime, by CN8 (DS-041691)   
- Adjusted EU-EXTRA Imports by tariff regime, by HS6 (DS-041718)   
- Adjusted EU-EXTRA Imports by tariff regime, by HS2 - HS4 (DS-041719)   
- GSP Trade for Graduations (DS-058485)  
- GSP Trade for Vulnerability (DS-058486)  
  
- EFTA Trade Since 1995 By SITC (DS-043227)   
- EFTA Trade Since 2003 By HS2,4,6 (DS-044225)   
- EFTA Trade Since 2003 by National Products - CH (DS-043955)  
- EFTA Trade Since 2008 by National Products - LI (DS-057254)  
- EFTA Trade Since 2003 by National Products - NO (DS-044156)  
- EFTA Trade Since 2003 by National Products - IS (DS-044571)  
- Western Balkan and Candidate Countries Trade Since 2002 By CN (DS-056697)   
- South Mediterranean Trade Since 2000 by HS6 (DS-057705)  

Easy Comext also gives access to all the **indices** compiled by Eurostat, to **trade by enterprise characteristics data** and also to **available nomenclatures and correlations**.

#### Indices (NICE)

- ... BEC Classification (DS-001707)  
- ... CPA-1-digit Classification (DS-001715)  
- ... CPA-2-digits Classification (DS-008151)  
- ... SITC-rev3-1digit Classification (DS-001722)  
- ... SITC-rev3-2digits Classification (DS-001727)  

#### International Trade in Goods Statistics by Enterprise Characteristics

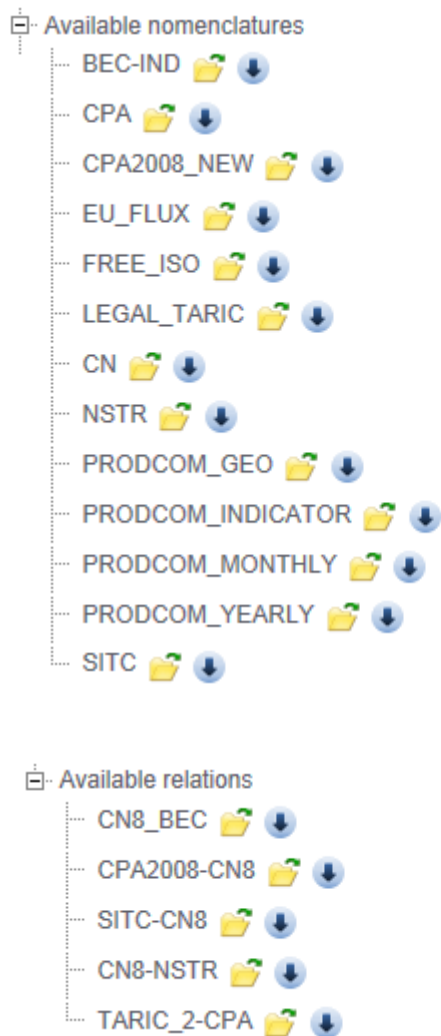
##### NACE Rev. 1.1.

- ... 1: Trade by activity and enterprise size class (DS-056329)  
- ... 2: Concentration of trade by activity (DS-056330)  
- ... 3: Trade by partner country and activity (DS-056331)  
- ... 4: Trade by number of partner countries and activity (DS-056332)  
- ... 5: Trade by commodity and activity (DS-056333)  

##### NACE Rev. 2.

- ... 01: Trade by activity and enterprise size-class (DS-058467)  
- ... 02: Concentration of trade by activity (DS-058468)  
- ... 03: Trade by partner country and activity (DS-058469)  
- ... 04: Trade by number of partner countries and activity (DS-058470)  
- ... 05: Trade by commodity and activity (DS-058471)  
- ... 06: Trade by type of traders (DS-058472)  
- ... 07: Trade by type of ownership (DS-058473)  
- ... 08: Trade by exports intensity (DS-058477)  
- ... 09: Trade by activity sectors (DS-058479)  
- ... 10: Trade by partner countries and size-class (DS-058476)  





### 8.1.8. BULK DOWNLOAD FACILITY

The [Bulk Download facility](#) allows users to download Eurostat datasets in a format which can easily be imported into a chosen tool for further analysis.

International trade in goods statistics are available in csv format from the [Bulk Download web page](#) and the [Comext domain](#). They are accompanied by metadata (classifications, data availability, etc.) and methodological notes.

#### Where to find the most recent Comext data

Data for the latest months can be downloaded from the '[Most recent Comext data](#)' subfolder. The following statistics are available for the EU and its Member States:

- Trade values (thousands of euros) and quantities (in tonnes and supplementary unit), according to the product codes of the Combined Nomenclature and of the SITC and BEC classifications, by intra- and extra-EU partner country; and
- Trade values (thousands of euros) and quantities (tonnes) by mode of transport, according to product codes of the Harmonised System and the nomenclature NSTR, by extra-EU partner country.

### Where to find historical Comext data

Historical data can be downloaded from different subfolders:

- [2016S1](#) and [2016S1 by reporter](#) — Monthly intra- and extra-EU trade data for the EU and its Member States from 1998 onwards;
- [2016S2](#) — Annual intra- and extra-EU trade data for the EU and its Member States from 1988 onwards;
- [2016S3](#) — Monthly and annual extra-EU trade data by transport mode for the EU and its Member States from 2002 onwards; and
- [1976-1987 Nimexe CD image](#) — Annual intra and extra-EU trade data from 1976 to 1987, broken down by product according to the Nimexe classification. The Nimexe classification was used to collect trade statistics before the implementation of the Combined Nomenclature in January 1988.

## 8.2. Publications

International trade publications in PDF format are provided to the general public free of charge under the '[International trade in goods](#)' dedicated section on Eurostat website.

### 8.2.1. NEWS RELEASES

- The international trade **Euro indicators News Release** gives the first results (including estimates) on euro area and EU trade flows. It is published online around 46 days after the reference month. The precise date of the [monthly release](#) is announced on the Eurostat website. The headline indicators are the non-seasonally adjusted euro area and EU trade balances for the latest reference month. Detailed results by main products, main partners and Member State are given for the cumulated period, i.e. from January to the month preceding the latest reference month. Seasonally and working day adjusted aggregates (imports, exports and trade balance) are also available for the euro area and the EU. Note that the seasonally adjusted trade balance is one of the **Principal European Economic Indicators** (PEEIs) used to give an overall picture of the macroeconomic situation in the EU and the euro area.
- Ad-hoc news releases are published for specific events like summits or international days.

All news releases can be found under this [link](#).

### 8.2.2. STATISTICS EXPLAINED

'Statistics Explained' is an official Eurostat website presenting all statistical topics in an easily understandable way. Together, the articles make up an encyclopedia of European statistics, completed by a statistical glossary clarifying all terms used and numerous links to further information and the very latest data and metadata. The website is a portal for occasional and regular users alike.

All 'Statistics Explained' relating to ITGS can be accessed under this [link](#).

A series of articles are available, among them:

- extra-EU trade in goods, in manufactured goods and in primary goods;
- extra-euro area trade in goods; and
- international trade in goods, in medicinal and pharmaceutical products, in motor cars and by enterprise characteristics.

The articles in 'Statistics Explained' are regularly updated (usually once a year) and can be included in 'virtual' publications, such as the Eurostat Yearbook.

Since 2014, 'Statistics Explained' includes Statistics in Focus, a special category of statistical articles which, unlike the standard articles, are not updated. An example for ITGS can be found [here](#).

### 8.3. Where can I find metadata? <sup>Rev</sup>

A wide array of descriptive and methodological notes is made available to help users understand the scope of ITGS. All can be found on the following pages of the 'International trade in goods' section on Eurostat website:

- [EU and national metadata](#)
- [Manual and guidelines](#)

In addition, full metadata, notes and news are available for each Easy Comext dataset via the 'International trade metadata' button.

### 8.4. User support

With the members of the European Statistical System Eurostat has established a network of support centres in nearly all EU Member States as well as some EFTA countries. Their mission is to provide help and guidance to users of European statistical data. Details of this user support network can be found in the Help section of [Eurostat's website](#). In addition, Eurostat provides specific support to journalists via its [Press centre](#).

Note that specific support is available for ITGS through the following email address: [comextsupport@ec.europa.eu](mailto:comextsupport@ec.europa.eu)

## Annex 1 — List of goods and movements excluded from ITGS

Lists of these exclusions or exemptions from ITGS are given in Annex 1 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 113/2010 for extra-EU trade and in Annex 1 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1982/2004 for intra-EU trade. The exclusions or exemptions apply to the following items:

- a) monetary gold;
- b) means of payment which are legal tender and securities, including means which are payment for services such as postage;
- c) goods for or following temporary use (e.g. hire, loan, operational leasing), provided all the following conditions are met:
  - no processing is or was planned or carried out;
  - the expected duration of the temporary use was or is not intended to be longer than 24 months;
  - no change of ownership took place or is intended to take place, or for extra-EU trade the dispatch/arrival has not to be declared as a supply/acquisition for VAT purposes for intra-EU trade.
- d) goods moving between:
  - the Member State and its territorial enclaves in non-EU countries or other Member States and the host Member State and territorial enclaves of non-EU countries, other Member States or international organisations;
  - territorial enclaves include embassies and national armed forces stationed outside the territory of the mother country.
- e) goods used as carriers of customised information including software;
- f) software downloaded from the internet;
- g) goods supplied free of charge which are themselves not the subject of a commercial transaction, provided that their movement is with the sole intention of preparing or supporting an intended subsequent trade transaction by demonstrating the characteristics of goods or services such as:
  - advertising material;
  - commercial samples;
- h) goods for and after repair and replacement parts that are incorporated in the framework of the repair and the replaced defective parts;
- i) means of transport travelling in the course of their work, including spacecraft launchers at the time of launching;

In addition, for extra-EU trade only:

- j) goods declared orally to customs authorities which are either of a commercial nature, provided that their value does not exceed the statistical threshold of EUR 1 000 and 1 000 kg, or of a non-commercial nature; and
- k) goods released for free circulation after being subject to the customs procedures of inward processing or, until April 2016, of processing under customs control.

## Annex 2 — Specific goods and movements

### VESSELS AND AIRCRAFT – TRANSFER OF ECONOMIC OWNERSHIP

<b>Scope</b>	Transfer of economic ownership
<b>Reference period</b>	Month when transfer of ownership takes place
<b>Flow</b>	Intra-EU/extra-EU imports and exports
<b>Partner country</b>	<b>For imports</b> — Country of construction for new vessels and aircraft, otherwise residence country of previous economic owner <b>For exports</b> — Residence country of new economic owner
<b>Commodity codes</b>	<b>Vessels:</b> seagoing vessels, tugs, warship and floating structure; commodity codes: 8901 10 10, 8901 20 10, 8901 30 10, 8901 90 10, 8902 00 10, 8903 91 10, 8903 92 10, 8904 00 10, 8904 00 91, 8905 10 10, 8905 20 00, 8905 90 10, 8906 10 00 and 8906 90 10. <b>Aircraft:</b> 8802 30 00 and 8802 40 00
<b>Trade value</b>	Value that would be invoiced in case of sale/purchase of the whole vessel and aircraft.
<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Net mass:</b> only for aircraft <b>Supplementary quantity:</b> in number of items

## VESSELS AND AIRCRAFT – PROCESSING OPERATION

<b>Scope</b>	Processing operation (based on physical movements)
<b>Reference period</b>	<b>Intra-EU trade:</b> month of arrival or dispatch (when vessel or aircraft is brought to/leaves the premises of processor) <b>Extra-EU trade:</b> month of acceptance of customs declaration
<b>Flow</b>	Intra-EU/extra-EU imports and exports
<b>Partner country</b>	<b>Imports in view of processing:</b> residence country of economic owner <b>Imports after processing:</b> country of processing <b>Exports in view of processing:</b> country of processing <b>Exports after processing:</b> residence country of economic owner
<b>Commodity codes</b>	<b>Vessels:</b> seagoing vessels, tugs, warship and floating structure; commodity codes: 8901 10 10, 8901 20 10, 8901 30 10, 8901 90 10, 8902 00 10, 8903 91 10, 8903 92 10, 8904 00 10, 8904 00 91, 8905 10 10, 8905 20 00, 8905 90 10, 8906 10 00 and 8906 90 10. <b>Aircraft:</b> 8802 30 00 and 8802 40 00
<b>Trade value</b>	<b>Movement in view of processing:</b> value of unprocessed goods that would be invoiced in case of sale/purchase <b>Movement after processing:</b> value of unprocessed goods plus value added by processing
<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Net mass:</b> only for aircraft <b>Supplementary quantity:</b> in number of items

## GOODS DELIVERED TO VESSELS AND AIRCRAFT

<b>Scope</b>	Physical delivery of goods in a Member State's port/airport on board a vessel/aircraft whose economic owner does not reside in that Member State
<b>Reference period</b>	Month when the goods are delivered
<b>Flow</b>	Intra-EU/extra-EU exports
<b>Partner country</b>	Residence country of economic owner of the vessel/aircraft or, if not determined, QR 'Stores and provisions within the framework of intra-EU trade' or QS 'Stores and provisions within the framework of extra-EU trade'
<b>Commodity codes</b>	9930 24 00, 9930 27 00 or 9930 99 00 converted in 8-digit codes containing the letter B (see Annex 3) in data published by Eurostat
<b>Trade value</b>	Standard definition including statistical value in case of processing
<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Net mass:</b> mandatory for goods belonging to CN chapter 27, otherwise optional <b>Supplementary quantity:</b> optional

## GOODS DELIVERED TO AND FROM OFFSHORE INSTALLATIONS

<b>Scope</b>	<p>Physical movement of goods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• between a Member State and another Member State's or a non-EU country's offshore installation ; or</li> <li>• between Member State's offshore installations and another Member State's or a non-EU country's offshore installation</li> </ul> <p>Note: An offshore installation is deemed country's offshore installation if it is established in exclusive economic zone of that country.</p>
<b>Reference period</b>	Month when the goods are delivered
<b>Flow</b>	Intra-EU/extra-EU imports and exports
<b>Partner country</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Member State or a non-EU country from/to which are goods delivered</li> <li>• Member State or a non-EU country from/to whose exclusive economic zone are goods delivered</li> </ul> <p>Note: The codes QV 'Countries and territories not specified in the framework of intra-EU trade' or QW 'Countries and territories not specified within the framework of extra-EU trade' may be used instead of real partner country.</p>
<b>Commodity codes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For goods delivered to offshore installations, i.e. delivery of products the crew and for the operation of engines, machines and other equipment of the offshore installation</b> — The following simplified codes may be used: 9931 24 00, 9931 27 00 or 9931 99 00 converted in 8-digit codes containing the letter F (see Annex 3) in data published by Eurostat.</li> <li>• <b>For goods obtained from or produced by offshore installations, i.e. products extracted from the seabed or subsoil, or manufactured by the offshore installations</b> — The standard CN8 codes shall be used.</li> </ul>
<b>Trade value</b>	Standard definition
<b>Quantity</b>	<p><b>Net mass:</b> Mandatory for goods belonging to CN chapter 27, otherwise optional</p> <p><b>Supplementary quantity:</b> Mandatory for goods belonging to CN chapter 27, otherwise optional</p>



## SEA PRODUCTS

<b>Scope</b>	<p><b>Imports</b> — Acquisition of sea products by Member State's vessel from another Member State's/country's vessel</p> <p><b>Exports</b> — Landing of sea products in Member State's port by another Member State's/country's vessel</p> <p>Note: A vessel is deemed country's vessel if the economic owner of the vessel is established in that country.</p>
<b>Reference period</b>	Month when the sea products are landed in Member State's port and month when the sea products are acquired by Member State's vessel
<b>Flow</b>	Intra-EU/extra-EU imports and exports
<b>Partner country</b>	<p><b>For imports</b> — Member State/country from whose vessels the sea products were acquired. In case of extra-EU imports, the partner country is the country of origin defined on the basis of the vessel's flag (Customs definition). In case of intra-EU imports, the partner country is the country of consignment defined as the country of residence of the economic owner of the vessel.</p> <p><b>For exports</b> — Member State/country where the port is located</p>
<b>Commodity codes</b>	Any relevant CN8 codes covering fishes and salvages
<b>Trade value</b>	Standard definition
<b>Quantity</b>	<p><b>Net mass:</b> Mandatory</p> <p><b>Supplementary quantity:</b> Mandatory</p>

## SPACECRAFT

<b>Scope</b>	Acquisition of economic ownership of a new spacecraft by the first economic owner
<b>Reference period</b>	Month when the spacecraft is launched
<b>Flow</b>	Intra-EU/extra-EU imports and exports
<b>Partner country</b>	<b>For imports</b> — Member State/country of construction <b>For exports</b> — Member State/country of residence of the first economic owner of the new spacecraft
<b>Commodity code</b>	8802 60 10
<b>Trade value</b>	Value of the spacecraft excluding transport and insurance costs
<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Net mass:</b> Mandatory <b>Supplementary quantity:</b> Mandatory

## ELECTRICITY AND GAS

<b>Scope</b>	Physical movement through the national frontier with the exception of the simple transit
<b>Reference period</b>	Month of import and export
<b>Flow</b>	Intra-EU/extra-EU imports and exports
<b>Partner country</b>	<b>For imports</b> — Member State of consignment for intra-EU imports and country of origin for extra-EU imports <b>For exports</b> — Member State/country of destination
<b>Commodity codes</b>	<b>Electricity:</b> 2716 00 00 <b>Gas:</b> 2711 21 00
<b>Trade value</b>	Standard definition but may be based on estimates
<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Net mass:</b> no net mass for electricity (null value) / mandatory for gas <b>Supplementary quantity:</b> Mandatory both for electricity and gas

## Annex 3 — Alphanumeric product codes in Comext

Alphanumeric codes are used in intra- and extra-EU trade statistics to identify confidential or adjusted data and trade for which a breakdown of the results at a detailed level of the product classification is not possible. This usually concerns goods for which some Member States allow a simplified declaration to be made. In principle, the results relating to the alphanumeric codes are included under the relevant chapter of the CN (e.g. 63III000 Selections of goods of Chapter 63). If the chapter cannot be identified, the results are included under Chapter 99 (e.g. 99III000 Selections of goods not specified elsewhere).

Code 99AAA000	Intra-EU trade involving transactions falling below the 'small scale transaction threshold' or residual products collected under the simplification scheme
Codes containing the letter B	Deliveries of products for the crew and passengers, and for the operation of the engines, machines and other equipment of sea-going vessels or aircraft
Codes containing the letter C	Corrections due to the reporting of erroneous codes
Codes containing the letter E	Selections of goods for which a simplified declaration applies
Codes containing the letter F	Goods destined for the operators of an offshore installation or for the operation of the engines, machines and other equipment of the offshore installation
Codes containing the letter I	Components of industrial plant for which a simplified declaration applies. 'Industrial plant' is a combination of machines, apparatus, appliances, equipment, instruments and materials which together make up large-scale, stationary units producing goods or providing services
Codes containing the letter M	Estimates for missing data, broken down by chapter
Codes containing the letter P	Goods transported by post for which a simplified declaration applies
Codes containing the letter S	Confidential data
Codes containing the letter T	Foodstuffs, drinks and tobacco for which a simplified declaration applies
Code 87VVV000	Motor vehicle components for which a simplified declaration applies
Code 88WWW000	Aircraft components for which a simplified declaration applies
Code 99YYY000	Estimates for missing data, not broken down by chapter
Code 99RRR100	Returned goods for which a simplified declaration applies

## Annex 4 — National authorities involved in ITGS <sup>New</sup>

		Leading administration	Primary data collection	Data processing and control	Dissemination
Belgium	Intrastat	National Bank	National Bank	National Bank	National Bank
	Extrastat	National Bank	Customs	National Bank	National Bank
Bulgaria	Intrastat	NSI	VAT Offices	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Czech Republic	Intrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Denmark	Intrastat	NSI	NSI	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Germany	Intrastat	NSI	NSI	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI/Customs	NSI
Estonia	Intrastat	NSI	NSI	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Ireland	Intrastat	NSI	Revenue & Customs	Revenue & Customs/NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Revenue & Customs	Revenue & Customs/NSI	NSI
Greece	Intrastat	NSI	NSI/VAT Offices	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Spain	Intrastat	Customs	Customs	Customs	Customs
	Extrastat	Customs	Customs	Customs	Customs
France	Intrastat	Customs	Customs	Customs	Customs
	Extrastat	Customs	Customs	Customs	Customs
Croatia	Intrastat	NSI	Customs	Custom/NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Italy	Intrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Cyprus	Intrastat	NSI	VAT Offices	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Latvia	Intrastat	NSI	NSI	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Lithuania	Intrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Luxembourg	Intrastat	NSI	NSI	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Hungary	Intrastat	NSI	NSI	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Malta	Intrastat	NSI	VAT offices/NSI	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Netherlands	Intrastat	NSI	NSI	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Austria	Intrastat	NSI	NSI	NSI	NSI
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
Poland	Intrastat	NSI	Customs	Customs	NSI/Customs
	Extrastat	NSI	Customs	Customs	NSI/Customs

		Leading administration	Primary data collection	Data processing and control	Dissemination
<b>Portugal</b>	<b>Intrastat</b>	NSI	NSI	NSI	NSI
	<b>Extrastat</b>	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
<b>Romania</b>	<b>Intrastat</b>	NSI	NSI	NSI	NSI
	<b>Extrastat</b>	NSI	Customs	Customs	NSI
<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>Intrastat</b>	NSI	Customs	Customs/NSI	NSI
	<b>Extrastat</b>	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>Intrastat</b>	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
	<b>Extrastat</b>	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
<b>Finland</b>	<b>Intrastat</b>	Customs	Customs	Customs	Customs
	<b>Extrastat</b>	Customs	Customs	Customs	Customs
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Intrastat</b>	NSI	NSI	NSI	NSI
	<b>Extrastat</b>	NSI	Customs	NSI	NSI
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>Intrastat</b>	Revenue & Customs	Revenue & Customs	Revenue & Customs	Revenue & Customs
	<b>Extrastat</b>	Revenue & Customs	Revenue & Customs	Revenue & Customs	Revenue & Customs

Notes:

- NSI: National Statistical Institute
- In the context of this table Intrastat/Extrastat should be understood as data collection system for intra-EU/extra-EU trade statistics.
- By data processing is meant validity and credibility checks, estimation of missing trade, adjustments and quality related analysis.

## Annex 5 — Overview of Easy-Comext datasets

### New

- **EU Trade Since 1988 by CN, SITC, BEC and CPA**

These datasets contain monthly and annual time series for the imports and exports of the European Union, the euro area and the EU Member States. The available indicators are the trade value in euros, the quantity (net mass) in 100 kg and the supplementary quantity wherever relevant. Data are given by trading partner (all countries of the Geonomenclature plus the intra- and extra-EU areas) and by product according to the different levels of the following product nomenclatures: Combined Nomenclature (CN8, HS6, HS4 and HS2), Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), the Broad Economic Categories (BEC) and the Classification of Products by Activity (CPA).

The starting date of the time series depends on the reporting country:

- from January 1988 for EU-12 and the EU-12 Member States (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom);
- from January 1995 for EU-15 and the Member States which joined the EU in 1995 (Austria, Finland and Sweden);
- from January 1999 for the euro area, the EU-27 and EU-28 aggregates, and the Member States which joined the EU in 2004 (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia), 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania) and 2013 (Croatia). Note that data by CN8 codes and according to the SITC, BEC and CPA nomenclatures are not available from January 1999 but only from January 2001 for the EU-28 aggregate and Croatia.

- **EU Trade Since 1999 by CN (Daily Updated)**

This dataset contains monthly time series for the imports and exports of the EU Member States. The available indicators are the trade value in thousands of euros, the quantity in tonnes (net mass) and the supplementary quantity wherever relevant. Data are given by trading partner (all countries of the Geonomenclature) and by product according to the different levels of the Combined Nomenclature (CN8, HS6, HS4 and HS2).

The starting date of the time series depends on the reporting country:

- from January 1999 for the EU-15 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom);
- from May 2014 for the new EU-25 Member States (Cyprus, the Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia);
- from January 2007 for the new EU-27 Member States (Bulgaria and Romania); and
- from July 2013 for Croatia.

- **Extra-EU Trade by Mode of Transport**

These datasets contain monthly and annual time series for the imports and exports of the European Union and each EU Member State from January 1999 until the last month available. Note that time series only start in January 2002 for EU-28 and Croatia. The available indicators

are the trade value in euros and the quantity (net mass) in 100 kg and tonnes. Data are given by trading partner (all non-EU countries of the Geonomenclature plus the extra-EU area) and by product according to the different levels of the following product nomenclatures: the 'Nomenclature uniforme des marchandises pour les Statistiques de Transport, Révisée' (NSTR) since 1999 and the Harmonised System (HS6, HS4 and HS2) since 2000.

In addition to the basic information, these datasets include one more dimension: the mode of transport. The mode of transport is classified according to the following codification: 0: Unknown mode of transport, 1: Sea transport, 2: Rail transport, 3: Road transport, 4: Air transport, 5: Postal consignment, 7: Fixed transport installations; 8: Inland waterway transport and 9: Own propulsion.

- **Intra-EU Trade since 2010 by Mode of Transport**

This dataset contains monthly and annual time series for the imports and exports of the following EU Member States: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia. Time series start from January 2010 until the last month available. The available indicators are the trade value in euros and the quantity (net mass) in 100 kg and tonnes. Data are given by trading partner (all individual EU Member States plus the intra-EU area) and by product according to the 'Nomenclature uniforme des marchandises pour les Statistiques de Transport, Révisée' (NSTR).

In addition to the basic information, these datasets include one more dimension: the mode of transport. The mode of transport is classified according to the following codification: 0: Unknown mode of transport, 1: Sea transport, 2: Rail transport, 3: Road transport, 4: Air transport, 5: Postal consignment, 7: Fixed transport installations; 8: Inland waterway transport and 9: Own propulsion.

- **Adjusted EU-EXTRA Imports by tariff regime**

These datasets contain monthly and annual time series for the imports of the EU Member States. The available indicators are the trade value in euros, the quantity (net mass) in 100 kg and tonnes, and the supplementary quantity wherever relevant. Data are given by trading partner (all non-EU countries of the Geonomenclature plus the extra-EU area) and by product according to the different levels of the Combined Nomenclature (CN8, HS6, HS4 and HS2).

The starting date of the time series depends on the reporting country:

- from January 1999 for the EU-15 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom);
- from May 2014 for the new EU-25 Member States (Cyprus, the Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia);
- from January 2007 for the new EU-27 Member States (Bulgaria and Romania); and
- from July 2013 for Croatia.

In addition to the basic information, these datasets include two more dimensions:

- the **eligibility** which reflects the tariff status as indicated in the TARIC database on the first day of each month; and
- the **tariff regime** (or **use**) which reflects the preference as reported in data transmitted by the Member States to Eurostat (source: customs declarations, box 36 of the Single Administrative Document) combined with the duty rate and possibly adjusted.



- **EFTA Trade by SITC, HS and national products**

- **Since 1995 by SITC** — This dataset contains monthly and annual time series for the imports and exports of the EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) from January 1995 (January 2009 for Liechtenstein) until the last month available. The available indicators are the trade value in euros and the quantity (net mass) in 100 kg and tonnes. Data are given by trading partner (all countries of the Geonomenclature) and by product according to the different levels of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC).
- **Since 2003 by HS2, 4, 6** — This dataset contains monthly and annual time series for the imports and exports of the EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) from January 2003 (January 2009 for Liechtenstein) until the last month available. The available indicators are the trade value in euros and the quantity (net mass) in 100 kg and tonnes. Data are given by trading partner (all countries of the Geonomenclature) and by product according to the different levels of the Harmonised System (HS6, HS4 and HS2).
- **Since 2003 by National Products** — These datasets contain monthly and annual time series for the imports and exports of the EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) from January 2003 (January 2009 for Liechtenstein) until the last month available. The available indicators are the trade value in euros and the quantity (net mass) in 100 kg and tonnes. Data are given by trading partner (all countries of the Geonomenclature) and by product according to the most detailed level of the national product nomenclature.

- **West Balkans and Candidate Countries trade Since 2002 by CN**

This dataset contains monthly time series for the imports and exports of the West Balkan Countries. The starting date of the series depends on the reporting country: since 2002 for Albania, Croatia, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, since 2004 for Kosovo and since 2005 for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. The available indicators are the trade value in thousands of euros, the quantity (net mass) in 100 kilos and tonnes, and the supplementary quantity wherever relevant. Data are given by trading partner (all countries of the Geonomenclature) and by product according to the different levels of the Combined Nomenclature (CN8, HS6, HS4 and HS2).

- **South Mediterranean Trade Since 2000 by HS6**

This dataset contains monthly and annual time series for the imports and exports of the South Mediterranean countries. The starting date of the series depends on the reporting country: since 2000 for Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, since 2002 for Syria, since 2005 for Israel and since 2007 for the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The available indicators are the trade value in thousands of euros, the quantity (net mass) tonnes and the supplementary quantity wherever relevant. Data are given by trading partner (all countries of the Geonomenclature) and by product according to the different levels of the Harmonised System (HS6, HS4 and HS2).

- **Indices by SITC, BEC and CPA**

These datasets contain monthly and annual time series for the imports and exports of the European Union, the euro area and each EU Member State from January 2000 until the last month available. The available indicators are the unit value indices (UVI) in euros, national currencies and US dollars and the volume indices in euros. Data are given by trading partner (mainly economic and geographical areas but also some individual countries) and by product according to the Standard International Trade Classification (1- and 2-digit SITC codes), the

Broad Economic Categories (BEC) and the Classification of Products by Activity (1- and 2-digit CPA codes).

- **International Trade in Goods by Enterprise Characteristics**

These datasets contain annual time series for the imports and exports of the EU Member States from 2008. The available indicators are the number of enterprises and the trade value in thousands of euros. International trade in goods data are broken down by enterprise size class, concentration of trade, number of partner countries, commodity, type of trader, type of ownership or export intensity. Data are given by trading partner (mainly intra- and extra-EU areas) and by activity according to the EU Statistical Classification of Economic Activities (NACE).

- **Statistics on industrial production and international trade**

These datasets combine international trade in goods statistics with industrial production statistics collected via a business survey. They contain annual data for the EU Member States, EFTA countries and candidate countries since 1995. Furthermore monthly time series for steel are provided since January 2003. The products are classified according to the PRODCOM nomenclature.

# Glossary

<b>Arrivals</b>	Imports from another Member State (intra-EU imports).
<b>Balance of payments</b>	The statistical system through which economic transactions between an economy and the rest of the world over specific time periods can be summarized in a systematic way. The fifth edition of the IMF Balance of Payments Manual (BPM5) provides conceptual guidelines for compiling balance of payments statistics according to international standards.
<b>CIF-type value</b>	Valuation principle when the value includes the transaction value of the goods, the value of services performed to deliver goods to the border of the exporting country and the value of the services performed to deliver the goods from the border of the exporting country to the border of the importing country.
<b>Combined Nomenclature</b>	A systematic list of goods descriptions based on the Harmonised System, used for the purposes of the Common Customs Tariff, external trade statistics and other Community policies (Article 1 of Regulation (EEC) No 2658/87, OJ L 256, 1987, p.1).
<b>Country of origin</b>	The country where the goods originate. Goods that are wholly obtained or produced in a country originate in that country. Goods whose production involved more than one country are deemed to originate in the country where they underwent their last, substantial, economically justified processing or processing resulting in the manufacture of a new product.
<b>Customs declaration</b>	The act whereby a person indicates, in the prescribed form and manner, a wish to place goods under a given customs procedure, with an indication, where appropriate, of any specific arrangements to be applied.
<b>Customs procedure</b>	The Union Customs Code provides for three customs procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• release for free circulation;</li> <li>• special procedures; and</li> <li>• export.</li> </ul>
<b>Comext</b>	Comext is the name given to the database in which all trade in goods data are stored.
<b>Dispatches</b>	Exports to another Member State (intra-EU exports).
<b>Exports</b>	Goods leaving the statistical territory of a country.
<b>Goods</b>	All movable property, including electricity.
<b>FOB-type value</b>	Valuation principle when the value includes the transaction value of the goods and the value of services performed to deliver goods to the border of the exporting country.
<b>Imports</b>	Goods which add to the stock of material resources of a country by entering its economic territory.
<b>National statistical authority (NSA)</b>	Within the meaning of the Extrastat and Intrastat Regulations, the national statistical institutes and other bodies responsible in each Member State for producing international trade in goods statistics.
<b>Provider of statistical information (PSI)</b>	Any business, 'institutional' body (e.g. public and non-profit institution, school, hospital) or individual who provides statistical information.

<b>Transit</b>	Operation/movements of goods when the goods are transported through the reporting economy on the way to their final destination without any halt or with a halt only inherent to the transport.
<b>Quantity of the goods</b>	The quantity of the goods can be expressed in two ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as net mass, i.e. the actual mass of the goods excluding all packaging; or</li> <li>• in supplementary units, i.e. units measuring quantity other than net mass, as detailed in the annual Commission regulation updating the Combined Nomenclature.</li> </ul>
<b>Reference period</b>	The calendar year and month in which the goods are imported or exported.  When the customs declaration is the source of records on imports and exports, the reference period indicates the calendar year and month when the declaration is accepted by customs authorities.
<b>Statistical value</b>	The statistical value is based on the value of the goods at the time and place they cross the border of the Member State of destination on import or of the Member State of actual export on export.  Statistical value includes the transport and insurance costs incurred in delivering the goods from the place of their departure to the border of the importing or exporting Member State.
<b>Quasi transit</b>	Operation when goods are imported by non-residents into the reporting economy from outside the EU and subsequently dispatched to another Member State as well as when the goods exported from a Member State to a non-EU country are cleared for export in another Member State.
<b>Union Customs Code</b>	Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council setting the general rules and procedures applicable to goods brought into or out of the customs territory of the EU.  This new code aims to facilitate trade by simplifying and computerising customs procedures and ensuring the interoperability between the IT systems of the 28 customs administrations, while ensuring a high level of safety and security at the external borders.
<b>Union goods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goods entirely obtained in the customs territory of the European Union, without the addition of goods from non-EU countries or territories which are not part of the customs territory of the Community;</li> <li>• Goods from non-EU countries or territories which are not part of the customs territory of the European Union which have been released for free circulation in a Member State; and</li> <li>• Goods obtained in the customs territory of the European Union either exclusively from the goods referred to in point a or from those referred to in points a and b;</li> </ul>
<b>VIIES</b>	The VAT Information Exchange System (VIIES) enables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• businesses rapidly to obtain confirmation of the VAT numbers of their intra-EU trading partners; and</li> <li>• Tax administrations to monitor and control the flow of intra-EU trade to detect all kinds of irregularity.</li> </ul>

Note: [Eurostat's Concepts and Definitions Database](#) (CODED web site) contains definitions of key terminology and concepts used within the European Statistical System (ESS).

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# User guide on European statistics on international trade in goods

The purpose of this guide is to explain to a wide range of users how the statistics relating to trade in goods, both between EU Member States and with non-EU countries, are collected, compiled, processed and published at European level. The different issues are tackled in a question and answer format.

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