

Quality report on European statistics on international trade in goods

Data 2010–11

2014 edition

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Abbreviations

BoP	Balance of payments
CN	Combined Nomenclature
EU	European Union
HS	Harmonized System
ITGS	International Trade in Goods Statistics
PSI	Provider of statistical information
SME	Small- and medium-size enterprise
UN	United Nations
VAT	Value added tax
VIES	VAT Information Exchange System

1 Introduction

The purpose of this Quality Report is to provide users with a tool for assessing the quality of the international trade in goods statistics (ITGS) disseminated by Eurostat. It complements the User Guide, which sets out the concepts and definitions used for the data collection and compilation, and provides information on collection, compilation and dissemination of European statistics on international trade in goods.

The Report presents the main quality indicators compiled for the reference years 2010 and 2011. The purpose is not to rank the EU Member States from best to worst for each indicator, but to provide users with information on different factors affecting statistics, thus allowing them to assess data quality.

1.1 European statistics on international trade in goods

The European statistics on international trade in goods measure the value and quantity of goods traded between the EU Member States (**intra-EU trade**) and goods traded by them with non-EU countries (**extra-EU trade**). They are the official harmonised source of information about the imports, exports and trade balance of the European Union (EU), its Member States and the euro area.

As international trade forms an important part of the world economy, statistics on the trading of goods are a key instrument for numerous public and private sector decision-makers. For example, the European ITGS:

- enable Community authorities to prepare multilateral and bilateral negotiations in the framework of the common commercial policy;
- enable Community authorities to evaluate the progress of the Single Market and the integration of EU economies;
- constitute an essential source of information for balance of payments statistics, national accounts and economic studies; and
- help EU enterprises to conduct market research and develop their commercial strategy.

This list, which is not exhaustive, demonstrates the diversity of the users and of their needs.

ITGS are based on two data collection systems: **Extrastat** and **Intrastat**. Extrastat data, which relate to the trading of goods with non-EU countries, are collected by customs administrations and are based on the records of trade transactions in customs declarations. Intrastat data, which relate to the trading of goods between the EU Member States, are collected once a month directly from traders. This direct data collection is the consequence of the implementation of the Single Market and the abolition of customs controls at the borders between Member States in 1993.

1.2 EU legislation

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 (Maastricht Treaty entered in force in 1993) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (former Treaty of Rome entered in 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 and national laws do not need to be adopted for them to be implemented.

As regards the production of ITGS, regulations ensure a harmonised approach by all Member States. 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 EU ITGS are determined in several regulations and address intra- and extra-EU trade separately. The **basic regulations** adopted by the Council and the European Parliament establish the essential rules governing ITGS. The **implementing provisions** are adopted by the Commission and contain more detail as regards the implementation of 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 legal basis for intra- and extra-EU trade statistics relating to 2011 was established in 2009. The revised regulations did not introduce major changes to the general concepts and definitions, but allowed for more simplification as regards intra-EU trade and aligned the extra-EU trade statistics with the Modernised Customs Code. Both regulations included articles on standardised procedures for quality reporting.

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

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

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

Implementing provisions:

Commission Regulation (EU) No 113/2010
Commission Regulation (EU) No 92/2010

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

1.3 Quality assurance

The concept of quality applied in ITGS is in line with the definition developed by the European Statistical System (ESS), whereby the components of quality are relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, comparability and coherence. Each component consists of several subcomponents.

Quality reporting is not a new concept in ITGS. In 2005, the ITGS legislation made annual reporting on particular quality indicators for intra-EU trade statistics mandatory. Since 2009, it has included a similar requirement for extra-EU trade statistics. Member States have to provide Eurostat with an annual report covering the standard quality criteria within a fixed deadline. In practice, this reporting process has been harmonised: Member States fulfil their quality reporting obligation by completing a report pre-filled by Eurostat. The key quality indicators are set out in this summary Quality Report.

1.4 Quality assessment

Main strengths of the ITGS: relevance, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility, comparability, clarity and coherence

- **Relevance** — The key users of ITGS and their respective needs are very well known. The data relevance can be assessed as good thanks to regular satisfaction surveys and frequent informal and formal contacts with users.
- **Timeliness and punctuality** — The EU ITGS benefit from well-established data collection and compilation procedures and also from the Intrastat and Extrastat regulations, which include deadlines for data transmission to Eurostat.
- **Accessibility** — All dissemination channels are used: electronic and paper publications, predefined tables, databases, DVDs and FTP addresses for bulk downloads.
- **Comparability over time** — The EU ITGS benefit from a high level of comparability over time thanks to the stability of the concepts, definitions and classifications. As far as possible, this comparability is also maintained when methodological changes occur, thanks to the retroactive recalculation of the time series.

Comparability across countries — The EU ITGS benefit from a high level of comparability across countries thanks to the implementation of harmonised rules for data collection and compilation. As far as possible, the concepts and definitions in EU legislation follow the international standards promoted by the United Nations Statistical Division.

Comparability across domains — The EU ITGS constitute an essential source of information for the compilation of the balance of payments statistics and national accounts. Nevertheless, comparability across domains is affected by differences in concepts and definitions which mean that the ITGS first have to be adjusted.

- **Clarity** — The dissemination of the ITGS is supported by a complete set of structural metadata that make it easy to identify, retrieve and browse the data. The reference metadata describing the contents and the data quality are also quite exhaustive. In particular, it is worth mentioning the User Guide and the annual Quality Report.
- **Coherence** — The Intrastat and Extrastat regulations ensure the harmonisation of the concepts and definitions applied by the Member States when compiling the data to be provided to Eurostat. In addition, the coherence is strengthened by Eurostat's harmonised approach to data production and dissemination regardless of the type of trade — intra- or extra-EU trade — and the reporting country.

Main area of potential quality improvement: accuracy and comparability

- **Accuracy** — The EU ITGS benefit from well-established data collection systems supported by efficient validation and compilation tools. However, the intra-EU trade statistics may suffer from some trade operators responding late or not at all to requests that they report their trade in goods. In addition, confidentiality has an impact on data accuracy at very detailed (i.e. CN eight-digit) level.
- **Comparability** — The comparability across countries could be improved through further harmonisation in the Member States' practices as regard specific goods or movements. In addition, regular 'mirror' analyses (comparing the trade flows reported by the two trading partners) reveal a lack of accuracy in the detailed statistics. That said, it should be kept in mind that basic data consist of millions of records each month and it is impossible to achieve complete accuracy. As in all statistical work, a balance has to be struck between the resources devoted to checking and the likely benefit. Therefore the users should be aware of the margin of inaccuracy in the data used, at least at the most detailed level of data.

2 Relevance

ESS DEFINITION

Relevance is the degree to which statistical outputs meet current and potential user needs. It depends on whether all the statistics that are needed are produced and the extent to which concepts used (definitions, classifications etc.) reflect user needs.

2.1 User needs

ITGS are an important primary source for most public and private sector decision-makers. For example, at EU level, international trade data are used extensively for multilateral and bilateral negotiations in the framework of the common commercial policy, to develop and implement anti-dumping policy, and to evaluate the progress of the Single Market and many other policies. They also constitute an essential source for the compilation of balance of payments statistics and national accounts. In addition, they help European enterprises carry out market research and determine their commercial strategy.

International trade in goods forms an important part of the world economy and, as such, must be measured reliably and the relevant statistical data should be comparable and widely disseminated. The statistics satisfy this need in a variety of ways. Users may need overall figures or very detailed data by product and partner. They may be interested in trade values in current prices or in trade volumes at constant prices. Alternatively, their interest may be in the weight of trade or in some other quantity measures.

These examples, which are far from exhaustive, show the diversity of the users and their requirements. Eurostat tries to meet these various needs and to adapt to the changing, increasingly global environment. In particular, the Intrastat and Extrastat Regulations and the ITGS classifications are revised regularly in order to take into account users' needs and the economic and administrative environment.

2.2 User satisfaction

User needs are monitored regularly. At EU level, there are regular contacts with key institutional users (e.g. Commission services or the European Central Bank) and with other main user groups such as trade associations. In daily work, users can easily communicate their requests and needs to Eurostat by using dedicated tools integrated in the data dissemination.

Eurostat undertook its last large-scale user satisfaction survey focusing on ITGS in 2007. The survey found a very high level of satisfaction among users: 85 % were very or fairly satisfied with the data. This high level of satisfaction has been confirmed by every general User Satisfaction Survey carried out by Eurostat since then (in 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013). In the 2013 general survey, 'International trade' received the second most positive evaluation of all the statistical domains, with 60.5 % of respondents rating the data quality as very good or good and 19.3 % as adequate. 'Economy and finance' statistics received the highest evaluation, with 62.4 % (very good or good) and 18.5 % (adequate) respectively. These two domains outperformed the average rates.

Many Member States also conduct regular user satisfaction surveys. All surveys show a very high level of satisfaction as regards ITGS.

2.3 Completeness

The EU ITGS are based on EU legislation that is directly applicable in the Member States. In particular, the legislation includes a clear and precise list of all the statistical variables with which all Member States must provide Eurostat.

3 Accuracy

ESS DEFINITION

The **accuracy** of statistical outputs in the general statistical sense is the degree of closeness of estimates to the true values.

The accuracy of ITGS is affected in different ways by several factors:

- thresholds and non-response;
- estimation of trade value and quantity;
- data revisions;
- confidentiality; and
- control procedures.

3.1 Thresholds and non-response

3.1.1 Collected and estimated data in intra-EU trade

In order to reduce the statistical burden on business, intra-EU trade data are collected only from the biggest intra-EU traders. An enterprise has to submit Intrastat declarations if its annual intra-EU trade exceeds a certain threshold. Intrastat data collection does not therefore cover 100 % of Member States' intra-EU trade. To achieve complete coverage, the loss caused by the thresholds and by non-response from traders shall be compensated with estimates.

Table 1 shows the shares of collected and estimated data (for trade below the exemption threshold and for non- or late response) in total intra-EU trade.

Table 1: Shares of collected and estimated data in intra-EU trade, 2011
(%)

	Collected data		Estimated data			
			Below threshold		Non response	
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches
Belgium	95.3	97.7	2.7	0.9	2.0	1.4
Bulgaria	96.6	97.9	3.3	2.0	0.1	0.0
Czech Republic	96.0	98.0	3.7	1.7	0.3	0.3
Denmark	87.7	92.3			(*) 12.3	(*) 7.7
Germany	96.2	97.9	2.9	1.8	0.8	0.3
Estonia	93.1	94.1	3.0	2.0	3.9	3.9
Ireland	96.6	98.8	2.7	1.0	0.7	0.2
Greece	97.1	97.5	1.9	0.9	1.0	1.6
Spain	95.1	96.9	2.7	1.6	2.2	1.5
France	97.9	98.4	1.6	1.4	0.5	0.2
Italy	98.4	99.1	1.6	0.9	0.0	0.0
Cyprus	96.9	92.3	1.9	1.8	1.2	5.9
Latvia	91.1	93.9	3.6	2.7	5.3	3.4
Lithuania	96.1	97.9	3.6	2.0	0.3	0.1
Luxembourg	98.2	98.1	1.7	0.8	0.1	1.1
Hungary	90.9	95.5	4.8	2.7	4.3	1.8
Malta (**)	99.0	99.0	No est.	No est.	No est.	No est.
Netherlands	87.6	93.1	4.8	2.1	7.6	4.8
Austria	95.0	97.6	4.2	1.8	0.8	0.7
Poland	97.9	98.6	1.6	1.1	0.5	0.3
Portugal	95.3	97.3	3.7	2.3	1.0	0.5
Romania	96.9	98.2	1.9	1.5	1.1	0.4
Slovenia	97.2	98.3	2.8	1.7	0.0	0.0
Slovakia	90.9	93.5	4.4	3.3	4.7	3.2
Finland	95.0	97.3	3.3	1.7	1.7	1.0
Sweden	95.5	97.9	3.6	1.8	0.8	0.3
United Kingdom	94.7	97.2	3.8	2.7	1.5	0.2

Note: The share of estimated data refers to the share in the final data transmitted to Eurostat. This is larger for first and intermediate data.

(*) Estimates both for trade below the exemption threshold and non-response.

(**) No estimate is compiled for trade below the exemption threshold and non-response.

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

The estimates are compiled on the basis of the information in enterprises' fiscal declarations — VAT returns or recapitulative statements (VIES data). Intrastat declarations submitted by enterprises above the exemption threshold are used to allocate the estimated total trade values by partner and product

Under EU legislation, estimates are to be broken down at least by partner Member State and two-digit codes of the Combined Nomenclature.

Table 2 indicates the levels at which the estimates are compiled.

Table 2: Estimates in intra-EU trade — Level of details, 2011

	Estimates for trade below threshold	Estimates for non-response
Belgium	CN8 / partner countries	CN8 / partner countries
Bulgaria	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
Czech Republic	CN8 / partner countries	CN8 / partner countries
Denmark	CN8 / partner countries	CN8 / partner countries
Germany	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
Estonia	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
Ireland	by partner only	CN8 / partner countries
Greece	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
Spain	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
France	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
Italy	HS2 / partner countries	No estimate
Cyprus	CN8 / partner countries	CN8 / partner countries
Latvia	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
Lithuania	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
Luxembourg	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
Hungary	HS4 / partner countries	HS4 / partner countries
Malta	No estimate	No estimate
Netherlands	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
Austria	CN8 / partner countries	CN8 / partner countries
Poland	CN8 / partner countries	CN8 / partner countries
Portugal	CN8 / partner countries	CN8 / partner countries
Romania	HS4 / partner countries	HS4 / partner countries
Slovenia	CN8 / partner countries	CN8 / partner countries
Slovakia	CN8 / partner countries	CN8 / partner countries
Finland	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
Sweden	HS2 / partner countries	HS2 / partner countries
United Kingdom	CN8 / partner countries	No product or partner breakdown

Note: The Combined Nomenclature is based on the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System (HS). The Harmonized System (HS) is an international classification at two (HS2), four (HS4) and six-digit (HS6) level. The CN corresponds to the HS plus a further breakdown at eight-digit (CN8) level.

Source: Detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

3.1.2 Collected and estimated data in extra-EU trade

Theoretically, the problem of late or non-response should not exist in the Extrastat system. Nevertheless, estimates may have to be made to make up for delayed or incomplete customs records. In addition, for simplification purposes, Member States are allowed to compile less detailed information for transactions below the statistical threshold of EUR 1 000 1000 and 1 000 1000 kilograms.

Table 3 shows the proportions of collected and estimated data in total extra-EU trade.

Table 3: Shares of collected and estimated data in extra-EU trade, 2011 (%)

	Collected data				Estimated data	
	Standard category		Less detailed data (below statistical threshold)		Delayed or incomplete records	
	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports
Belgium	100.0	100.0				
Bulgaria	100.0	100.0				
Czech Republic	100.0	100.0				
Denmark	100.0	100.0	0.0			
Germany	100.0	100.0				
Estonia	100.0	100.0				
Ireland	100.0	100.0				
Greece	100.0	100.0				
Spain	100.0	100.0				
France	100.0	100.0				
Italy	99.6	99.1	0.4	0.9		
Cyprus	100.0	100.0				
Latvia	100.0	100.0				
Lithuania	100.0	100.0				
Luxembourg	100.0	100.0				
Hungary	100.0	100.0				
Malta	100.0	100.0				
Netherlands	99.6	100.0			0.4	0.0
Austria	100.0	100.0				
Poland	100.0	100.0				
Portugal	100.0	100.0				
Romania	100.0	100.0				
Slovenia	100.0	99.9	0.0	0.1		
Slovakia	100.0	100.0				
Finland	100.0	100.0				
Sweden	100.0	100.0				
United Kingdom	98.5	99.0	1.5	1.0		

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

Under EU legislation, estimates have to be broken down at least by partner country and two-digit CN code. Table 4 indicates the Member States compiling estimates for the extra-EU trade and the levels of these estimates.

Table 4: Estimates in extra-EU trade — Level of details, 2011

	Data below the statistical threshold	Estimates for delayed or incomplete records
Denmark	CN8 / partner countries	
Italy	No product or partner breakdown	
Netherlands		HS2 / partner countries
Slovenia	No product or partner breakdown	
United Kingdom	No product or partner breakdown	

Source: Detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

3.2 Estimating trade value and quantity

3.2.1 Trade value

In ITGS, the trade value corresponds to the amount that would be invoiced in the event of sale or purchase at the national border of the reporting country. It is expressed as a free-on-board (FOB) value) for exports/dispatches and a cost-insurance-freight (CIF) value) for imports/arrivals.

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 invoice value — the amount agreed on the sales agreement — is systematically collected from the providers of statistical information (PSIs). When not provided by the PSIs, the statistical value is estimated by the National Statistical Authority.

Table 5 shows the discrepancy between total estimated statistical value and total collected invoice value (aggregation of values at transaction level). At transaction level, the discrepancy can be positive or negative depending on the proportion of transport costs included in the invoice. The biggest discrepancies are recorded when the invoice relates to a processing activity like repainting, labelling or packaging. In such cases, the statistical value will be much higher, as it corresponds to the total amount which would have been invoiced if the goods had been sold or purchased.

Table 6 indicates where some PSIs are exempted from reporting the statistical value. Most Member States either do not collect the statistical value at all or collect it only from PSIs with annual trade above a certain threshold. Table 6 also shows the method used to estimate non-collected statistical value. In all cases, the estimate is based on the invoice value, which is adjusted by means of a correction coefficient fixed differently according to Member State.

Table 5: Intra-EU trade — Estimated statistical value vs collected invoice value, 2011 (%)

	Arrivals	Dispatches
Belgium	0.0	0.0
Bulgaria	1.4	-0.3
Czech Republic	0.1	-0.8
Denmark	:	:
Germany	-0.2	-0.2
Estonia	1.5	-1.4
Ireland	0.3	0.0
Greece	No est.	No est.
Spain	0.3	0.1
France	-0.1	-0.5
Italy	:	:
Cyprus	0.7	-0.9
Latvia	1.3	-0.7
Lithuania	1.2	-0.2
Luxembourg	0.9	-0.7
Hungary	0.3	-0.2
Malta	No est.	No est.
Netherlands	:	:
Austria	0.0	0.0
Poland	0.8	-0.4
Portugal	0.2	-0.5
Romania	0.9	-0.2
Slovenia	0.4	-0.7
Slovakia	1.1	-0.6
Finland	1.2	-1.6
Sweden	1.0	-0.7
United Kingdom	:	:

Formula = [total statistical value / total invoice value - 1] * 100

: Data not available

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

Table 6: Intra-EU trade — Exemption from statistical value reporting and estimation, 2011

	PSIs exempted	Estimation methods
Belgium	All PSIs exempted	No estimation, use of the invoice value
Bulgaria	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient computed from historical data; statistical value collected from PSIs for goods for/after processing
Czech Republic	All PSIs exempted	Correction coefficient computed from historical data
Denmark	All PSIs exempted	Estimation from invoice value by applying factors derived from a survey
Germany	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient for trade data below the threshold computed from above-threshold data
Estonia	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient for trade data below the threshold computed from above-threshold data
Ireland	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient computed for trade data below the threshold from above-threshold data
Greece	No exemption	Statistical value collected from trade operators above and below the threshold, so no estimation needed
Spain	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient computed for trade data below the threshold from above-threshold data
France	All PSIs exempted	Correction coefficient computed from historical data
Italy	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient computed from above the threshold data for trade data below the threshold
Cyprus	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient for trade data below the threshold computed from above-threshold data
Latvia	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient for trade data below the threshold computed from historical data
Lithuania	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient for trade data below the threshold computed from above-threshold data
Luxembourg	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient for trade data below the threshold computed from above-threshold data
Hungary	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient for trade data below the threshold computed from above-threshold data
Malta	No exemption	No estimation since both invoice and statistical values are collected
Netherlands	All PSIs exempted	Correction coefficients derived from historical data
Austria	PSIs below the threshold	No estimation, use of the invoice value
Poland	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient for trade data below the threshold computed from above-threshold data
Portugal	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient for trade data below the threshold computed from above-threshold data
Romania	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient for trade data below the threshold computed from above-threshold data
Slovenia	PSIs below the threshold	Correction coefficient for trade data below the threshold computed from above-threshold data
Slovakia	All PSIs exempted	Estimation from invoice value by applying factors derived from a survey on ancillary costs
Finland	All PSIs exempted	Estimation from invoice value by applying factors derived from a 2008 survey
Sweden	All PSIs exempted	Estimation from invoice value by applying factors derived from a survey
United Kingdom	All PSIs exempted	Delivery terms are collected from the largest traders. Estimation from invoice value by a model using ancillary cost information derived from a monthly survey.

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

3.2.2 Quantity

The most common unit of measurement of quantity is net mass expressed in kilograms. This corresponds to the weight of the goods without packaging.

For certain goods, a supplementary quantity is provided in addition to the net mass. This quantity is expressed in a unit which adds useful information. Supplementary units are units other than kilograms, e.g. 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 CN product code, it is not mandatory to request the specification of net mass from the PSIs. Member States can decide whether the information about net mass is collected systematically for all CN8 codes or for some only. Under the EU legislation, the non-collected net mass shall be estimated by the National Statistical Authority since 2010.

3.3 Data revisions

International trade in goods statistics, like many published statistics, must balance the need for timely information with the accuracy of that information. Inevitably, the detailed data first sent for a 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 transmitted to Eurostat are subject to revision, revised results shall be transmitted no later than the month following their availability.

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 anymore except in exceptional and well-justified cases.

Table 7 shows the impact of revisions by comparing the last values with the first ones. A minus symbol indicates a higher first value and a positive figure a lower first value. In most cases, the values transmitted first are underestimated. Underestimations in intra-EU trade are generally due to Intrastat declarations not submitted in due time by PSIs. In particular, this was the reason of the exceptionally high revision which occurred for Malta.

The average extent of the revisions is generally greater for intra-EU trade than for extra-EU trade and greater for arrivals than for dispatches. The exceptionally high revision which occurred in extra-EU trade for Greece was due to the resolution of issues in the processing of Customs declarations linked to simplification provisions. The exceptionally high revision which occurred for the United Kingdom was due to the integration of trade in non-monetary gold.

Table 7: Impact of revisions in intra- and extra-EU, 2011 (%)

	Intra-EU trade		Extra-EU trade	
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Imports	Exports
EU-27	1.2	0.5	3.2	2.1
Belgium	0.9	0.0	5.0	0.3
Bulgaria	4.3	1.6	-0.2	1.1
Czech Republic	0.8	0.9	0.1	0.0
Denmark	-3.4	-1.2	0.0	0.1
Germany	-0.1	-0.1	0.5	0.2
Estonia	0.7	0.3	0.4	-0.6
Ireland	0.5	-1.4	0.3	0.0
Greece	10.6	12.8	63.3	16.2
Spain	4.9	5.6	3.3	0.7
France	0.5	-0.4	2.0	1.5
Italy	0.2	-0.1	-1.2	-0.2
Cyprus	0.5	2.5	1.6	-0.3
Latvia	6.7	0.9	-0.1	-0.6
Lithuania	3.0	-0.6	-1.2	0.2
Luxembourg	4.5	2.1	1.6	2.8
Hungary	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.6
Malta	18.6	28.3	0.3	0.0
Netherlands	-0.6	0.1	2.0	2.6
Austria	2.9	0.7	0.8	-1.5
Poland	6.6	2.8	-0.3	-0.2
Portugal	4.9	2.8	0.4	-1.5
Romania	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.6
Slovenia	1.1	0.1	0.1	-0.2
Slovakia	5.5	1.7	-0.3	-0.3
Finland	2.4	0.2	2.3	1.8
Sweden	1.3	-0.6	2.1	-0.1
United Kingdom	1.2	0.5	12.0	15.4

Note: Revision rate = (Last figure - First figure) / First figure * 100

Source: Eurostat calculations based on the first and last versions of detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

3.4 Confidentiality

The confidentiality impacts the data accuracy, in particular at the most detailed level, as some characteristics of the trade are hidden.

There are two types of confidentiality:

- **partner confidentiality** — In order to conceal the destination or the origin of the goods, the code of the partner country is replaced by a ‘secret country’ code, different for intra- and extra-EU trade; and
- **product confidentiality** — In order not to divulge the nature of the goods, all or part of the trade is allocated to a confidential product code. Information about goods may be considered commercially sensitive as regards value, quantity or value/quantity ratio (since this would give an indication of price).

Tables 8 and 9 show the impact of confidentiality in intra- and extra-EU trade, in terms of number of eight-digit product codes (CN8) affected, trade value and net mass. The impact varies considerably depending on the type of trade, the flow and the Member State in question.

Table 8: Impact of confidentiality in intra-EU trade, 2011

	Number of CN8 codes affected		Impact on trade value (%)		Impact on net mass (%)	
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches
Belgium	32	103	0.8	1.4	0.2	1.9
Bulgaria						
Czech Republic	651	391	1.2	0.4	4.3	0.4
Denmark	45	101	0.5	7.0	1.7	10.5
Germany	65	197	2.4	2.6	8.2	9.4
Estonia						
Ireland	11	6	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.4
Greece	11	11	0.0	2.8	0.0	1.0
Spain	53	52	0.4	0.8	0.7	1.6
France	38	316	0.3	3.2	0.0	3.8
Italy	23	101	0.2	0.7	0.2	1.0
Cyprus	1		0.8		0.0	
Latvia						
Lithuania						
Luxembourg	3	6	3.9	1.6	0.2	0.8
Hungary	58	53	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.8
Malta						
Netherlands	217	402	1.4	6.5	0.7	10.1
Austria	100	254	2.7	6.5	12.3	13.4
Poland	1		0.0		0.0	
Portugal	131	2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Romania	81	52	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.0
Slovenia	27	12	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1
Slovakia						
Finland	78	137	1.3	7.1	11.9	12.1
Sweden	14	47	0.1	1.9	0.1	1.0
United Kingdom	13	63	0.8	1.8	1.9	1.9

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

Table 9: Impact of confidentiality in extra-EU trade, 2011 (%)

	Number of CN8 codes affected		Impact on trade value (%)		Impact on net mass (%)	
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches
Belgium	39	99	2.3	2.9	0.6	3.5
Bulgaria						
Czech Republic	242	195	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.5
Denmark	38	102	4.3	11.1	29.3	12.2
Germany	59	184	7.0	1.7	26.0	7.7
Estonia						
Ireland						
Greece	10	15	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.2
Spain	49	52	0.3	1.3	0.3	1.8
France	40	302	0.3	3.7	0.0	3.6
Italy	19	90	0.1	0.7	0.0	1.0
Cyprus	1		1.5		0.0	
Latvia	5		1.1		0.5	
Lithuania	1		0.4		0.2	
Luxembourg	1	4	1.9	0.5	2.3	0.0
Hungary	59	63	0.5	0.7	0.0	1.3
Malta						
Netherlands	410	724	4.2	5.0	3.1	1.9
Austria	88	247	12.4	8.0	45.4	7.4
Poland						
Portugal	14	9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Romania	64	39	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.0
Slovenia	23	20	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.5
Slovakia						
Finland	69	133	7.6	6.7	11.8	17.7
Sweden	19	51	0.3	4.7	0.5	1.4
United Kingdom	39	59	0.8	1.0	0.6	2.5

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

Table 10 indicates the number of CN8 codes according to the type of confidentiality: partner confidentiality only, product confidentiality only or a combination of the two. For most of the Member States, product confidentiality seems to affect dispatches/exports more than arrivals/imports. Also, some Member States systematically use only one type of confidentiality.

Table 10: Number of CN8 codes according to the type of confidentiality, 2011

	Intra-EU trade						Extra-EU trade					
	Arrivals			Dispatches			Imports			Exports		
	Secret product	Secret partner	Secret product and partner	Secret product	Secret partner	Secret product and partner	Secret product	Secret partner	Secret product and partner	Secret product	Secret partner	Secret product and partner
Belgium	32			103			29		10	89		10
Bulgaria												
Czech Republic			651			391			242			195
Denmark	38	7		81	20		31	7		82	20	
Germany	16	4	45	175	1	21	15	11	33	172	1	11
Estonia												
Ireland			11			6						
Greece	11			11			10			15		
Spain	53			52			49			52		
France	2	6	30	282	4	30	2	6	32	261	4	37
Italy			23			101			19			90
Cyprus	1						1					
Latvia									5			
Lithuania								1				
Luxembourg			3			6			1			4
Hungary			58			53			59			63
Malta												
Netherlands		154	63		326	76		345	65		670	54
Austria	42	6	52	160	18	76	36	6	46	155	18	74
Poland		1										
Portugal			131			2			14			9
Romania			81			52			64			39
Slovenia		5	22			12		5	18			20
Slovakia												
Finland		37	41		11	126		34	35		11	122
Sweden			14			47			19			51
United Kingdom	6	7		47	16		9	30		39	20	

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

3.5 Control procedures

The primary responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of the published trade data rests with the Member States, as they are responsible for data collection and compilation. The control procedures can be broadly classified as:

- controls of data validity: Data are invalid when they cause processing problems and must be removed or corrected. Controls of data validity should in particular detect incorrect or missing codes, missing indicators (e.g. value or quantity), character data in numeric field and vice versa. All Member States use reference tables with an automatic process to check for invalid data;
- controls of data credibility: data can be ‘valid’ but not plausible; therefore, they can be processed but will distort the statistical analysis. Inconsistencies can be detected by cross-checking different statistical variables (e.g. trade value and net mass) or by observing trends in time series; and
- controls of data completeness: these are checks as to whether the reported trade data represent all the operator’s trading activity. In intra-EU data, a close link with the VAT system allows Member States to compare the statistical declarations with VAT returns or VIES data. In extra-EU trade, data are collected through customs declarations, so they are considered to be complete. Additional sources can be used, e.g. data from other statistical domains or mirror statistics.

In addition, data are validated by Eurostat before any dissemination to users. This mainly involves controls of data validity. Data already uploaded in the Eurostat database undergo further credibility and completeness checks on the basis of internal studies or user feedback.

It should be kept in mind that basic data consist of millions of detailed trade declarations each month and it is impossible to achieve complete accuracy for the published statistics. As in all statistical work, a balance has to be struck between the resources devoted to checking and the likely benefits. Therefore, users should be aware of the margin of inaccuracy in the data used, at least as regards the most detailed level of data. This applies particularly to intra-EU trade statistics, where not all traders are requested to provide detailed information on their transactions.

4 Timeliness and punctuality

ESS DEFINITION

The **timeliness** of statistical outputs is the length of time between the event or phenomenon they describe and their availability.

Punctuality is the time lag between the release date of data and the target date on which they were scheduled for release as announced in an official release calendar, laid down by Regulations or previously agreed among partners.

First results (including estimates) on euro-area and EU trade balances are published around 46 days after the reference month in the international trade euro-indicators news release. The latest supplied detailed data (including revisions) are published in a monthly press release. Short-term indicators are also updated on a monthly basis on the date of the press release. They include in particular all data published in the euro-indicators news release. Long-term indicators are generally updated once a year, when final data are available for the previous reference year.

Under the Intrastat legislation, Member States should provide Eurostat with intra-EU **aggregated** statistics within 40 days of the reference month and with intra-EU **detailed** statistics within 70 days.

Under the Extrastat legislation, until 2009 Member States had to provide Eurostat with extra-EU **aggregated** statistics within 40 days of the reference month and with extra-EU **detailed** statistics within 42 days. Since 2010, they have had to provide extra-EU **detailed** statistics only, but within 40 days.

Table 11 shows how often and to what extent the monthly intra- and extra-EU trade data were delivered late in 2011. This indicator is based on the dates on which the first version was sent to Eurostat.

Table 11: Punctuality of detailed and aggregated data, 2011

	Aggregated data		Detailed data			
	Intra-EU trade		Intra-EU trade		Extra-EU trade	
	Number of delayed data deliveries	Average delay	Number of delayed data deliveries	Average delay	Number of delayed data deliveries	Average delay
Belgium					1	1 day
Bulgaria						
Czech Republic						
Denmark						
Germany						
Estonia						
Ireland	2	2 days	1	4 days		
Greece					1	3 days
Spain			1	1 day	1	1 day
France						
Italy			2	2 days		
Cyprus			1	4 days		
Latvia						
Lithuania	1	18 days			1	18 days
Luxembourg			2	1 day	2	2 days
Hungary						
Malta						
Netherlands						
Austria						
Poland						
Portugal						
Romania						
Slovenia						
Slovakia						
Finland	1	1 day			1	1 day
Sweden						
United Kingdom						

5 Accessibility and clarity

ESS DEFINITION

The **accessibility** of statistical outputs is the measure of the ease with which users can obtain the data. It is determined by the physical conditions by means of which users obtain data: where to go, how to order, delivery time, pricing policy, marketing conditions (copyright, etc.), availability of micro or macro data, various formats (paper, files, CD-ROM, internet, etc.).

The **clarity** of statistical outputs is the measure of the ease with which users can understand the data. It is determined by the information environment within which the data are presented, whether the data are accompanied by appropriate metadata, whether use is made of illustrations such as graphs and maps, whether information on data accuracy is available (including any limitations on use) and the extent to which additional assistance is provided by the producer.

All available dissemination channels are used: electronic and paper publications, predefined tables, databases, DVDs and FTP addresses for bulk download. Data are disseminated simultaneously and free of charge to all interested parties through Eurostat's website. Annually, approximately 20 000 registered users perform about two million extractions of trade in goods data.

In daily work, users can easily communicate their requests and needs by using tools directly geared to dissemination. The requests are further managed by the Eurostat helpdesk.

The dissemination of ITGS is supported by a complete set of structural metadata making it possible easily to identify, retrieve and browse the data. The reference metadata describing the contents and the data quality are also exhaustive.

6 Coherence and comparability

ESS DEFINITION

The **coherence** of two or more statistical outputs refers to the degree to which the statistical processes by which they were generated used the same concepts — classifications, definitions and target populations — and harmonised methods. Coherent statistical outputs have the potential to be validly combined and used jointly. Examples of joint use are where the statistical outputs refer to the same population, reference period and region but comprise different sets of data items (say, employment data and production data) or where they comprise the same data items (say, employment data) but for different reference periods, regions or domains.

Comparability is a special case of coherence and refers to the second example above, where the statistical outputs refer to the same data items and the aim of combining them is to make comparisons over time, or across regions, or across other domains.

6.1 Comparability over space

6.1.1 Community figures versus national figures

EU legislation serves as a basis for compiling the intra- and extra-EU trade statistics published by Eurostat. However, Community statistics, which cover the EU as a whole, and the statistics published by the Member States, are not always directly comparable. Member States may apply a different concept at national level but they have to provide Eurostat with harmonised data according to the Community concept.

The most common differences between the Community concept and the national concepts are as follows:

- Use of the general trade system at national level while the Community statistics are compiled according to the special trade system;
- Exclusion from national statistics of ‘quasi-transit’, which means of
 - goods imported from a non-EU country, cleared through customs and immediately dispatched to another Member State (the Member State of final destination); or
 - goods imported from another Member State (the Member State of actual export), cleared through customs and immediately dispatched to a non-EU country.

The customs formalities distinguish between simple transit, which is not recorded in Community statistics, and quasi-transit.
- Inclusion of repairs in national statistics — these are excluded from the scope of Community statistics from 2006; and
- Country of origin vs. Member State of consignment — for Community statistics for intra-EU imports, the partner country is the Member State of consignment but for national statistics it may be the country of origin.

Table 12 shows conceptual differences between Community statistics and individual Member State’s national statistics.

Table 12: Conceptual differences between European statistics and national statistics, 2011

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

⁽¹⁾ 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 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 FOB.

United Kingdom: Extra-EU imports at national level are by country of consignment; non-monetary gold is excluded from national statistics.

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

6.1.2 Asymmetries in extra-EU trade statistics

There are two main approaches for measuring international trade in goods: the general trade system and the special trade system. EU ITGS use the latter, which means that goods from a non-EU country that are received into customs warehouses are not recorded unless they subsequently go into free circulation in the

Member State of receipt (or are placed under the customs procedures for inward processing). Similarly, outgoing goods from customs warehouses are not recorded as exports. The general trade system, which is used by most of the EU's main partner countries, is broader, including all goods entering or leaving the country.

Since intra-EU trade statistics are not directly linked to customs procedures, they are not compiled on a general or special trade basis.

Comparing extra-EU trade statistics with the figures published by non-EU countries for the same trade flows inevitably highlights some discrepancies. Besides the trade system and errors such as product or partner misclassification, the most common reasons for asymmetries are:

- Methodological differences: trade coverage (e.g. data collection thresholds, treatment of specific goods or movements of goods), definition of partner country (e.g. country of re-export vs. country of origin), definition of statistical territory, different valuation principles (e.g. FOB valuation for exports and CIF valuation for imports);
- Time lag: the same operation is recorded for a different reference period;
- Statistical confidentiality: the goods movement is made confidential by one of the partners;
- Different practices in the treatment of revisions; and
- Problems of currency conversion.

Table 13 shows the mirror discrepancies in EU-27 trade with its top-10 trading partners.

Table 13: Asymmetries with the top-10 extra-EU partner countries, 2011 (%)

	EU-27 imports (*)	EU-27 exports (**)
USA	-1.1	-2.3
China	13.7	-10.7
Russia	20.9	36.7
Switzerland	-2.9	19.6
Norway	0.3	13.3
Japan	2.5	-16.5
Turkey	7.2	11.0
South Korea	-11.1	-4.7
Brazil	2.3	-2.5
India	0.8	1.0

(*) (EU imports - mirror exports) / Mirror flows average

(**) (EU exports - mirror imports) / Mirror flows average

Source: Eurostat calculations based on data transmitted by Member States and data available in the UN Comtrade database

6.1.3 Asymmetries in intra-EU trade statistics

In theory, intra-EU trade statistics should be less affected by asymmetries than extra-EU trade statistics as issued from more harmonised rules. Dispatches from Member State A to Member State B, as reported by A, should be almost equal to arrivals into B from A, as reported by B. Due to a different valuation principle (CIF > FOB), arrivals should be slightly higher than dispatches.

However, since the Intrastat system came into operation, bilateral comparisons have revealed major and persistent discrepancies in the intra-EU trade statistics. Therefore, comparisons based on intra-EU trade statistics must be handled with caution and should take these into account. The main reasons for the discrepancies are known and are partly the same as in the case of extra-EU trade. There are also factors that are specific to intra-EU trade, such as estimates for non-collected data.

Table 14 reports the asymmetries in trade values, expressed in relative terms. It is evident that the impact varies considerably among the Member States. Many regularly carry out bilateral studies to find out at detailed product level where the problems are and to resolve them. However, despite all the analysis, the problems are not easily remedied.

Table 14: Intra-EU asymmetries, 2011
(%)

	Arrivals (*)	Dispatches (**)
EU-27	-2.4	2.4
Belgium	5.3	5.5
Bulgaria	3.0	7.8
Czech Republic	0.0	3.4
Denmark	-2.4	1.7
Germany	-1.1	2.4
Estonia	1.5	3.7
Ireland	-8.3	-17.3
Greece	-2.4	5.7
Spain	0.5	7.3
France	-5.1	1.2
Italy	-1.1	5.9
Cyprus	-35.1	-92.2
Latvia	6.2	-9.4
Lithuania	9.4	3.7
Luxembourg	-5.4	-5.2
Hungary	2.2	7.9
Malta	-13.2	-32.5
Netherlands	-5.7	4.7
Austria	-1.1	-0.2
Poland	-8.1	4.6
Portugal	1.7	9.3
Romania	2.6	10.4
Slovenia	4.6	13.6
Slovakia	-2.5	7.7
Finland	-0.1	-3.9
Sweden	0.9	-3.8
United Kingdom	-6.4	-3.7

(*) (Arrivals - mirror dispatches) / Mirror flows average

(**) (Dispatches - mirror arrivals) / Mirror flows average

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

6.2 Comparability over time

Comparability over time is another important aspect of quality. Changes due to definitions, coverage or methods and other changes will have an impact on the continuity of trade series. The most important methodological changes or other events affecting ITGS in the past few years are listed in the table below.

Table 15: Changes affecting comparability over time

	Type of trade	Event
2010	Intra- and extra-EU	Introduction of the concept of change in economic ownership to record the trade in ships and aircraft and to determine the partner country allocation for deliveries to ships and aircraft and sea products (based on the economic ownership of the ships/aircraft)
	Intra- and extra-EU	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
	Intra-EU	Estimates for non-collected net mass mandatory
2009	Intra-EU	For arrivals, minimum coverage from collected data reduced from 97 % to 95 % of total trade value
2007	Intra- and extra-EU	Change in the definition of intra- and extra-EU trade due to EU enlargement (accession of Bulgaria and Romania on 1 January 2007)
	Intra- and extra-EU	Combined Nomenclature impacted by the revision of the Harmonized System
2006	Extra-EU	Repairs excluded from the scope of extra-EU trade
	Intra-EU	Collection of net mass in Intrastat no longer mandatory if a supplementary quantity is collected
2005	Intra-EU	Repairs excluded from the scope of intra-EU trade
	Intra-EU	Collection of net mass in Intrastat no longer mandatory for a specific list of CN8 codes for which a supplementary quantity is collected
2004	Intra- and extra-EU	Change in the definition of intra- and extra-EU trade due to EU enlargement (accession of Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia on 1 July 2004)

A particular issue of comparability over time concerns product classifications. The most detailed statistics are collected and published by eight-digit CN code. Some changes are made to the CN every year. Eurostat maintains conversion tables between successive versions of the CN in order to improve comparison over time. Table 16 gives an overview of changes affecting the CN8 codes in recent years.

Table 16: Changes to CN8 codes over time

Year	Creations	Deletions	Total	Net change	CN Codes
2011	132	281	413	-149	9 294
2010	180	306	486	-126	9 443
2009	127	257	384	-130	9 569
2008	75	96	171	-21	9 699
2007	917	1 039	1 956	-122	9 720
2006	486	740	1 226	-254	9 842
2005	97	175	272	-78	10 096
2004	273	503	776	-230	10 174
2003	19	15	34	4	10 404
2002	780	654	1 434	126	10 400
2001	50	90	140	-40	10 274

The impact of the various methodological and practical changes in recent years is difficult to assess precisely. Nevertheless, a change from an administrative data source (Extrastat) to a purely statistical data collection system (Intrastat) normally means a major break in the trade statistics time series.

6.3 Coherence with other statistics

Apart from the ITGS, information on trade flows can be found in national accounts, business statistics and balance of payments data. These are compiled and produced according to the recommendations (sources and methods) of various international organisations, e.g. Eurostat, International Monetary Fund, United Nations. Table 17 gives an overall idea of the main differences between these sources.

Table 17: Coherence across domains

	International Trade Statistics	National Accounts	Balance of Payments	Business Statistics
Concepts & Definitions	Community definition	Aggregation of national statistics based on ESA 95. However, account of the rest of the world is based on national definition.	Aggregation of national statistics based upon IMF 5th manual. It implies some methodological discrepancies (FOB/FOB, difference of coverage). BoP statistics in Member States are most of the time derived from Member States' ITGS. BoP statistics sent to Eurostat are compiled according to the Community concept.	Statistics are based on activity sector
Statistical unit/ object/ population	Cross-border movement of goods		International transaction with change of ownership	Enterprise, local unit
Classifications (nomenclature)	Combined Nomenclature (CN)	Institutional sectors	IMF classification	NACE
Geographical breakdown	Detailed geographical breakdown	Intra-EU, Extra-EU, World	Detailed geographical breakdown	All partners
Reference period	Monthly	Annual	Quarterly	Annual
Correction methods	National corrections	National corrections	National corrections	National corrections

6.4 Internal coherence

A key feature of the EU ITGS is their coherence. Aggregated data are constructed from detailed data across Member States and product classifications with the help of official correspondence tables. This ensures internal coherence. In addition, in order to maintain coherence, Eurostat calculates derived indicators such as unit value indices or seasonally adjusted series from the detailed data provided by Member States.

7 Trade-offs between output quality components

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Output quality components are not mutually exclusive in the sense that there are relationships between the factors that contribute to them. There are cases where the factors leading to improvements with respect to one component result in deterioration with respect to another.

As there are a number of quality components, including some with subcomponents, the number of possible trade-offs is considerable. However, not all of them are relevant for ITGS. Some of the most significant trade-offs are considered below:

- **Trade-off between relevance and comparability over time**

The most important methodological changes over the last few years are documented in section 6.2. Some, such as the exclusion of repairs from the scope of statistics, were made in order to improve the relevance of statistics. Similarly, product classifications are revised regularly to ensure that they reflect changes in technology, trade patterns and user needs. Consequently, comparability over time is affected.

- **Trade-off between accuracy and timeliness**

Trade statistics consist of a huge volume of detailed declarations collected in two different systems: Intrastat and Extrastat. As the time needed to transmit detailed intra-EU trade data is considerably longer than that for detailed extra-EU trade data, aggregated intra-EU trade data must be reported within 40 days for the purposes of macro-economic analysis.

- **Trade-off between accuracy and respondent burden**

Although respondent burden is not an output quality component as such, it forms an important trade-off with accuracy. The Intrastat system is constructed so that the smallest traders are exempted from statistical reporting (see section 9.2). Consequently, fewer data are collected, which affects the accuracy of the detailed intra-EU trade statistics.

8 Assessment of user needs and perceptions

ESS QUALITY DECLARATION: USER FOCUS

We provide our users with products and services that meet their needs. The articulated and non-articulated needs, demands and expectations of external and internal users will guide the ESS, its members, their employees and operations.

User needs are monitored regularly. At EU level, there are regular contacts with key institutional users (Commission services and the European Central Bank) and with other main user groups such as trade associations.

Eurostat undertook its last large-scale user satisfaction survey focusing on ITGS in 2007. The survey found a very high level of satisfaction among users: 85 % were very or fairly satisfied with the data. This high level of satisfaction has been confirmed by every general User Satisfaction Survey carried out by Eurostat since then (in 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013).

Recently, the most urgent user needs have concerned incomplete information on net mass (see section 3.2.2) and statistics on enterprises involved in international trade in goods, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises. On the former, provisions in force since 2010 stipulate the use of estimates if net mass is not collected directly from the traders. On the latter, disseminated statistics on trade by business characteristics cover reference year 2005 onwards.

9 Performance, cost and respondent burden

EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE

Principle 9: Resources must be effectively used.

Principle 10: Respondent burden should be proportional to the needs of users and not excessive for respondents. Respondent burden should be measured and targets set for its reduction over time.

9.1 Performance and cost

In order to improve performance and reduce the costs of data collection and processing, the use of IT tools in data collection has been identified as a priority. Consequently, the proportion of paper declarations has decreased over time. Around 90 % of all Intrastat declarations are now received in electronic formats. Paper declarations for exports to non-EU countries have not been allowed since July 2009. Also several measures have been taken to develop and promote common tools for data validation.

9.2 Respondent burden

In order to reduce the burden on enterprises, particularly 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, Member States have each year to set thresholds for arrivals and dispatches that exempt enterprises from providing statistical information or that limit the information collected. The thresholds are expressed in terms of the annual value of intra-EU trade; there are three types:

- **Exemption threshold** — Enterprises below the threshold do not have to declare their trade in goods. When setting the threshold, Member States have to ensure that at least 97 % of their dispatches and 95% of their arrivals are covered;
- **Simplification threshold** — This allows enterprises 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. Currently, four Member States apply the simplification threshold: France, Luxembourg, Portugal and Slovakia; and
- **Statistical value threshold** — Member States may collect the statistical value but only from some of their enterprises. The threshold should 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%.

Tables 18 to 20 show these thresholds in value terms and the share of traders that benefit from them.

Table 18: Intrastat exemption thresholds and share of beneficiary traders, 2011

	Exemption threshold				Percentage of traders exempted from statistical reporting (%)		
	In euro		In national currency (*)		Arrivals	Dispatches	Total
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches			
Belgium	700 000	1 000 000			85	83	89
Bulgaria	92 034	102 260	180 000	200 000	72	66	73
Czech Republic	325 336	325 336	8 000 000	8 000 000	85	80	81
Denmark	456 338	603 977	3 400 000	4 500 000	83	75	81
Germany	400 000	400 000			91	83	89
Estonia	130 000	90 000			68	63	66
Ireland	191 000	635 000			78	83	78
Greece	130 000	90 000			63	63	63
Spain	250 000	250 000			89	81	87
France	460 000	460 000			85	78	85
Italy	200 000	200 000			71	50	67
Cyprus	85 000	55 000			71	59	73
Latvia	99 108	99 108	70 000	70 000	72	63	70
Lithuania	159 291	173 772	550 000	600 000	72	72	71
Luxembourg	200 000	150 000			83	77	82
Hungary	357 900	357 900	100 000 000	100 000 000	90	90	90
Malta	700	700			10	62	20
Netherlands	900 000	900 000			93	90	91
Austria	500 000	500 000			91	81	90
Poland	242 683	242 683	1 000 000	1 000 000	85	82	91
Portugal	200 000	250 000			89	82	88
Romania	70 770	212 309	300 000	900 000	65	68	65
Slovenia	120 000	200 000			79	77	78
Slovakia	200 000	400 000			85	83	86
Finland	275 000	500 000			87	81	87
Sweden	498 348	498 348	4 500 000	4 500 000	89	82	87
United Kingdom	691 340	288 058	600 000	250 000	87	80	84

(*) When not the euro

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

Table 19: Intrastat simplification thresholds and share of beneficiary PSIs, 2011

	Simplification threshold in euro		Percentage of PSIs allowed to make Intrastat simplified declarations (%)		
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches	Total
Luxembourg	375 000	375 000	24	28	24
Portugal	350 000	450 000	18	17	17
Slovakia	600 000	1 700 000	47	57	59

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

Table 20: Intrastat statistical value thresholds and share of beneficiary PSIs, 2011

	Statistical value threshold				Percentage of traders exempted from statistical value reporting (%)		
	In euro		In national currency (*)				
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Dispatches	National Currency	Arrivals	Dispatches	Total
Belgium	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Bulgaria	1 738 420	3 834 750	3 400 000	7 500 000	86	90	87
Czech Republic	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Denmark	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Germany	30 000 000	42 000 000			95	96	96
Estonia	4 000 000	4 500 000			93	93	92
Ireland	5 000 000	34 000 000			88	91	:
Greece	No exemption	No exemption			0	0	0
Spain	6 000 000	6 000 000			99	97	98
France	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Italy	20 000 000	20 000 000			:	:	:
Cyprus	1 500 000	3 500 000			93	96	93
Latvia	1 840 578	2 548 492	1 300 000	1 800 000	92	90	91
Lithuania	2 316 960	6 950 880	8 000 000	24 000 000	82	91	84
Luxembourg	4 000 000	8 000 000			83	88	84
Hungary	10 737 000	39 369 000	3 000 000 000	11 000 000 000	91	89	90
Malta	No exemption	No exemption			0	0	0
Netherlands	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Austria	10 000 000	10 000 000			87	83	86
Poland	8 008 539	14 560 980	33 000 000	60 000 000	90	93	95
Portugal	5 000 000	6 500 000			82	83	83
Romania	2 358 990	4 717 980	10 000 000	20 000 000	89	83	88
Slovenia	4 000 000	9 000 000			91	90	91
Slovakia	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Finland	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Sweden	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
United Kingdom	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100

(*) When not the euro

: Data not available

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

In addition to value thresholds, Member States may apply other simplification measures, including optional collection of net mass for CN8 codes with a supplementary unit or the use of simplified reporting for specific goods such as industrial plants or parts of motor vehicles.

Extra-EU trade statistics cover all commercial transactions reported to customs. However, transactions where the value and net mass are below the statistical threshold do not have to be processed in detail. This threshold is fixed at maximum EUR 1 000 and 1 000 kilograms.

Table 21: Extrastat statistical thresholds, 2011

Extrastat statistical threshold	
Belgium	No threshold
Bulgaria	No threshold
Czech Republic	No threshold
Denmark	No threshold
Germany	No threshold
Estonia	No threshold
Ireland	No threshold
Greece	No threshold
Spain	No threshold
France	No threshold
Italy	EUR 1 000
Cyprus	No threshold
Latvia	No threshold
Lithuania	No threshold
Luxembourg	No threshold
Hungary	No threshold
Malta	No threshold
Netherlands	No threshold
Austria	No threshold
Poland	No threshold
Portugal	No threshold
Romania	No threshold
Slovenia	No threshold
Slovakia	No threshold
Finland	No threshold
Sweden	No threshold
United Kingdom	EUR 1 000 or 1 000 kg

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

10 Confidentiality, transparency and security

EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE

Principle 5: The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes must be absolutely guaranteed.

Principle 6: Statistical authorities must produce and disseminate European statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.

In ITGS, the principle of ‘passive confidentiality’ is applied, whereby data can be withheld only at the request of an enterprise that feels that its interests would be harmed by the dissemination of its data. Passive confidentiality is different from ‘active confidentiality’, where the National Statistical Authority takes the initiative of withholding data automatically when certain criteria are met, without informing the enterprises concerned.

The considerable amount of detail in trade data means that the potential for the creation of confidential data at detailed level is extremely high. Passive confidentiality helps to minimise the loss of information at detailed level.

Both the Intrastat and Extrastat Regulations provide for the application of passive confidentiality. They also state that real trade values should be disseminated to all users at least at chapter (i.e. two-digit CN code) level, except where this does not ensure confidentiality.

When receiving a request for confidentiality from an enterprise, the National Statistical Authority must decide whether or not it should be granted. National rules and practices vary from sophisticated decision-making systems to a case-by-case ‘common-sense’ sense approach.

Member States’ transmission of data to Eurostat follows the principle of a single entry point endorsed by the Statistical Programme Committee (SPC). It uses eDAMIS (electronic Data files Administration and Management Information System), an integrated environment of data transmission tools that allow highly secure transmissions. At Eurostat, confidential data is stored in secure environments.

Annex — Data for 2010

Table A.1: Shares of collected and estimated data in intra-EU trade, 2010 (%)

	Collected data		Estimated data			
			Below threshold		Non response	
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches
Belgium	95.7	97.5	2.5	1.0	1.8	1.5
Bulgaria	96.8	97.8	3.2	2.1	0.1	0.0
Czech Republic	96.3	98.2	3.4	1.2	0.3	0.5
Denmark	87.4	92.4			(*) 12.6	(*) 7.6
Germany	96.3	97.8	2.9	1.8	0.8	0.5
Estonia	94.3	94.3	3.0	2.8	2.7	2.9
Ireland	96.3	98.5	3.2	1.2	0.5	0.3
Greece	96.7	96.4	1.7	0.9	1.5	2.7
Spain	94.8	95.7	2.9	1.6	2.3	2.7
France	99.4	99.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.0
Italy	98.2	98.9	1.8	1.1	0.0	0.0
Cyprus	98.2	96.5	1.6	2.9	0.2	0.6
Latvia	92.1	96.1	4.5	2.2	3.4	1.7
Lithuania	96.4	97.9	3.4	2.1	0.1	0.0
Luxembourg	98.0	97.6	1.9	0.8	0.1	1.6
Hungary	88.5	94.3	5.1	2.9	6.3	2.7
Malta (**)	99.0	99.0	No est.	No est.	No est.	No est.
Netherlands	88.4	92.5	5.3	2.7	6.3	4.8
Austria	94.7	97.5	4.5	1.8	0.8	0.7
Poland	96.9	97.9	1.7	1.2	1.4	0.9
Portugal	94.1	96.8	5.1	2.5	0.8	0.7
Romania	96.7	98.0	2.0	1.6	1.3	0.4
Slovenia	97.1	98.3	2.9	1.7	0.0	0.0
Slovakia	93.5	95.3	2.5	2.5	3.9	2.2
Finland	95.2	97.5	3.2	1.5	1.5	1.0
Sweden	95.1	97.8	3.9	1.9	0.9	0.3
United Kingdom	94.7	96.9	3.7	2.9	1.5	0.2

Note: The share of estimated data refers to the share in the final data transmitted to Eurostat. This is larger for first and intermediate data.

(*) Estimates both for trade below the exemption threshold and non-response.

(**) No estimate is compiled for trade below the exemption threshold and non-response.

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

Table A.3: Share of collected and estimated data in extra-EU trade, 2010
(%)

	Collected data				Estimated data	
	Standard category		Less detailed data (below statistical threshold)		Delayed or incomplete records	
	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports
Belgium	100.0	100.0				
Bulgaria	100.0	100.0				
Czech Republic	100.0	100.0				
Denmark	100.0	100.0	0.0			
Germany	100.0	100.0				
Estonia	100.0	100.0				
Ireland	100.0	100.0				
Greece	100.0	100.0				
Spain	100.0	100.0				
France	100.0	100.0				
Italy	99.6	99.1	0.4	0.9		
Cyprus	100.0	100.0				
Latvia	100.0	100.0				
Lithuania	100.0	100.0				
Luxembourg	100.0	100.0				
Hungary	100.0	100.0				
Malta	100.0	100.0				
Netherlands	98.9	99.8			1.1	0.2
Austria	100.0	100.0				
Poland	100.0	100.0				
Portugal	100.0	100.0				
Romania	100.0	100.0				
Slovenia	100.0	99.9	0.0	0.1		
Slovakia	100.0	100.0				
Finland	100.0	100.0				
Sweden	100.0	100.0				
United Kingdom	98.9	99.3	1.1	0.7		

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

Table A.5: Intra-EU trade — Estimated statistical value vs. collected invoice value, 2010 (%)

	Arrivals	Dispatches
Belgium	0.0	0.0
Bulgaria	1.4	-0.2
Czech Republic	0.1	-0.8
Denmark	0.8	1.0
Germany	-0.2	-0.2
Estonia	1.7	-1.3
Ireland	0.2	0.2
Greece	No est.	No est.
Spain	-0.8	-0.4
France	-0.1	-0.5
Italy	:	:
Cyprus	0.8	-1.2
Latvia	1.4	-0.9
Lithuania	1.3	-0.4
Luxembourg	0.9	-0.8
Hungary	0.3	-0.3
Malta	No est.	No est.
Netherlands	:	:
Austria	0.0	0.0
Poland	0.3	-0.5
Portugal	0.2	-0.5
Romania	1.6	0.0
Slovenia	0.5	-0.7
Slovakia	2.2	-0.6
Finland	1.2	-0.6
Sweden	1.0	-0.7
United Kingdom	0.6	-0.5

Formula = [total statistical value / total invoice value – 1] * 100

: Data not available

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

Table A.7: Impact of revisions in intra-and extra-EU trade, 2010
(%)

	Intra-EU trade		Extra-EU trade	
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Imports	Exports
EU-27	0.8	0.5	3.2	1.0
Belgium	-2.7	-1.0	6.1	1.0
Bulgaria	1.3	0.9	0.9	0.0
Czech Republic	1.3	1.0	1.0	-0.3
Denmark	-3.3	-1.2	1.7	-0.1
Germany	-1.8	-1.3	0.1	0.0
Estonia	-0.3	1.1	0.1	-0.5
Ireland	1.7	0.3	0.2	0.2
Greece	8.8	14.5	71.7	65.3
Spain	6.2	4.5	0.8	1.6
France	0.3	0.1	0.7	1.3
Italy	1.2	0.4	1.6	-0.4
Cyprus	5.4	-0.4	-0.8	-0.8
Latvia	4.3	2.5	-0.2	-0.6
Lithuania	1.5	-0.3	0.0	-0.2
Luxembourg	6.0	2.4	13.8	-0.6
Hungary	-0.1	0.3	0.2	-1.0
Malta	32.8	40.0	0.6	43.8
Netherlands	-0.1	1.0	1.2	-2.3
Austria	2.3	1.9	2.6	-0.1
Poland	7.2	5.6	0.6	0.1
Portugal	6.7	3.2	0.1	-0.5
Romania	1.1	0.5	0.5	0.4
Slovenia	1.1	-1.2	0.1	0.1
Slovakia	-1.1	-0.2	0.0	0.1
Finland	3.2	-1.3	1.5	4.0
Sweden	0.5	-0.7	1.5	1.5
United Kingdom	2.1	1.9	10.4	5.2

Note: Revision rate = (Last figure - First figure) / First figure * 100

Source: Eurostat calculations based on the first and last versions of detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

Table A.8: Impact of confidentiality in intra-EU trade, 2010

	Number of CN8 codes affected		Impact on trade value (%)		Impact on net mass (%)	
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches
Belgium	39	115	0.7	1.8	0.3	2.6
Bulgaria						
Czech Republic	557	237	0.9	0.4	3.6	1.0
Denmark	33	107	0.4	7.5	2.9	12.7
Germany	67	199	1.7	2.1	6.6	7.3
Estonia						
Ireland	10	6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Greece	15	10	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.8
Spain	38	39	0.3	0.5	0.3	1.1
France	39	314	0.3	3.0	0.0	3.8
Italy	25	104	0.2	0.7	0.2	1.0
Cyprus	1		0.4		0.0	
Latvia	1		1.6		0.0	
Lithuania						
Luxembourg	4	6	3.6	1.3	0.2	1.0
Hungary	63	61	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.3
Malta						
Netherlands	192	460	5.1	7.3	3.3	11.0
Austria	105	269	2.3	6.7	11.4	13.5
Poland	1		0.0		0.0	
Portugal	998	410	0.4	1.6	1.6	2.6
Romania	88	54	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0
Slovenia	33	12	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1
Slovakia						
Finland	78	137	1.2	7.3	11.6	13.1
Sweden	14	49	0.1	2.1	0.0	1.0
United Kingdom	19	76	0.5	2.0	1.9	2.1

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

Table A.9: Impact of confidentiality in extra-EU trade, 2010

	Number of CN8 codes affected		Impact on trade value (%)		Impact on net mass (%)	
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches
Belgium	43	114	1.7	2.9	0.6	3.8
Bulgaria						
Czech Republic	257	215	0.3	0.9	0.1	0.6
Denmark	30	107	2.0	12.4	23.0	12.7
Germany	68	189	6.2	1.7	26.9	8.0
Estonia						
Ireland						
Greece	9	15	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.2
Spain	31	36	0.2	1.0	0.1	0.7
France	38	299	0.4	3.9	0.0	3.8
Italy	21	96	0.1	0.8	0.0	1.0
Cyprus	1		5.0		0.0	
Latvia	4		1.0		0.4	
Lithuania	1		0.3		0.2	
Luxembourg	1	4	1.2	0.3	1.5	0.0
Hungary	64	71	0.5	0.7	0.0	3.2
Malta						
Netherlands	393	807	5.5	6.2	4.2	2.1
Austria	89	260	11.3	8.1	47.0	7.7
Poland						
Portugal	382	367	0.4	2.8	0.1	2.7
Romania	70	41	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0
Slovenia	27	21	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.7
Slovakia						
Finland	69	131	8.5	6.6	13.5	13.1
Sweden	19	52	0.4	3.4	0.6	1.2
United Kingdom	44	71	0.7	1.6	0.6	1.9

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

Table A.10: Number of CN8 codes affected according to type of confidentiality, 2010

	Intra-EU trade						Extra-EU trade					
	Arrivals			Dispatches			Imports			Exports		
	Secret product	Secret partner	Secret product and partner	Secret product	Secret partner	Secret product and partner	Secret product	Secret partner	Secret product and partner	Secret product	Secret partner	Secret product and partner
Belgium	39			115			33		10	105		9
Bulgaria												
Czech Republic			557			237			257			215
Denmark	26	7		87	20		23	7		87	20	
Germany	18	3	46	177		22	17	15	36	176		13
Estonia												
Ireland			10			6						
Greece	15			10			9			15		
Spain	38			39			31			36		
France	2	6	31	280	5	29	2	5	31	259	4	36
Italy			25			104			21			96
Cyprus			1						1			
Latvia			1						4			
Lithuania								1				
Luxembourg			4			6			1			4
Hungary			63			61			64			71
Malta												
Netherlands		111	81		260	200		316	77		650	157
Austria	49	8	48	173	22	74	39	7	43	165	22	73
Poland		1										
Portugal			998			410			382			367
Romania			88			54			70			41
Slovenia		6	27			12		5	22			21
Slovakia												
Finland		37	41		11	126		35	34		11	120
Sweden			14			49			19			52
United Kingdom	9	10		60	16		10	34		46	25	

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

Table A.11: Punctuality of detailed and aggregated data, 2010

	Aggregated data		Detailed data			
	Intra-EU trade		Intra-EU trade		Extra-EU trade	
	Number of delayed data deliveries	Average delay	Number of delayed data deliveries	Average delay	Number of delayed data deliveries	Average delay
Belgium					1	1 day
Bulgaria	1	1 day				
Czech Republic						
Denmark						
Germany					1	4 days
Estonia	1	1 day	1	1 day	1	1 day
Ireland						
Greece	1	1 day	1	1 day		
Spain					1	3 days
France						
Italy						
Cyprus	1	3 days	1	1 day	2	3 days
Latvia	1	3 days			1	3 days
Lithuania						
Luxembourg	1	3 days			4	7 days
Hungary						
Malta						
Netherlands						
Austria			1	4 days		
Poland						
Portugal						
Romania						
Slovenia						
Slovakia			2	1 day		
Finland						
Sweden						
United Kingdom					3	3 days

Table A.13: Extra-EU asymmetries, 2010
(%)

	EU-27 imports (*)	EU-27 exports (**)
USA	-4.7	-1.6
China	18.4	-11.3
Russia	14.8	20.3
Switzerland	-1.4	6.9
Norway	-0.9	12.7
Japan	2.3	-13.1
Turkey	6.5	12.5
South Korea	-2.5	-4.4
Brazil	2.0	-3.1
India	6.1	8.5

(*) (EU imports - Mirror exports) / Mirror flows average

(**) (EU exports - Mirror imports) / Mirror flows average

Source: Eurostat calculations based on data transmitted by Member States and data available in the UN Comtrade database

Table A.14: Intra-EU asymmetries, 2010
(%)

	Arrivals (*)	Dispatches (**)
EU-27	-2.8	2.8
Belgium	4.9	6.7
Bulgaria	0.8	3.3
Czech Republic	0.6	4.4
Denmark	-4.0	5.2
Germany	-2.8	1.4
Estonia	0.3	9.2
Ireland	-12.6	-17.2
Greece	-2.8	7.2
Spain	-3.7	4.3
France	-4.7	1.0
Italy	-1.2	5.9
Cyprus	-22.6	-89.9
Latvia	3.5	-4.3
Lithuania	9.2	7.3
Luxembourg	-6.9	0.0
Hungary	2.7	7.7
Malta	-26.1	-42.5
Netherlands	-4.9	6.9
Austria	-2.8	2.7
Poland	-4.8	6.4
Portugal	2.7	7.8
Romania	5.3	9.7
Slovenia	2.0	16.3
Slovakia	-4.5	6.7
Finland	-1.7	-5.1
Sweden	-1.1	-1.6
United Kingdom	-4.8	-2.0

(*) (Arrivals - mirror dispatches) / Mirror flows average

(**) (Dispatches - mirror arrivals) / Mirror flows average

Source: Eurostat calculations based on detailed statistics transmitted by Member States

Table A.18: Intrastat exemption thresholds and share of beneficiary traders, 2010

	Exemption threshold				Percentage of traders exempted from statistical reporting (%)		
	In euro		In national currency (*)				
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches	Total
Belgium	700 000	1 000 000			92	84	91
Bulgaria	102 260	127 825	200 000	250 000	72	67	73
Czech Republic	316 408	316 408	8 000 000	8 000 000	82	79	83
Denmark	483 397	644 530	3 600 000	4 800 000	81	75	79
Germany	400 000	400 000			91	83	89
Estonia	127 824	108 650	2 000 000	1 700 000	67	66	65
Ireland	191 000	635 000			77	83	78
Greece	130 000	90 000			64	65	64
Spain	250 000	250 000			86	85	84
France	150 000	150 000			77	63	76
Italy	200 000	200 000			74	48	67
Cyprus	75 000	65 000			65	58	68
Latvia	112 883	98 772	80 000	70 000	74	65	71
Lithuania	130 329	144 810	450 000	500 000	70	70	69
Luxembourg	200 000	150 000			82	76	81
Hungary	363 000	363 000	100 000 000	100 000 000	90	89	89
Malta	700	700			:	:	:
Netherlands	900 000	900 000			92	88	90
Austria	500 000	500 000			92	82	91
Poland	250 332	250 332	1 000 000	1 000 000	82	78	83
Portugal	300 000	250 000			88	76	86
Romania	71 222	213 665	300 000	900 000	68	68	68
Slovenia	120 000	200 000			78	77	78
Slovakia	200 000	400 000			83	81	81
Finland	200 000	300 000			84	76	83
Sweden	471 830	471 830	4 500 000	4 500 000	89	83	87
United Kingdom	699 431	291 430	600 000	250 000	89	84	86

(*) When not the euro

: Data not available

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

Table A.19: Intrastat simplification thresholds and share of beneficiary PSIs, 2010

	Simplification threshold in euro		Percentage of PSIs allowed to make Intrastat simplified declarations (%)		
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Arrivals	Dispatches	Total
France	230 000	460 000	22	22	22
Luxembourg	375 000	375 000	25	29	26
Portugal	450 000	450 000	15	15	15
Slovakia	800 000	2 000 000	64	71	74

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

Table A.20: Intrastat statistical value thresholds and share of beneficiary PSIs, 2010

	Statistical value threshold				Percentage of traders exempted from statistical value reporting (%)		
	In euro		In national currency (*)		Arrivals	Dispatches	Total
	Arrivals	Dispatches	Dispatches	National Currency			
Belgium	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Bulgaria	1 789 550	3 323 450	3 500 000	6 500 000	88	90	88
Czech Republic	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Denmark	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Germany	30 000 000	42 000 000			95	96	96
Estonia	2 812 128	3 131 688	44 000 000	49 000 000	89	90	89
Ireland	5 000 000	34 000 000			89	91	:
Greece	No exemption	No exemption			0	0	0
Spain	6 000 000	6 000 000			95	95	95
France	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Italy	20 000 000	20 000 000			:	:	:
Cyprus	1 500 000	1 200 000			88	89	88
Latvia	1 834 344	2 539 861	1 300 000	1 800 000	90	91	90
Lithuania	2 316 960	6 950 880	8 000 000	24 000 000	86	92	87
Luxembourg	2 500 000	4 500 000			79	83	80
Hungary	9 075 000	36 300 000	2 500 000 000	10 000 000 000	90	88	89
Malta	No exemption	No exemption			0	0	0
Netherlands	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Austria	10 000 000	10 000 000			88	83	86
Poland	8 260 956	15 019 920	33 000 000	60 000 000	93	93	93
Portugal	6 000 000	6 500 000			89	89	89
Romania	2 374 060	4 748 120	10 000 000	20 000 000	88	84	88
Slovenia	4 000 000	9 000 000			90	90	90
Slovakia	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Finland	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
Sweden	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100
United Kingdom	All PSIs exempted	All PSIs exempted			100	100	100

(*) When not the euro

: Data not available

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

Table A.21: Extrastat statistical thresholds, 2010

Extrastat statistical threshold	
Belgium	No threshold
Bulgaria	No threshold
Czech Republic	No threshold
Denmark	No threshold
Germany	No threshold
Estonia	No threshold
Ireland	No threshold
Greece	No threshold
Spain	No threshold
France	No threshold
Italy	EUR 1 000
Cyprus	No threshold
Latvia	No threshold
Lithuania	No threshold
Luxembourg	No threshold
Hungary	No threshold
Malta	No threshold
Netherlands	No threshold
Austria	No threshold
Poland	No threshold
Portugal	No threshold
Romania	No threshold
Slovenia	No threshold
Slovakia	No threshold
Finland	No threshold
Sweden	No threshold
United Kingdom	EUR 1 000 or 1 000 kg

Source: National quality reports transmitted by Member States

Glossary

Arrivals	Imports from another Member State (intra-EU imports).
Balance of payments	The statistical system through which economic transactions between an economy and the rest of the world over specific time periods can be summarised 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.
Combined Nomenclature	A systematic list of goods descriptions based on the Harmonized 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).
Country of origin	The country where the goods originate. Goods that are wholly obtained or produced in a country originate in that country. Goods, the production of which 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.
Customs declaration	The act whereby a person indicates in the prescribed form and manner a wish to place goods under one of the customs procedures provided for by the Community Customs Code (Articles 4(17) and 59 to 78 CC).
Customs procedure	The Community Customs Code provides for eight customs procedures: release for free circulation, transit, customs warehousing, inward processing, processing under customs control, temporary importation, outward processing, and exportation (Article 4(16) CC).
Dispatches	Exports to another Member State (intra-EU exports).
Exports	Goods leaving the statistical territory of a country.
Goods	All movable property, including electric current.
Community goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) goods entirely obtained in the customs territory of the Community, without the addition of goods from non-EU countries or territories which are not part of the customs territory of the Community; (ii) goods from non-EU countries or territories which are not part of the customs territory of the Community which have been released for free circulation in a Member State; and (iii) goods obtained in the customs territory of the Community either exclusively from the goods referred to in point (ii) or from those referred to in points (i) and (ii);
Imports	Goods which add to the stock of material resources of a country by entering its economic territory.

National Statistical Authority (NSA)	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.
Provider of statistical information (PSI)	Any business, 'institutional' body (e.g. public and non-profit institution, school, hospital) or individual who provides statistical information.
Quantity of the goods	<p>The quantity of the goods can be expressed in two ways:</p> <p>(a) as net mass, i.e. the actual mass of the goods excluding all packaging;</p> <p>or</p> <p>(b) in supplementary units, i.e. units measuring quantity other than net mass, as detailed in the annual Commission regulation updating the Combined Nomenclature.</p>
Reference period	<p>The calendar year and month in which the goods are imported or exported. When the customs declaration is the source for records on imports and exports, the reference period indicates the calendar year and month when the declaration is accepted by customs authorities.</p>
Statistical value	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
VIES	<p>The VAT Information Exchange System (VIES) enables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — companies rapidly to obtain confirmation of the VAT numbers of their intra-EU trading partners; and — Tax administrations to monitor and control the flow of intra-EU trade to detect all kinds of irregularity.

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