

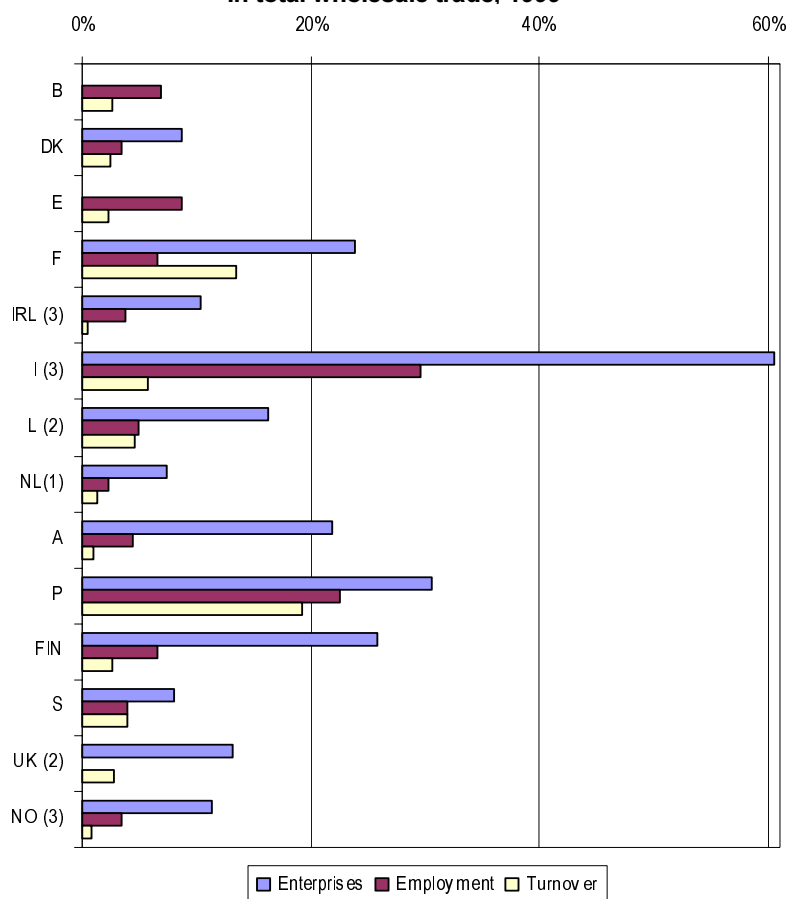
# Distributive trades statistics

## Wholesale intermediaries

Joachim Hubertus

- Many small firms with **low employment** and **turnover** as a percentage of total wholesale activity, except in **Italy**.
- Wholesale intermediaries in general show **similar productivity** to total wholesale – **operating rates** tend to be **higher**.
- Wholesale intermediaries are **dominated by the self-employed**.
- Agents dealing in **food, beverages and tobacco** account for the biggest share of turnover in this branch at European level.

Figure 1: Proportion of wholesale intermediaries in total wholesale trade, 1999



N.B. Enterprise data are from 1998, unless otherwise stated below; 1999 data are provisional  
 (1) 1998 data on employment (2) 1998 data on all variables (3) 1997 data on all variables

Source: Eurostat SBS database

Wholesale intermediaries: the official denomination of NACE group 51.1 is wholesale on a fee or contract basis. This NACE group includes:

- activities of commission agents, commodity brokers and all other wholesalers who trade on behalf and account of others;
- activities of those involved in bringing buyers and sellers together or undertaking commercial transactions on behalf of a principal.

The NACE classes of this group are listed in the methodological notes on page 7.

## Statistics in focus

### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND SERVICES

THEME 4 – 15/2001

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## Proportion of wholesale intermediaries in total wholesale trade

### Many small firms with a small share of employment and turnover

Wholesale intermediaries are one of the seven NACE groups that make up the wholesale trade.

Operators in this activity are also called 'agents', and are often small businesses or persons working on their own. The sector thus has a large number of enterprises which account for a relatively **small share of total wholesale in terms of numbers of persons employed and turnover**.

Figure 1 shows that this pattern applies to some extent to all countries, but with some disparities.

**Italy** is an exceptional case: wholesale intermediaries account for over **60% of all wholesale enterprises** and nearly **30% of wholesale employment** (1997 data).

**Portugal** ranks second for these two variables (enterprises 30.6% - employment 22.5%). Next for enterprises come **Finland** (25.8%) and **France** (23.9%), and for employment **Spain** and **Belgium**, with 8.6% and 6.9% respectively.

The values for the other countries range between 21.9% and 8.0% of enterprises and 6.5% to 3.4% of employment. **The Netherlands** records the lowest values

for both variables (enterprises 7.5% and employment 2.3%).

In **turnover terms**, **Portugal** shows the highest percentage of intermediaries in total wholesale, at 19.2%.

**France** ranks second with 13.4%, followed by Italy (5.8% - 1997) and Luxembourg (4.6% - 1998).

On the other hand, the turnover generated by NACE group 51.1 as a percentage of total wholesale turnover is **negligible in Austria (1%), Ireland and Norway** (both below 1%).

## Productivity and labour costs

### Productivity values similar to total wholesale - France with exceptional turnover per person employed

Figure 2 illustrates the differences between total wholesale and wholesale intermediaries for **turnover per person employed**.

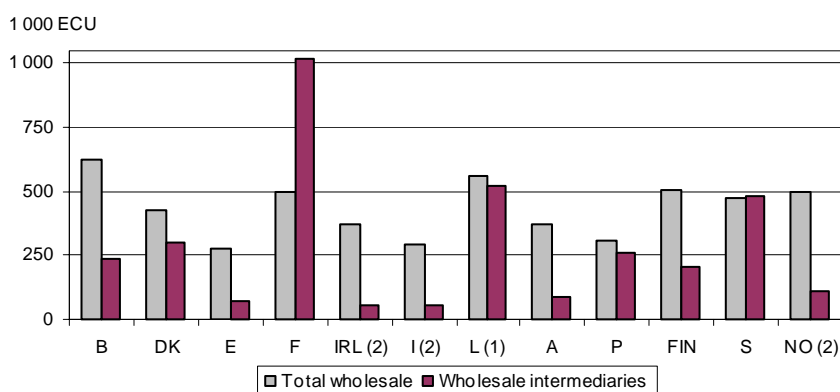
This variable is generally **higher** in total wholesale and the greatest differences are observed in **Belgium** and **Norway**. There are, however, two **exceptions: France** (where the turnover of wholesale intermediaries is double that of total wholesale!) and Sweden.

The **lowest** absolute values for wholesale intermediaries are recorded in **Italy** and **Ireland**.

For **value added per person employed** (apparent labour productivity), there is relatively little difference between wholesale intermediaries and total wholesale.

**France, Luxembourg** and **Sweden** show values slightly above those for total wholesale; the values for the other countries observed are slightly below (Figure 3). Disparities between countries are wide: **Luxembourg** stands at the top with ECU 59 500 for total wholesale and ECU 60 400 for wholesale intermediaries; Portugal is at the bottom of the scale with ECU 24 000 and 17 300 respectively. The wide gaps for turnover and similar figures for value added may be explained by the fact that wholesale intermediary operations are less capital intensive (no goods purchasing, stocks or fixed investments).

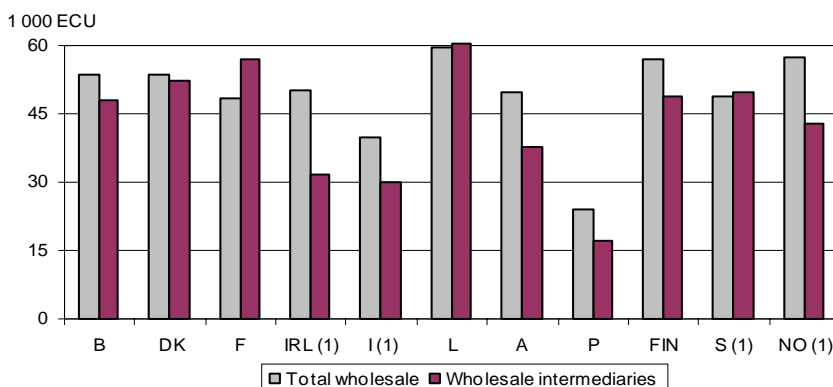
Figure 2: Turnover per person employed, 1999  
Wholesale intermediaries and total wholesale



(1) 1998 data (2) 1997 data

Source: Eurostat SBS database

Figure 3: Apparent labour productivity, 1998  
Wholesale intermediaries and total wholesale



(1) 1997 data

Source: Eurostat SBS database

### Higher operating rates for wholesale intermediaries

The operating surplus is the result of operating activity and can be calculated from value added after compensating for the labour cost factor.

The **operating rate** (share of gross operating surplus in turnover: Figure 5) can be regarded as an indicator of the success of an economic activity.

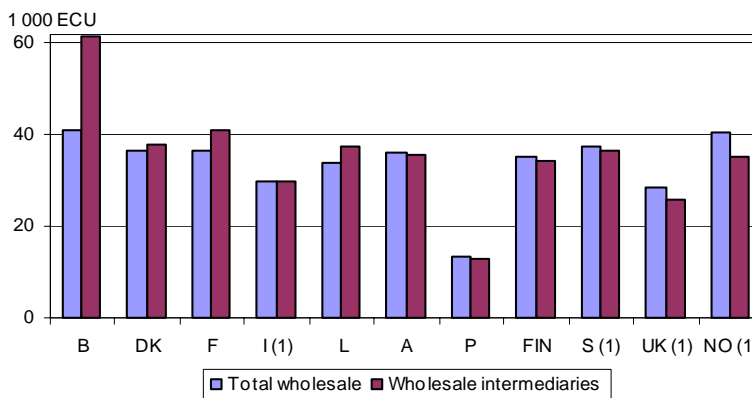
Figure 4 illustrates the different levels of **unit labour cost (personnel cost per employee)** in the countries providing data on total wholesale and wholesale intermediaries.

With the **exception of Belgium** and, to a lesser extent, **Luxembourg** and **France**, wholesale intermediaries record unit labour cost values **similar** to those for total wholesale. However, the absolute values vary widely between the countries observed.

In wholesale intermediaries, unit labour cost values range between ECU 61 500 for Belgium to ECU 12 900 for Portugal; in total wholesale, they range between ECU 41 000 and ECU 13 500 – with Belgium and Portugal again holding respectively the top and the lowest positions.

Most countries show **higher operating rates for wholesale intermediaries** than for total wholesale (Figure 5). The range is considerable (France 2%; Italy 43%), while in retailing, for example, the range is only 4% to 11%.

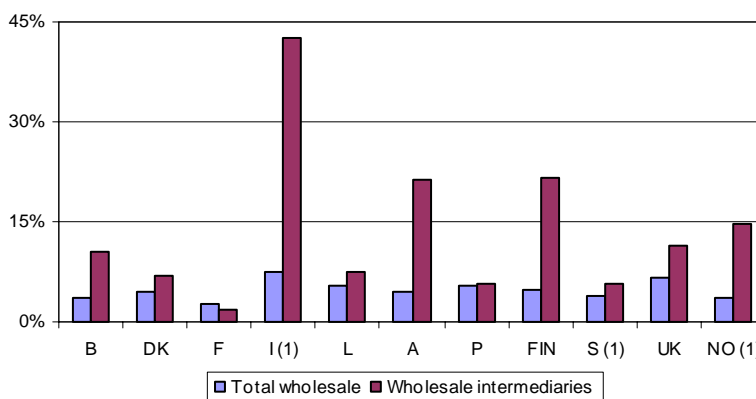
**Figure 4: Unit labour costs, 1998**  
Wholesale intermediaries and total wholesale



(1) 1997 data

Source: Eurostat SBS database

**Figure 5: Gross operating rates, 1998**  
Wholesale intermediaries and total wholesale



(1) 1997 data

Source: Eurostat SBS database

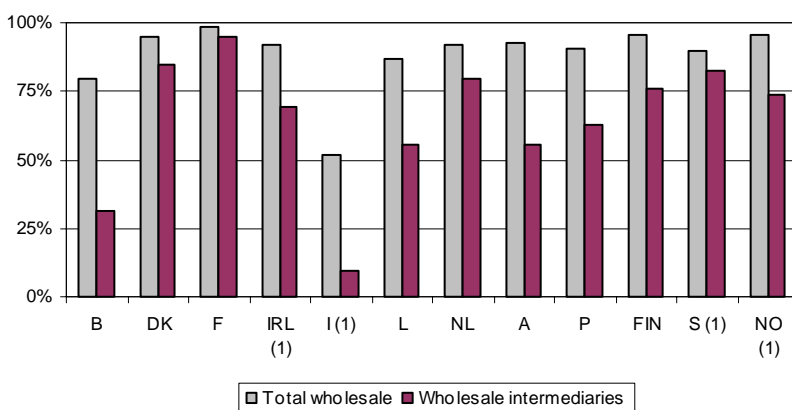
Figures should be examined cautiously, however, since in self-employment (large numbers in Italy) the proprietor's income may be included in the operating result and thus inflate it.

## Employment characteristics

### High level of self-employment – Italy outstanding

Wholesale intermediaries show a **higher level of self-employment** (Figure 6) than total wholesale. This is due mainly to the dominance of very small "one-person" businesses run directly by the proprietor. This aspect clearly appears in **Italy**, where fewer than 10% of those working in the branch are employees. Wholesale intermediary activity is organised differently in **France**, where 95% are employees.

**Figure 6: Share of employees in total employment, 1998**  
Wholesale intermediaries and total wholesale



(1) 1997 data

Source: Eurostat SBS database

## Activities of wholesale intermediaries

Figures 7, 8 and 9 illustrate the scale of the various activities of wholesale intermediaries at EU level (averages are calculated on the basis of the countries providing data - see footnote).

**'Final consumption goods'** (e.g. furniture, household goods, food and clothing) constitute the main activity and together account for almost 90% for each of the three main variables analysed.

Except for turnover, where food, beverages and tobacco (NACE 51.17) predominate, the NACE classes 'Agents specialising in the sale of particular products or ranges of products n.e.c.' (NACE 51.18) and 'Agents involved in the sale of a variety of goods' (51.19) take the largest shares of the main variables.

The high shares of the above two classes can be explained **by the variety of types of 'consumer goods' that agents can deal with**, which are often difficult to classify exactly.

**Wholesale activities linked to production processes**, such as agricultural raw materials, mining products and industrial supplies (intermediate consumption), record **low shares**.

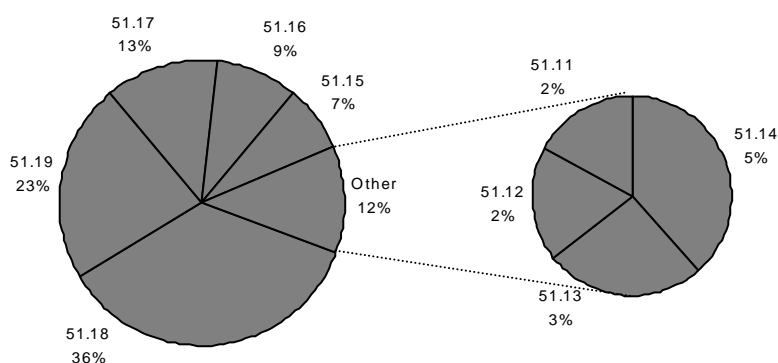
The proportions of the different activities are similar for numbers of enterprises and employment, but for **turnover the pattern is different**.

For example, **furniture and household goods** (NACE 51.15) and **textiles and clothing** (NACE 51.16) account for fairly high shares of enterprises and employment, but for only 2-4% of turnover.

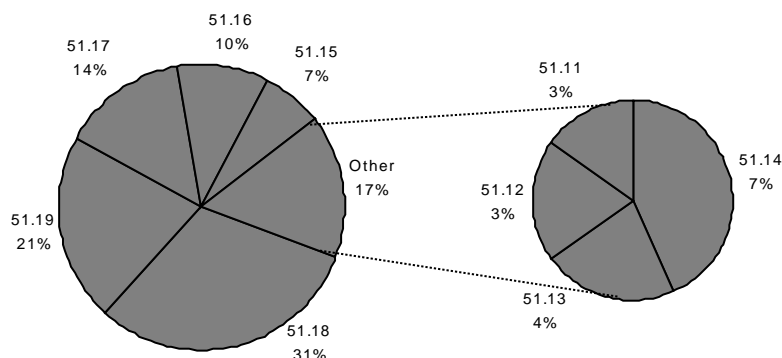
Conversely, **food, beverages and tobacco** (NACE 51.17) account for more than a third of the total turnover of intermediaries, but for only 13% of enterprises and 14% of employment.

Table 1 shows disparities across countries for the different activities of wholesale intermediaries.

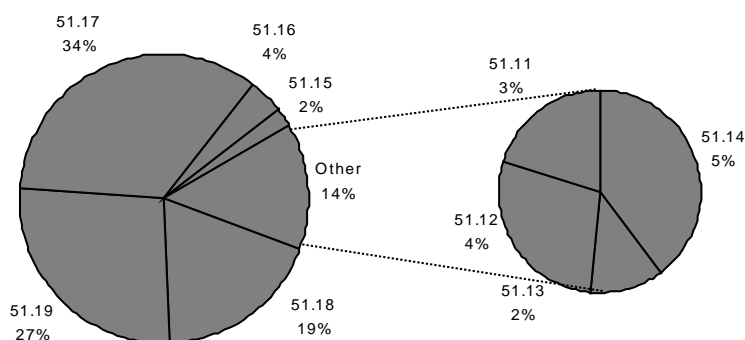
**Figure 7: Wholesale intermediaries in the EU, 1998, number of enterprises broken down by activity (NACE class)**



**Figure 8: Wholesale intermediaries in the EU, 1998, number of persons employed broken down by activity (NACE class)**



**Figure 9: Wholesale intermediaries in the EU, 1998, turnover broken down by activity (NACE class)**



Data cover the following countries: B, DK, F, IRL, I, NL, A, P, FIN, S.

Source: Eurostat, SBS database and estimates

The NACE classes refer to agents involved in the sale of:

- 51.11: agricultural raw materials, live animals, textile raw materials and semi-finished goods;
- 51.12: fuels, ores, metals and industrial chemicals;
- 51.13: timber and building materials;
- 51.14: machinery, industrial equipment, ships and aircraft;
- 51.15: furniture, household goods, hardware and ironmongery;
- 51.16: textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods;
- 51.17: food, beverages and tobacco;
- 51.18: particular products or ranges of products n.e.c.;
- 51.19: a variety of goods.

## Key variables on wholesale intermediary activities

**Table 1: Main enterprise variables by NACE class, 1998**

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL (1)	I (1)	L (2)	NL	A	P	FIN	S (1)	UK	IS	NO (1)	
Number of enterprises (units)																		
51.1	:	1 980	:	:	:	38 538	510	232 763	479	4 060	4 251	15 071	4 478	3 373	15 734	:	1 992	
51.11	:	130	:	:	:	971	89	4 331	6	345	69	135	60	58	:	:	20	
51.12	:	48	:	:	:	589	40	5 235	39	185	99	90	143	167	:	:	78	
51.13	:	79	:	:	:	1 027	:	6 807	50	210	301	330	634	268	:	:	120	
51.14	:	172	:	:	:	1 417	50	9 529	90	650	529	222	588	801	:	:	128	
51.15	:	188	:	:	:	731	36	18 962	38	470	337	232	1 323	261	:	:	296	
51.16	:	269	:	:	:	1 553	71	23 701	38	870	679	778	531	773	:	:	452	
51.17	:	86	:	:	:	2 905	100	34 680	42	325	180	396	401	294	:	:	219	
51.18	:	184	:	:	:	17 663	75	88 223	71	755	789	799	301	336	:	:	557	
51.19	:	824	:	:	:	11 682	32	41 295	105	250	1 269	12 089	497	415	:	:	122	
Number of persons employed (units)																		
51.1 (3)	12 971	6 225	:	:	:	61 477	1 931	290 441	618	10 117	8 871	31 919	5 418	10 079	:	:	3 592	
51.11	368	345	:	:	:	1 550	767	6 105	14	848	104	456	308	88	:	:	26	
51.12	699	233	:	:	:	3 560	111	7 303	:	437	269	424	165	752	:	:	222	
51.13	602	203	:	:	:	2 098	:	9 207	:	513	470	1 329	667	636	:	:	210	
51.14	1 283	566	:	:	:	4 893	216	13 598	103	3 425	1 467	1 236	1 196	3 052	:	:	191	
51.15	1 746	314	:	:	:	1 007	135	22 578	44	820	645	614	1 207	971	:	:	484	
51.16	1 775	1 085	:	:	:	2 359	231	32 256	49	1 422	1 291	3 011	580	1 477	:	:	690	
51.17	1 138	547	:	:	:	14 342	151	41 419	54	753	330	2 958	527	883	:	:	556	
51.18	3 390	980	:	:	:	16 144	81	107 594	84	1 514	2 454	3 455	412	1 231	:	:	1 004	
51.19	1 970	1 952	:	:	:	15 524	268	50 381	120	385	1 842	18 436	356	989	:	:	209	
Turnover (million ECU)																		
51.1 (3)	3 498.6	1 816.8	:	:	:	58 322.6	101.5	16 659.4	320.3	:	739.3	5 238.1	572.8	3 526.1	13 510.6	:	:	411.0
51.11	113.5	339.2	:	:	:	1 627.6	20.1	357.9	1.5	:	8.3	92.5	27.7	17.9	:	:	2.7	
51.12	953.1	168.2	:	:	:	1 403.0	11.9	580.5	:	:	35.1	87.6	25.9	312.6	:	:	43.5	
51.13	173.3	51.6	:	:	:	237.2	:	515.0	:	:	32.9	173.7	52.0	417.7	:	:	25.3	
51.14	351.5	139.0	:	:	:	1 894.9	18.8	1 178.4	19.3	:	242.1	157.3	145.3	764.7	:	:	26.7	
51.15	332.9	113.4	:	:	:	120.0	4.1	1 126.7	5.9	:	50.7	40.0	87.2	273.3	:	:	51.9	
51.16	275.2	136.3	:	:	:	452.3	12.2	1 950.4	1.6	:	95.4	342.8	44.4	373.6	:	:	57.7	
51.17	304.9	189.4	:	:	:	26 616.4	8.7	2 055.2	6.4	:	16.7	1 407.9	43.1	488.2	:	:	60.8	
51.18	454.3	252.6	:	:	:	7 290.1	9.5	6 485.5	8.1	:	169.0	814.3	89.2	479.4	:	:	122.6	
51.19	539.8	427.0	:	:	:	18 681.1	9.5	2 409.9	10.8	:	89.0	2 122.0	57.8	398.7	:	:	19.8	
Value added at factor cost (million ECU)																		
51.1	621.9	324.8	:	:	:	3 508.7	61.0	7 827.2	37.3	:	334.7	552.6	263.6	502.2	3 088.3	:	:	153.3
51.11	12.0	28.0	:	:	:	79.4	7.4	180.8	0.7	:	4.1	7.0	17.6	2.3	:	:	1.3	
51.12	87.0	20.7	:	:	:	284.5	11.5	233.2	:	:	19.1	8.5	14.9	41.5	:	:	14.3	
51.13	28.0	12.7	:	:	:	78.8	:	237.9	:	:	16.0	18.2	24.8	26.4	:	:	8.6	
51.14	85.4	30.9	:	:	:	443.1	10.9	519.8	7.0	:	71.9	29.1	74.3	168.9	:	:	8.4	
51.15	57.1	19.5	:	:	:	37.8	2.8	581.3	1.6	:	29.3	6.1	47.3	74.1	:	:	20.8	
51.16	69.9	48.4	:	:	:	120.7	7.7	892.4	0.6	:	48.5	55.0	24.3	50.4	:	:	20.0	
51.17	40.0	21.5	:	:	:	847.3	4.2	944.7	2.8	:	9.9	40.4	23.5	43.0	:	:	22.6	
51.18	150.6	47.8	:	:	:	770.1	8.5	3 065.8	1.1	:	83.4	109.5	20.4	63.1	:	:	49.7	
51.19	91.8	95.2	:	:	:	847.0	5.2	1 171.4	2.5	:	52.5	278.8	16.5	32.3	:	:	7.6	
Gross operating surplus (million ECU)																		
51.1	372.3	124.9	:	:	:	1 118.7	:	7 081.1	24.3	:	158.2	294.4	123.4	199.2	1 527.1	:	:	59.9
51.11	7.2	19.7	:	:	:	24.4	:	150.7	0.5	:	2.5	3.4	7.9	0.9	:	:	0.7	
51.12	61.1	-1.8	:	:	:	103.5	:	195.9	:	:	6.4	4.2	8.1	14.0	:	:	5.1	
51.13	23.3	5.0	:	:	:	14.7	:	217.0	:	:	11.0	9.4	12.4	8.4	:	:	3.1	
51.14	20.2	11.3	:	:	:	133.5	:	445.2	3.8	:	14.2	9.9	31.0	60.5	:	:	3.1	
51.15	23.4	10.6	:	:	:	3.9	:	546.0	0.7	:	17.8	1.4	23.2	48.7	:	:	8.8	
51.16	43.7	18.3	:	:	:	33.1	:	820.1	0.0	:	30.0	21.5	13.1	20.1	:	:	9.9	
51.17	21.1	6.4	:	:	:	374.1	:	873.0	2.1	:	4.3	9.5	9.5	16.0	:	:	8.0	
51.18	88.9	15.5	:	:	:	157.0	:	2 826.8	-0.2	:	34.2	55.1	8.6	23.0	:	:	18.8	
51.19	83.4	39.9	:	:	:	274.6	:	1 006.4	1.5	:	37.8	179.9	9.6	7.8	:	:	2.4	
Personnel costs (million ECU)																		
51.1	249.6	199.9	:	:	:	2 390.0	:	746.2	13.0	:	176.4	258.3	140.2	302.9	1 561.1	:	:	93.4
51.11	4.8	8.4	:	:	:	55.0	:	30.1	0.2	:	1.6	3.7	9.7	1.4	:	:	0.6	
51.12	25.9	22.6	:	:	:	181.0	:	37.3	:	:	12.8	4.3	6.8	27.5	:	:	9.1	
51.13	4.7	7.8	:	:	:	64.1	:	20.9	:	:	5.0	8.8	12.5	18.1	:	:	5.5	
51.14	65.2	19.6	:	:	:	309.6	:	74.6	3.1	:	57.6	19.2	43.3	108.5	:	:	5.3	
51.15	33.8	8.9	:	:	:	33.9	:	35.3	0.9	:	11.5	4.7	24.1	25.4	:	:	12.0	
51.16	26.1	30.1	:	:	:	87.6	:	72.3	0.6	:	18.5	33.5	11.1	30.3	:	:	10.1	
51.17	18.9	15.1	:	:	:	473.2	:	71.7	0.6	:	5.6	30.9	14.0	27.0	:	:	14.6	
51.18	61.8	32.2	:	:	:	613.1	:	239.0	1.3	:	49.3	54.4	11.8	40.1	:	:	30.9	
51.19	8.4	55.3	:	:	:	572.4	:	165.1	1.0	:	14.7	98.9	6.8	24.6	:	:	5.2	
Gross investment in tangible goods (million ECU)																		
51.1	139.9	37.2	:	:	:	309.8	2.0	1 083.7	1.6	:	22.0	91.4	31.0	108.0	323.8	:	:	14.6
51.11	0.9	2.9	:	:	:	8.4	0.7	20.0	0.1	:	1.0	2.2	1.8	1.5	:	:	0.1	
51.12	1.9	2.9	:	:	:	48.8	0.0	25.5	:	:	0.5	1.8	3.7	4.4	:	:	1.0	
51.13	1.4	1.4	:	:	:	4.3	:	23.1	:	:	1.2	6.4	5.7	2.7	:	:	0.5	
51.14	8.5	2.6	:	:	:	43.1	0.2	50.9	0.3	:	3.7	2.8	4.7	56.2	:	:	1.0	
51.15	10.2	1.5	:	:	:	2.5	0.1	168.2	0.1	:	1.6	1.0	5.0	21.3	:	:	1.4	
51.16	5.1	5.6	:	:	:	6.1	0.2	225.8	0.1	:	4.4	7.6	2.6	5.3	:	:	1.2	
51.17	6.1	4.0	:	:	:	72.6	0.2	81.1	0.1	:	0.9	6.5	3.4	7.2	:	:	1.6	
51.18	50.0	4.8	:	:	:	56.6	0.1	314.2	0.1	:	4.6	19.6	1.8	6.1	:	:	7.1	
51.19	55.8	11.5	:	:	:	67.5	0.1	174.9	0.2	:	4.3	43.5	2.3	3.2	:	:	0.7	

(1) 1997 data

(2) 1995 data on gross investment in tangible goods

(3) The 1999 preliminary data presented in Figures 1 and 2 are available only at NACE group level; they have not been included in the table to avoid inconsistency with the NACE classes.

Source: Eurostat, SBS database

Final consumption goods account for large shares of wholesale intermediary activity at European level and are clearly dominant in some countries (Table 1).

**Food, beverages and tobacco** (NACE 51.17 - 1998), for instance, account for 45.6% of the turnover of wholesale intermediaries in France, 26.9% in Portugal, 20.3% in Denmark and less than 10% in most other countries.

In **Portugal** 'a variety of goods' (NACE 51.19) is clearly dominant, accounting for over 80% of the number of enterprises, almost 60% of employment and 40.5% of turnover, while all activities

relating to 'non-consumer' goods appear to be negligible.

Activities related to intermediate consumption goods are more important in a number of countries, however.

In **Austria** food, beverages and tobacco (NACE 51.17) are of negligible importance, accounting for only 2.3% of the turnover of wholesale intermediaries, while **machinery and industrial equipment** (NACE 51.14) provide the largest share of turnover at 32.7%.

This activity is also dominant in **Sweden** (up to 21.7% of the turnover and 30.3% of the employment of wholesale

intermediaries in 1997), **Finland** (25.4% of turnover and 22.0% of employment in 1998) and the **Netherlands** (nearly 34% of employment in 1998; data on turnover not available).

In **Belgium**, the wholesale intermediary activity providing the largest share of turnover (27.2% in 1998) is **fuels, ores, metals and industrial chemicals** (NACE 51.12), while in **Ireland** (1997) **agricultural and textile raw materials** (NACE 51.11) prevail, accounting for 19.8% of turnover and nearly 40% of employment.

**Table 2: Main productivity variables by NACE class, 1998**

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL (1)	I (1)	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S (1)	UK (2)	IS	NO (1)
Turnover per person employed (thousand ECU)																	
51.1	269.7	291.9	:	:	:	948.7	52.6	60.0	518.2	:	83.3	164.1	105.7	349.8	:	:	114.4
51.11	308.3	983.3	:	:	:	1 050.1	26.2	60.0	109.3	:	80.0	202.8	90.0	203.9	:	:	102.0
51.12	1 363.6	721.8	:	:	:	394.1	107.6	80.0	:	:	130.5	206.7	157.3	415.7	:	:	195.8
51.13	287.9	254.3	:	:	:	113.1	:	60.0	:	:	69.9	130.7	78.0	656.8	:	:	120.5
51.14	274.0	245.5	:	:	:	387.3	87.3	90.0	187.2	:	165.1	127.3	121.5	250.6	:	:	140.0
51.15	190.6	361.3	:	:	:	119.2	30.3	50.0	134.7	:	78.7	65.2	72.3	281.4	:	:	107.2
51.16	155.1	125.7	:	:	:	191.7	52.8	60.0	32.7	:	73.9	113.8	76.5	252.9	:	:	83.6
51.17	267.9	346.2	:	:	:	1 855.8	57.7	50.0	118.8	:	50.8	476.0	81.8	552.9	:	:	109.3
51.18	134.0	257.8	:	:	:	451.6	117.8	60.0	96.5	:	68.9	235.7	216.5	389.5	:	:	122.1
51.19	274.0	218.7	:	:	:	1 203.4	35.5	50.0	89.9	:	48.3	115.1	162.5	403.1	:	:	94.8
Apparent labour productivity (thousand ECU)																	
51.1	47.9	52.2	:	:	:	57.1	31.6	30.0	60.4	:	37.7	17.3	48.7	49.8	:	:	42.7
51.11	32.7	81.3	:	:	:	51.2	9.7	30.0	49.6	:	39.7	15.5	57.1	26.5	:	:	49.7
51.12	124.5	89.0	:	:	:	79.9	103.2	30.0	:	:	71.2	20.1	90.4	55.2	:	:	64.3
51.13	46.6	62.7	:	:	:	37.6	:	30.0	:	:	34.0	13.7	37.2	41.6	:	:	40.8
51.14	66.6	54.6	:	:	:	90.6	50.4	40.0	67.6	:	49.0	23.6	62.1	55.4	:	:	43.8
51.15	32.7	62.2	:	:	:	37.5	20.8	30.0	36.6	:	45.4	10.0	39.2	76.4	:	:	43.0
51.16	39.4	44.6	:	:	:	51.2	33.4	30.0	11.3	:	37.5	18.3	41.9	34.1	:	:	29.0
51.17	35.2	39.3	:	:	:	59.1	27.9	20.0	51.2	:	30.0	13.7	44.6	48.7	:	:	40.7
51.18	44.4	48.7	:	:	:	47.7	104.9	30.0	13.4	:	34.0	31.7	49.5	51.2	:	:	49.5
51.19	46.6	48.8	:	:	:	54.6	19.2	20.0	20.8	:	28.5	15.1	46.3	32.7	:	:	36.3
Gross operating rate (%)																	
51.1	10.6	6.9	:	:	:	1.9	:	42.5	7.6	:	21.4	5.6	21.5	5.7	11.3	:	14.6
51.11	6.4	5.8	:	:	:	1.5	:	42.1	33.3	:	30.4	3.7	28.6	5.1	:	:	24.5
51.12	6.4	-1.1	:	:	:	7.4	:	33.8	:	:	18.1	4.8	31.2	4.5	:	:	11.8
51.13	13.5	9.6	:	:	:	6.2	:	42.1	:	:	33.6	5.4	23.8	2.0	:	:	12.2
51.14	5.7	8.1	:	:	:	7.0	:	37.8	20.0	:	5.9	6.3	21.3	7.9	:	:	11.6
51.15	7.0	9.4	:	:	:	3.2	:	48.5	11.6	:	35.1	3.6	26.6	17.8	:	:	17.0
51.16	15.9	13.4	:	:	:	7.3	:	42.0	-1.6	:	31.5	6.3	29.6	5.4	:	:	17.1
51.17	6.9	3.4	:	:	:	1.4	:	42.5	33.0	:	25.7	0.7	22.0	3.3	:	:	13.2
51.18	19.6	6.2	:	:	:	2.2	:	43.6	-2.7	:	20.2	6.8	9.6	4.8	:	:	15.3
51.19	15.4	9.3	:	:	:	1.5	:	41.8	13.7	:	42.5	8.5	16.6	1.9	:	:	12.1
Unit labour cost (thousand ECU)																	
51.1	61.5	37.8	:	:	:	40.9	:	30.0	37.6	:	35.9	12.9	34.2	36.6	25.8	:	35.2
51.11	55.0	29.1	:	:	:	42.1	:	20.0	20.5	:	40.0	9.7	33.5	29.5	:	:	49.4
51.12	79.0	101.7	:	:	:	51.3	:	30.0	:	:	69.9	11.2	44.3	40.4	:	:	46.4
51.13	29.1	44.9	:	:	:	32.5	:	20.0	:	:	23.7	7.6	29.3	36.0	:	:	33.6
51.14	121.0	38.6	:	:	:	64.8	:	30.0	35.5	:	57.2	16.4	44.2	40.1	:	:	34.5
51.15	41.3	36.8	:	:	:	35.2	:	30.0	38.6	:	33.3	10.7	28.9	31.2	:	:	33.9
51.16	49.3	31.0	:	:	:	38.4	:	20.0	36.2	:	28.0	13.0	28.2	29.0	:	:	22.1
51.17	42.7	29.0	:	:	:	34.2	:	30.0	23.0	:	35.4	11.0	33.1	38.9	:	:	32.3
51.18	62.5	36.2	:	:	:	41.2	:	30.0	37.4	:	28.7	17.4	34.2	38.8	:	:	44.0
51.19	51.5	37.6	:	:	:	38.5	:	30.0	21.6	:	24.5	12.4	26.7	32.5	:	:	32.6
Investment per person employed (thousand ECU)																	
51.1	10.8	6.0	:	:	:	5.0	1.0	0.0	2.6	:	2.5	2.9	5.7	10.7	:	:	4.1
51.11	2.3	8.4	:	:	:	5.4	0.9	0.0	6.3	:	9.3	4.8	5.9	16.5	:	:	3.7
51.12	2.7	12.4	:	:	:	13.7	0.1	0.0	:	:	1.8	4.3	22.6	5.9	:	:	4.6
51.13	2.3	7.0	:	:	:	2.0	:	0.0	:	:	2.5	4.8	8.5	4.3	:	:	2.2
51.14	6.6	4.5	:	:	:	8.8	0.9	0.0	2.8	:	2.5	2.2	3.9	18.4	:	:	5.3
51.15	5.9	4.8	:	:	:	2.4	0.8	10.0	1.7	:	2.5	1.6	4.2	22.0	:	:	2.8
51.16	2.9	5.2	:	:	:	2.6	1.0	10.0	1.9	:	3.4	2.5	4.5	3.6	:	:	1.8
51.17	5.3	7.3	:	:	:	5.1	1.3	0.0	1.6	:	2.6	2.2	6.4	8.2	:	:	3.0
51.18	14.7	4.9	:	:	:	3.5	0.7	0.0	2.0	:	1.9	5.7	4.3	5.0	:	:	7.0
51.19	28.4	5.9	:	:	:	4.4	0.5	0.0	1.9	:	2.3	2.4	6.6	3.3	:	:	3.5

(1) 1997 data

(2) 1997 data on unit labour cost

Source: Eurostat, SBS database

## ➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

### Database

This issue of *Statistics in Focus* (SiF) is based on structural business statistics collected under the terms of Council Regulation (EC, EURATOM) No 58/97 of 20 December 1996. The reference data are stored in Eurostat's reference database *New Cronos* (Theme 4 - domain SBS – collection enterpr: annual enterprise statistics – dft file *enter and prelim*).

*The figures presented reflect the situation of the database as of 7 February 2000. 1999 data are provisional.*

**No data are available for those countries or EU aggregates that are not shown in the graphs or tables.**

### Statistical classification

The data are collected according to the *statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community (NACE Rev. 1)*.

This SiF deals with NACE Group **51.1 (Wholesale on a fee or contract basis)**, which breaks down into the following classes:

**51.11:** agents involved in the sale of agricultural raw materials, live animals, textile raw materials and semi-finished goods

**51.12:** agents involved in the sale of fuels, ores, metals and industrial chemicals

**51.13:** agents involved in the sale of timber and building materials

**51.14:** agents involved in the sale of machinery, industrial equipment, ships and aircraft

**51.15:** agents involved in the sale of furniture, household goods, hardware and ironmongery

**51.16:** agents involved in the sale of textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods

**51.17:** agents involved in the sale of food, beverages and tobacco

**51.18:** agents involved in the sale of particular products of ranges of products n.e.c.

**51.19:** agents involved in the sale of a variety of goods.

### SBS variables (Structural Business Statistics)

#### Number of enterprises

A count of the number of enterprises registered to the population concerned in the business register corrected for errors, in particular frame errors. Dormant units are excluded.

#### Number of persons employed

The total number of persons who work in the observation unit (employees receiving remuneration, working proprietors and unpaid family workers) as well as outside working persons who belong to the unit and are paid by it. It includes all persons who are on the payroll of the enterprise, whether they are temporarily absent (excluding long-term absences), part-time, seasonal or home workers, apprentices etc. The number of persons employed excludes manpower supplied to the unit by other enterprises and persons carrying out repair and maintenance work in the enquiry unit on behalf of other enterprises.

#### Turnover

Turnover comprises the totals invoiced by the observation unit during the reference period, which corresponds to market sales of goods or services supplied to third parties. It includes all duties and taxes on the goods and services invoiced by the unit, with the exception of the VAT invoiced by the unit vis-à-vis its customers and other similar deductible taxes directly linked to turnover.

#### Value added at factor cost

Value added at factor cost is the gross income from operating activities after adjusting for operating subsidies and indirect taxes.

#### Personnel costs

Personnel costs are defined as the total remuneration, in cash or in kind, payable by an employer to an employee in return for work done by the latter during the reference period. Personnel costs also include taxes and employees' social security

contributions retained by the unit as well as the employer's compulsory and voluntary social contributions.

#### Gross operating surplus

Gross operating surplus is the surplus generated by operating activities after the labour factor input has been recompensed. It can be calculated from the value added at factor cost less the personnel costs. It is the balance available to the unit which allows it to recompense the providers of own funds and debt, to pay taxes and eventually to finance all or a part of its investment.

#### Gross investment in tangible goods

Investment during the reference period in all tangible goods. Included are new and existing tangible capital goods, whether bought from third parties or produced for own use (i.e. capitalised production of tangible capital goods), having a useful life of more than one year, including non-produced tangible goods such as land.

#### Apparent labour productivity

Apparent labour productivity is defined as value added per person employed.

#### Unit labour cost

Unit labour cost is defined as personnel costs per employee.

#### Gross operating rate

Gross operating rate is defined as gross operating surplus/ turnover.

The above SBS variables are laid down in Commission regulation (EC) No 2700/98 of 17 December 1998.

More info on business statistics methodology:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/ramon/>

or

[http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/bmethods/info/data/new/main\\_en.html](http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/bmethods/info/data/new/main_en.html)

The above-mentioned regulations and statistical classification can be downloaded under 'legal texts'



# Further information:

## Databases

New Cronos, Domain SBS

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