

60/2016 - 31 March 2016

International trade in goods in 2015

EU's top trading partners in 2015: the United States for exports, China for imports

Trade between Member States largely prevails though

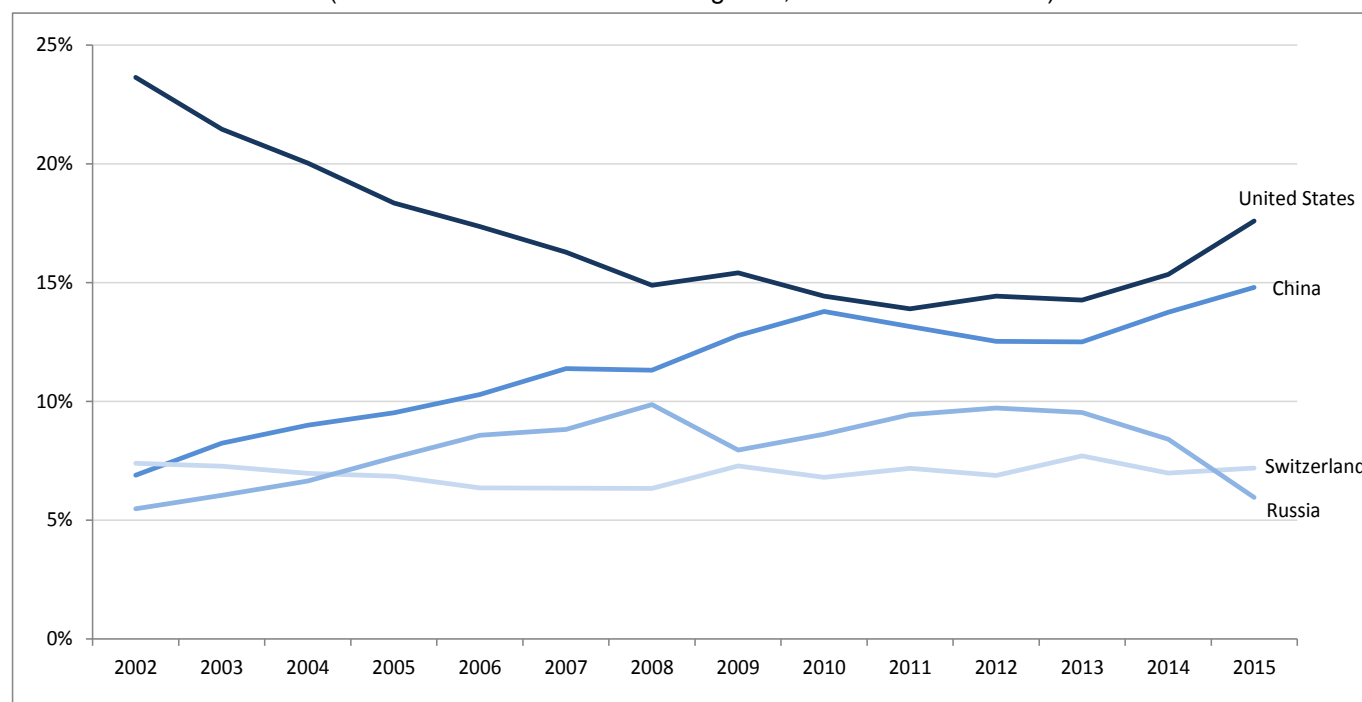
In 2015, the **United States** (€619 bn, or 18% of total EU trade in goods) and **China** (€521 bn, or 15%) continued to be the two main goods trading partners of the **European Union** (EU), well ahead of **Switzerland** (€253 bn, or 7%) and **Russia** (€210 bn, or 6%).

Trends observed over recent years are however very different for these top trading partners of the EU. After recording a significant and almost continuous fall until 2011, the share of the **United States** in **EU** total trade in goods has begun to increase again to reach 18% in 2015. The share of **China** has doubled since 2002, rising from 7% to 15% in 2015. Since 2013 the share of **Russia** in total EU trade in goods has declined sharply to 6% in 2015. The share of **Switzerland** remained almost unchanged at 7% over the entire time period.

In 2015, machinery and transport equipment, other manufactured goods and chemicals represented the main categories of product in **EU** international trade with the rest of the world.

These data are issued by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. A selection of [infographics](#) on international trade in goods is also available on the Eurostat website.

EU top trading partners, 2002-2015
(Share in total extra-EU trade in goods, based on trade value)



Germany, main export destination for a majority of Member States

In almost all EU Member States, the main partner for exports of goods in 2015 was another member of the European Union, except for **Germany**, **Ireland** and the **United Kingdom** (the United States was the main destination of exports), **Lithuania** (Russia) and **Sweden** (Norway).

In some Member States, at least a quarter of exports went to one single partner. This partner was **Germany** for the **Czech Republic** (32% of exports of goods), **Austria** (29%), **Hungary** (28%) and **Poland** (27%), while for **Portugal** 25% of exports of goods went to **Spain**. Overall, **Germany** was the main destination of goods exports for 16 Member States and among the top three in 22 Member States.

For extra-EU trade, that is trade with non-EU countries, the 3 main destinations of EU exports in 2015 were the **United States** (21% of all extra-EU exports), **China** (10%) and **Switzerland** (8%).

Exports of goods of the EU Member States: top 3 partners, 2015 (based on trade value)

| | Main partner | % | Second main partner | % | Third main partner | % |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|
| EU* | United States | 21 | China | 10 | Switzerland | 8 |
| Belgium | Germany | 17 | France | 15 | Netherlands | 11 |
| Bulgaria | Germany | 13 | Italy | 9 | Turkey | 9 |
| Czech Republic | Germany | 32 | Slovakia | 9 | Poland | 6 |
| Denmark | Germany | 18 | Sweden | 12 | United States | 8 |
| Germany | United States | 10 | France | 9 | United Kingdom | 7 |
| Estonia | Sweden | 19 | Finland | 16 | Latvia | 10 |
| Ireland | United States | 24 | United Kingdom | 14 | Belgium | 13 |
| Greece | Italy | 11 | Germany | 7 | Turkey | 7 |
| Spain | France | 16 | Germany | 11 | United Kingdom | 7 |
| France | Germany | 16 | Spain | 7 | United States | 7 |
| Croatia | Italy | 13 | Slovenia | 12 | Germany | 11 |
| Italy | Germany | 12 | France | 10 | United States | 9 |
| Cyprus | Greece | 11 | Ireland | 10 | United Kingdom | 7 |
| Latvia | Lithuania | 18 | Russia | 11 | Estonia | 11 |
| Lithuania | Russia | 14 | Latvia | 10 | Poland | 10 |
| Luxembourg | Germany | 22 | Belgium | 17 | France | 17 |
| Hungary | Germany | 28 | Romania | 5 | Slovakia | 5 |
| Malta | Germany | 13 | France | 10 | Hong Kong | 7 |
| Netherlands | Germany | 24 | Belgium | 11 | United Kingdom | 9 |
| Austria | Germany | 29 | United States | 6 | Italy | 6 |
| Poland | Germany | 27 | United Kingdom | 7 | Czech Republic | 7 |
| Portugal | Spain | 25 | France | 12 | Germany | 12 |
| Romania | Germany | 20 | Italy | 12 | France | 7 |
| Slovenia | Germany | 19 | Italy | 11 | Austria | 8 |
| Slovakia | Germany | 23 | Czech Republic | 12 | Poland | 9 |
| Finland | Germany | 14 | Sweden | 10 | United States | 7 |
| Sweden | Norway | 10 | Germany | 10 | United States | 8 |
| United Kingdom | United States | 15 | Germany | 10 | Switzerland | 7 |

* EU exports refer to extra-EU exports only, while exports of Member States refer to total exports (both intra- and extra-EU).

Cells shaded in blue are EU Member States.

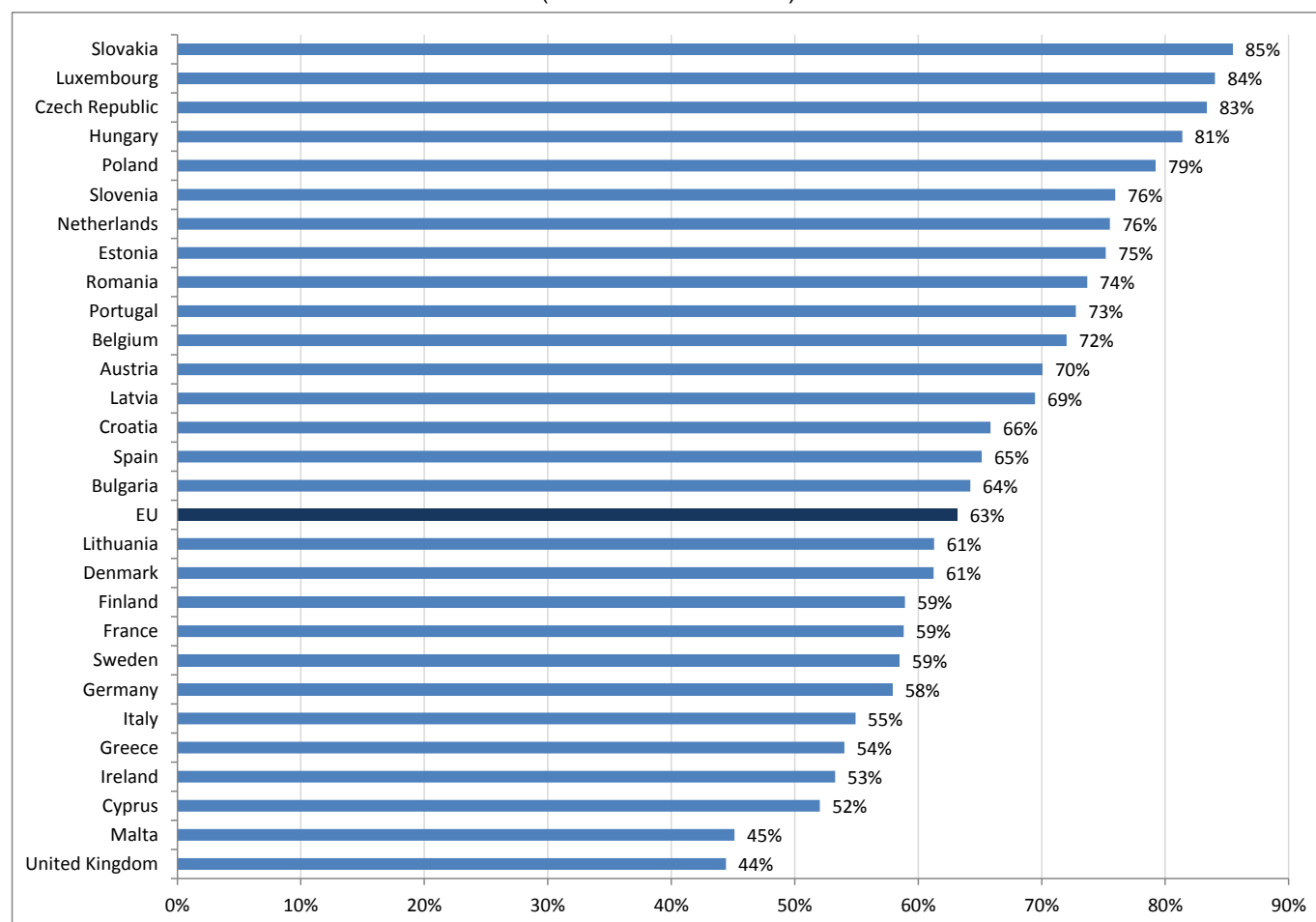
The source dataset can be found [here](#).

Intra-EU exports prevail in all Member States apart from the United Kingdom and Malta

In 2015, the 28 EU Member States exported a total of €4 861 bn of goods, of which €3 070 bn (or 63%) were destined for another Member State of the EU (intra-EU trade).

With 75% or more of goods exported to other EU Member States, **Slovakia** (85% intra-EU in total exports), **Luxembourg** (84%), the **Czech Republic** (83%), **Hungary** (81%), **Poland** (79%), **Slovenia** and the **Netherlands** (both 76%) as well as **Estonia** (75%) recorded in 2015 the highest shares of intra-EU exports. At the opposite end of the scale, the **United Kingdom** (44%) and **Malta** (45%) were the only Member States that exported more goods to non-EU countries than within the EU in 2015.

Share of intra-EU exports, 2015
(based on trade value)



The source dataset can be found [here](#).

Germany, also main source of imports for more than half of EU Member States

As for exports, the main partner for imports of goods in 2015 was another member of the European Union in all Member States except **Lithuania**, for which Russia was the main country of origin of goods imported.

In eight Member States, at least 25% of imports of goods came from a single partner country in 2015: **Austria** (42% of imports of goods originated from Germany), **Portugal** (33% from Spain), **Ireland** (32% from the United Kingdom), the **Czech Republic** (30% from Germany), **Luxembourg** (28% from Belgium), **Poland** (28% from Germany), **Cyprus** (26% from Greece) and **Hungary** (26% from Germany). Overall, **Germany** was among the top three countries of origin of goods imported in all EU Member States except **Ireland**, **Cyprus** and **Malta**.

For extra-EU trade, the main country of origin of goods imported into the EU in 2015 was **China** (20% of all extra-EU imports), followed by the **United States** (14%) and **Russia** (8%).

Imports of goods into the EU Member States: top 3 partners, 2015 (based on trade value)

| | Main partner | % | Second main partner | % | Third main partner | % |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|
| EU* | China | 20 | United States | 14 | Russia | 8 |
| Belgium** | Netherlands** | 17 | Germany | 13 | France | 10 |
| Bulgaria | Germany | 13 | Russia | 12 | Italy | 8 |
| Czech Republic | Germany | 30 | Poland | 9 | China | 8 |
| Denmark | Germany | 20 | Sweden | 12 | Netherlands** | 8 |
| Germany | Netherlands** | 14 | France | 8 | China | 7 |
| Estonia | Finland | 14 | Germany | 11 | Lithuania | 9 |
| Ireland | United Kingdom | 32 | United States | 14 | France | 10 |
| Greece | Germany | 11 | Italy | 8 | Russia | 8 |
| Spain | Germany | 14 | France | 12 | China | 7 |
| France | Germany | 19 | Belgium** | 11 | Italy | 8 |
| Croatia | Germany | 15 | Italy | 13 | Slovenia | 11 |
| Italy | Germany | 15 | France | 9 | China | 8 |
| Cyprus | Greece | 26 | United Kingdom | 9 | Italy | 8 |
| Latvia | Lithuania | 17 | Germany | 11 | Poland | 11 |
| Lithuania | Russia | 17 | Germany | 12 | Poland | 10 |
| Luxembourg | Belgium** | 28 | Germany | 23 | China | 12 |
| Hungary | Germany | 26 | China | 7 | Austria | 7 |
| Malta | Italy | 23 | Netherlands** | 8 | United Kingdom | 7 |
| Netherlands** | Germany | 15 | China | 15 | Belgium** | 8 |
| Austria | Germany | 42 | Italy | 6 | Switzerland | 6 |
| Poland | Germany | 28 | China | 7 | Russia | 7 |
| Portugal | Spain | 33 | Germany | 13 | France | 7 |
| Romania | Germany | 20 | Italy | 11 | Hungary | 8 |
| Slovenia | Germany | 16 | Italy | 14 | Austria | 10 |
| Slovakia | Germany | 19 | Czech Republic | 17 | Austria | 9 |
| Finland | Germany | 17 | Sweden | 16 | Russia | 11 |
| Sweden | Germany | 18 | Netherlands** | 8 | Norway | 8 |
| United Kingdom | Germany | 15 | China | 10 | United States | 9 |

* EU imports refer to extra-EU imports only, while imports of Member States refer to total imports (both intra- and extra-EU).

** See country note.

Cells shaded in blue are EU Member States.

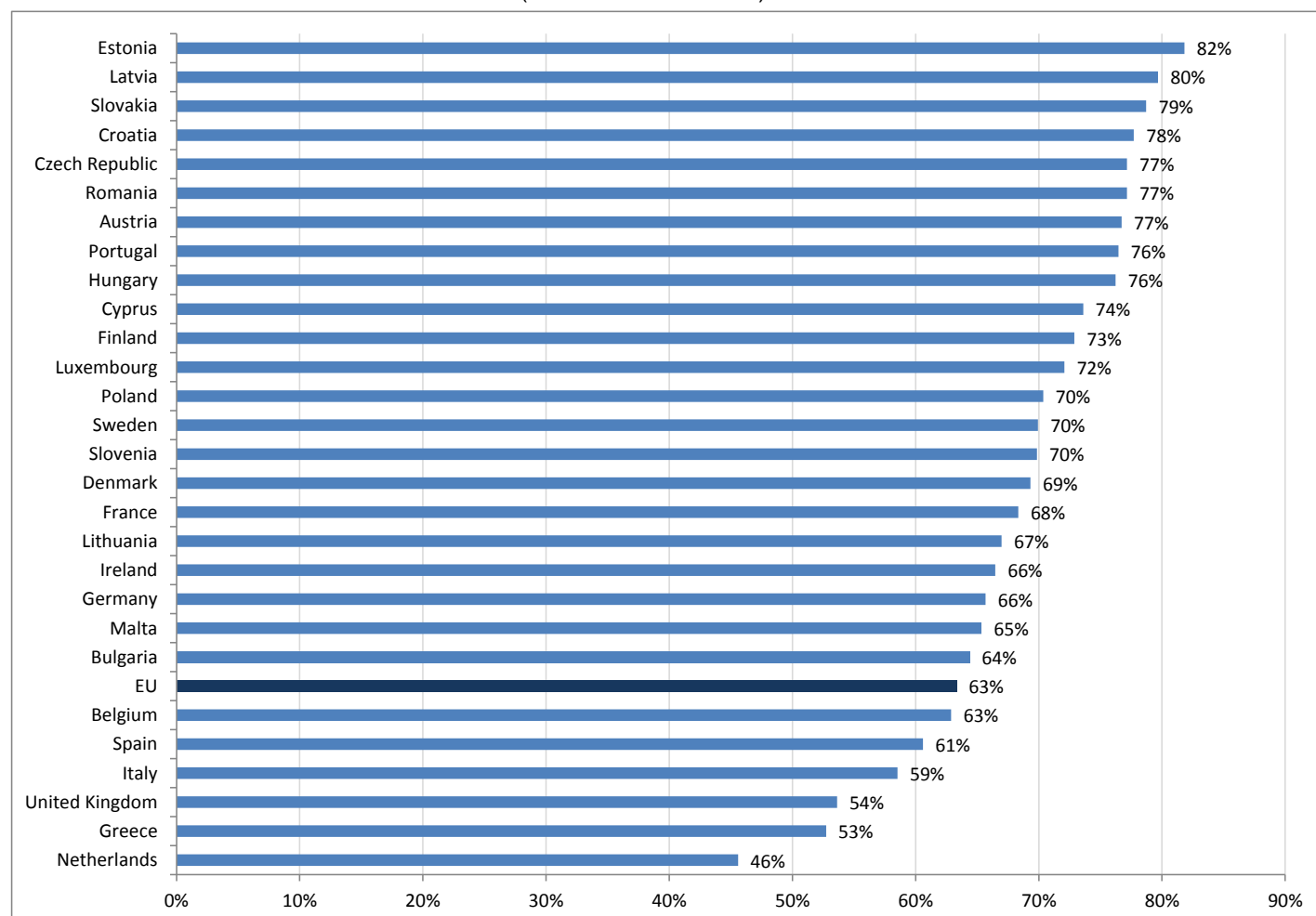
The source dataset can be found [here](#).

Intra-EU imports prevail in almost all Member States

In 2015, the 28 EU Member States imported a total of €4 707 bn of goods, of which €2 980 bn (or 63%) came from another EU Member State (intra-EU trade).

At least three-quarters of total imports of goods originated from another EU Member State in **Estonia** (82%), **Latvia** (80%), **Slovakia** (79%), **Croatia** (78%), the **Czech Republic**, **Romania** and **Austria** (all 77%) as well as **Portugal** and **Hungary** (both 76%). In contrast, the **Netherlands** (46%) was the only Member State where less than half of the imports came from within the EU. This is largely due to the so-called 'Rotterdam effect' (see country note).

Share of intra-EU imports, 2015
(based on trade value)



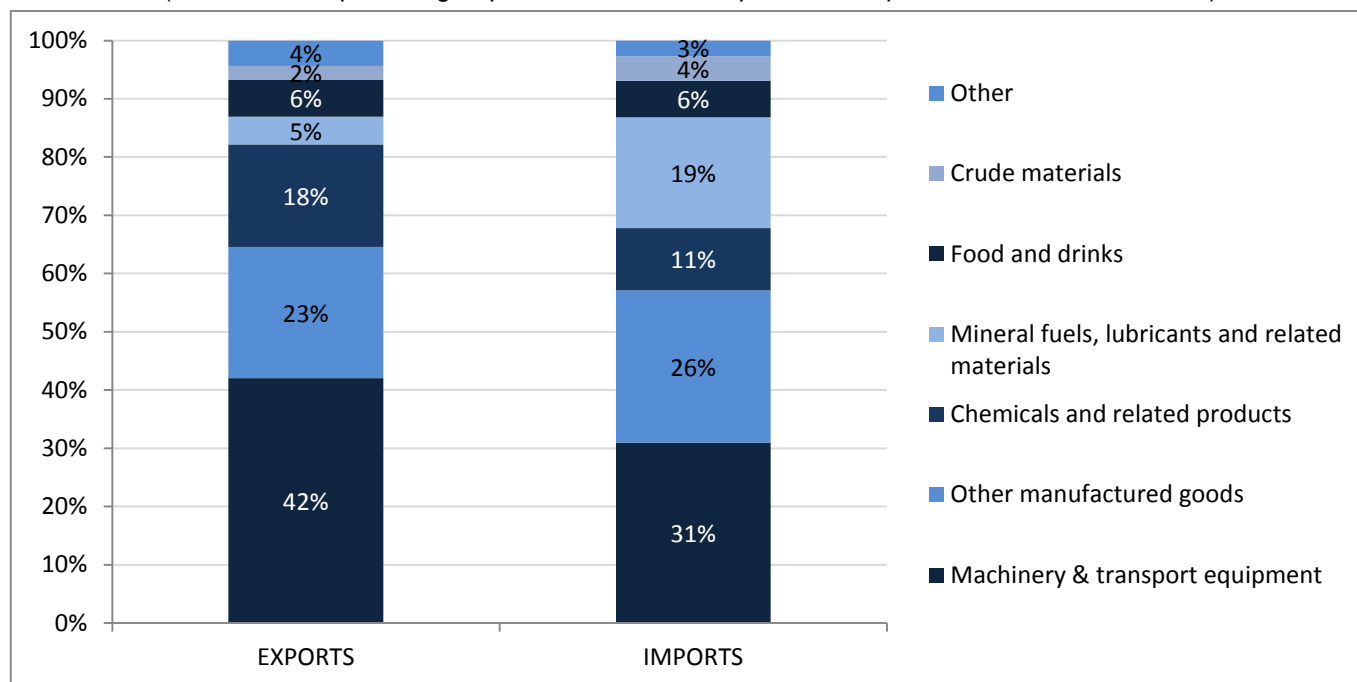
The source dataset can be found [here](#).

Machinery & transport equipment accounted for more than 40% of all extra-EU exports

In 2015, machinery and transport equipment played a major role in EU trade in goods with the rest of the world, accounting for 42% of total extra-EU exports and 31% of imports. Other manufactured goods (23% of extra-EU exports and 26% of extra-EU imports) as well as chemicals (18% of extra-EU exports and 11% of extra-EU imports) also played a significant role in EU trade in goods in 2015. Mineral fuels made up a minor share of extra-EU exports (5%), but accounted for almost 20% of all imports.

Extra EU-trade by product group, 2015

(share of each product group in total extra-EU exports and imports, based on trade value)



The source dataset can be found [here](#).

Geographical information

The **European Union** (EU) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Methods and definitions

This News Release is based on data available on 17 March 2016. These are provisional figures based on information provided by Member States. They are subject to frequent revision for up to two years after the year in question. Furthermore, national concepts may differ from the harmonised methodology used by Eurostat, leading to differences between figures in this release and those published nationally.

Products are classified according to the Standard international trade classification (SITC), Revision 4. Other manufactured goods includes articles made of leather, rubber and wood, paper, textiles, metals, building fixtures and fittings, furniture, clothes, shoes and accessories, scientific instruments, clocks, watches and cameras.

As data for all EU Member States are available according to a harmonised methodology, in theory the intra-EU balance should be 0. However, bilateral comparisons have revealed persistent discrepancies in the mutual Member States' intra-EU trade, called **asymmetries**. For example, this means that, for a given period and a specific product X, exports from France to Austria do not equal to imports of Austria from France. There are different reasons for these asymmetries, including methodological issues (such as CIF/FOB valuation, deliveries to vessels and aircrafts, system of threshold for providing statistical information) but also mismatch in data reporting.

Country note:

Dutch trade flows are over-estimated because of the so-called '**Rotterdam effect**' (or *quasi-transit trade*): that is goods bound for other EU countries arrive in Dutch ports and, according to EU rules, are recorded as extra-EU imports by the Netherlands (the country where goods are released for free circulation). This in turn increases the intra-EU flows from the Netherlands to those Member States to which the goods are re-exported. To a lesser extent, Belgian figures are similarly overestimated.

For more information

Eurostat [website section](#) dedicated to trade in goods statistics.

Eurostat [database](#) on international trade in goods.

Eurostat [Statistics Explained article](#) on international trade in goods statistics.

Eurostat [infographic](#) on EU international trade in goods in 2015.

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