

## E-commerce in EU enterprises

# 1 in 6 EU businesses sold on the web in 2016

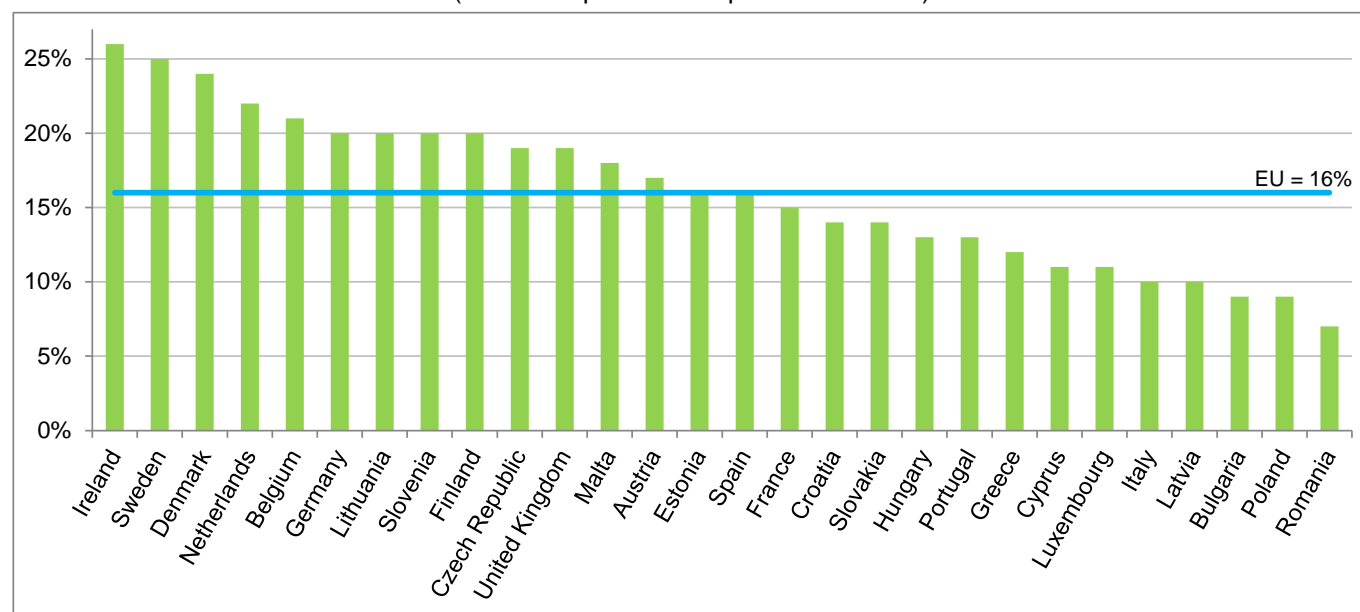
## Some difficulties still hinder cross-border sales

Last year, 16% of enterprises located in the **European Union** (EU) and employing at least 10 persons had received orders via a website or via apps. Web sales include both sales to individual consumers and to other enterprises. The share of **EU** enterprises making web sales rose from 12% in 2010 to around 16% in 2014, since when it has been relatively stable. Among those EU enterprises with web sales in 2016, nearly all (97%) sold to their own country, while less than half (44%) sold to customers located in other EU Member States and over a quarter (28%) to non-EU customers.

Web sales may offer businesses the means for expanding beyond national borders and reaching customers (businesses or consumers) regardless of their geographical location. The European Commission aims at creating a Digital Single Market where e-commerce among Member States is as smooth as the sales of a traditional brick and mortar outlet within any country. Yet, almost 2 in every 5 EU enterprises with web sales to other EU Member States in 2016 reported difficulties in doing so, notably due to the costs of delivering and/or the linguistic barriers.

This information comes from an [article](#) issued by **Eurostat**, the **statistical office of the European Union**, and forms part of the results of a survey conducted in 2017 on ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) usage and e-commerce in enterprises.

**EU businesses with web sales in 2016**  
(% of enterprises of 10 persons or more)



### 1 in 4 enterprises sold via the web in Ireland, Sweden and Denmark

Among the EU Member States in 2016, web sales were used by about a quarter of enterprises in **Ireland** (26%), **Sweden** (25%) and **Denmark** (24%), ahead of the **Netherlands** (22%) and **Belgium** (21%). At the opposite end of the scale, web sales concerned 1 in 10 enterprises or fewer in **Romania** (7%), **Bulgaria** and **Poland** (both 9%), **Italy** and **Latvia** (both 10%).

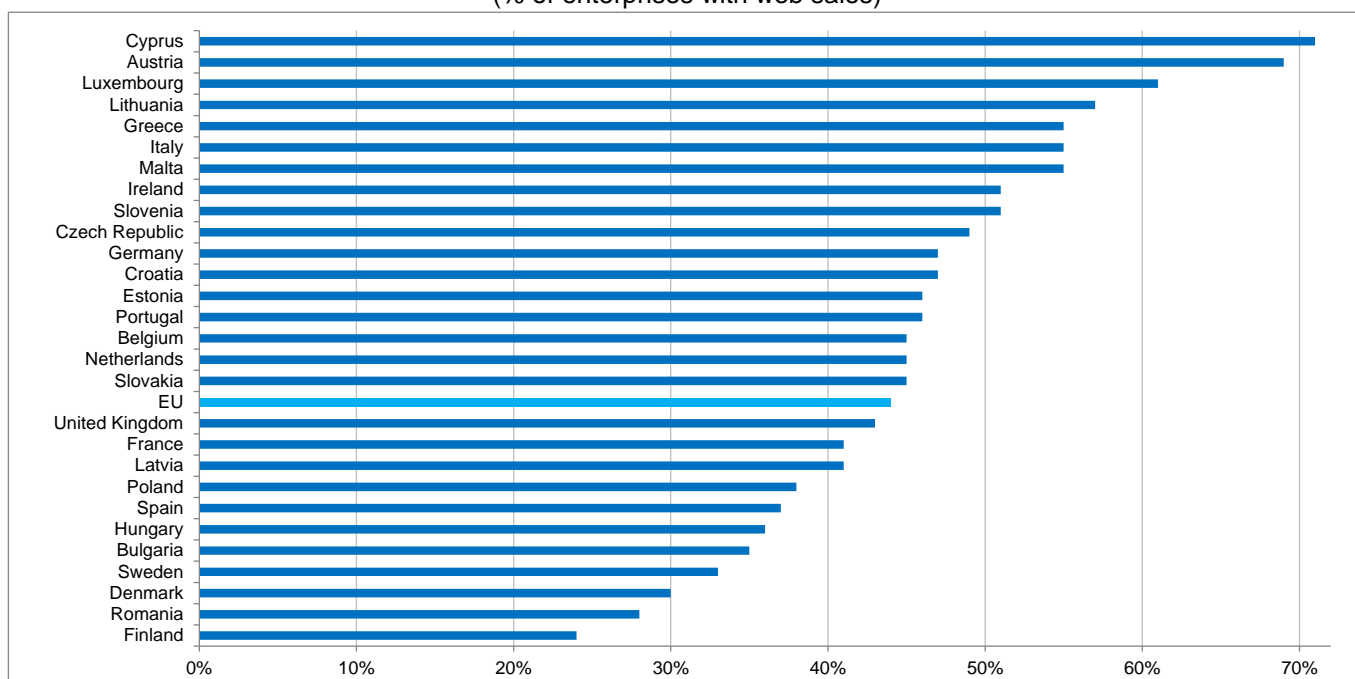
## Cross-border web sales within the EU most common for enterprises in Cyprus and Austria

Almost all enterprises in the EU with web sales sold to national customers, but there are significant differences between Member States for the sales abroad ("cross-border e-commerce").

The largest proportions of EU enterprises with web sales in 2016 that sold to customers located in other EU Member States were recorded in **Cyprus** (71%) and **Austria** (69%), followed by **Luxembourg** (61%), **Lithuania** (57%), **Italy**, **Greece** and **Malta** (all 55%). In contrast, this concerned a third or less of enterprises in the three Nordic Member States – **Finland** (24%), **Denmark** (30%) and **Sweden** (33%) – as well as in **Romania** (28%).

Regarding commerce with non-EU countries, only in **Cyprus** did over half (62%) of enterprises with web sales sell to non-EU customers, followed by **Malta** (44%), **Ireland** (41%), **Portugal** (40%), **Greece** and **Austria** (both 39%).

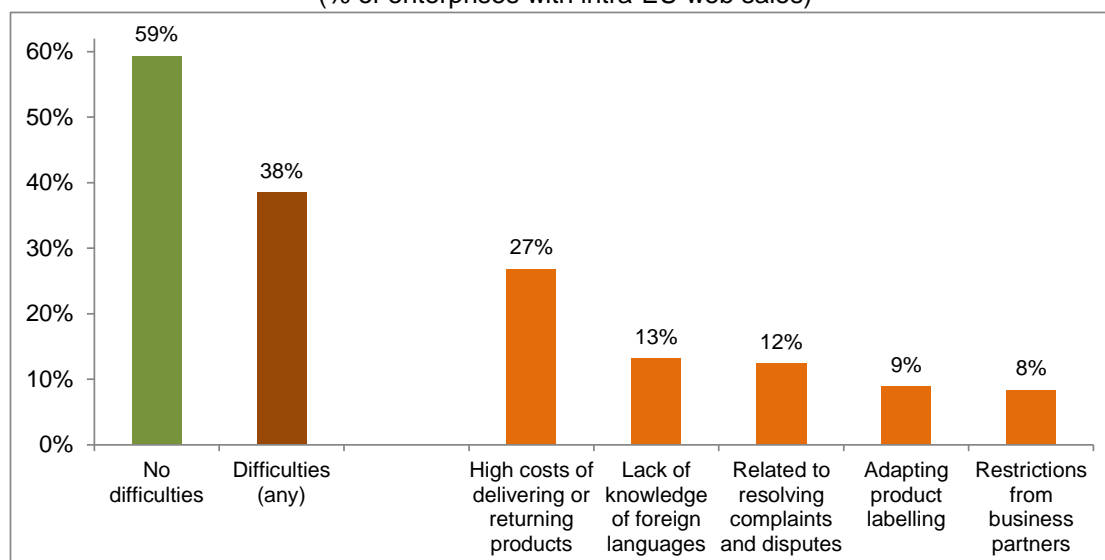
**Web sales to other EU Member States, 2016**  
(% of enterprises with web sales)



## Transport charges main obstacle to cross-border web sales within the EU

The majority (59%) of **EU** enterprises having received orders via a website or via apps during 2016 reported no difficulties for their web sales to other EU Member States. However, almost 4 in 10 (38%) reported hampering factors. These mainly concerned economic reasons such as the high costs of delivering or returning products (27%), technical barriers such as the lack of knowledge of foreign languages (13%) or adapting product labelling (9%), and/or judicial reasons related for instance to resolving complaints and disputes (12%).

**Difficulties for web sales to other EU Member States, 2016**  
(% of enterprises with intra-EU web sales)



**Enterprises having received orders via a website or apps (web sales), by destination, 2016**  
(enterprises of 10 persons or more)

	% of enterprises		Destinations of web sales % of enterprises with web sales*		
	Having a website	With web sales	To their own country	To other EU Member States	To non-EU countries
<b>EU</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	83	21	90	45	17
<b>Bulgaria</b>	51	9	95	35	19
<b>Czech Republic</b>	83	19	99	49	16
<b>Denmark</b>	95	24	88	30	21
<b>Germany</b>	87	20	95	47	30
<b>Estonia</b>	78	16	98	46	22
<b>Ireland</b>	74	26	95	51	41
<b>Greece</b>	65	12	100	55	39
<b>Spain</b>	77	16	99	37	24
<b>France</b>	67	15	99	41	28
<b>Croatia</b>	71	14	96	47	33
<b>Italy</b>	72	10	98	55	35
<b>Cyprus</b>	73	11	91	71	62
<b>Latvia</b>	63	10	97	41	30
<b>Lithuania</b>	78	20	97	57	29
<b>Luxembourg</b>	82	11	90	61	26
<b>Hungary</b>	69	13	99	36	18
<b>Malta</b>	81	18	91	55	44
<b>Netherlands</b>	86	22	98	45	18
<b>Austria</b>	86	17	99	69	39
<b>Poland</b>	67	9	98	38	19
<b>Portugal</b>	65	13	96	46	40
<b>Romania</b>	45	7	91	28	9
<b>Slovenia</b>	83	20	80	51	15
<b>Slovakia</b>	79	14	96	45	18
<b>Finland</b>	96	20	98	24	16
<b>Sweden</b>	91	25	94	33	21
<b>United Kingdom</b>	84	19	100	43	34
<b>Iceland</b>	82	26	:	:	:
<b>Norway</b>	80	27	92	20	14
<b>Turkey</b>	73	9	:	:	:

Note that an enterprise may have e-commerce web sales and still not have a website as the sales are through e-marketplaces.

\* The same enterprise may report several or all types of destination.

: Data not available

The source dataset can be found [here](#), where dimension "Time" refers to the survey year.

## 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

Data presented in this News Release are based on the results of the 2017 European Union survey on "ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises". This survey covered enterprises with at least 10 persons employed in manufacturing; electricity, gas and steam; water supply; construction; wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; transportation and storage; accommodation and food service activities; information and communication; real estate; professional, scientific and technical activities; administrative and support activities; repair of computers and communication equipment.

**Web sales** are sales to both businesses and individuals made via an online store (web shop, e-commerce marketplace), via web forms on a website or extranet, or via 'apps' regardless of how the web is accessed (computer, laptop, mobile phone, etc.).

## Timetable

A news release on ICT usage in household and by individuals is scheduled for 20 December 2017.

## For more information

Eurostat [website section](#) on digital economy and society statistics.

Eurostat [database](#) on digital economy and society.

Eurostat [Statistics Explained article](#) on e-commerce statistics.

European Commission [Digital Single Market strategy](#).

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