

Businesses in the administrative and support services sector

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in May 2025
Planned article update: June 2026*

Highlights

" In 2022, the administrative and support services sector generated € 581 billion of value added."

" The administrative and support services sector accounted for 8.7% of the total employment in the EU's business economy in 2022."

This article presents an overview of statistics for the [European Union's \(EU\)](#) administrative and support services, as covered by [NACE](#) Rev. 2 Section N. Administrative and support services comprise a variety of activities that support business operations; they can be distinguished from [professional, scientific and technical services](#) (Section M) in that their primary purpose is not the transfer of specialised knowledge. It belongs to a [set of statistical articles](#) on 'Business economy by sector'.

Structural profile

In 2022 there were 1.8 million [enterprises](#) active within the administrative and support services sector (Section N) in the [EU](#) ; this was equivalent to 5.7% of the [business economy](#) (Sections B to N and P to R, as well as Division S95 and S96) enterprise population. Many administrative and support services are labour-intensive activities and often the staff employed in these activities work on a part-time basis, for example, in cleaning activities (part of services to buildings and landscape activities), security and investigation activities, or employment activities. EU [employment](#) for the administrative and support services sector reached 14.0 million in 2022, an 8.7% share of the business economy employment; in [value added](#) terms the administrative and support services sector contributed € 581 billion, some 5.8% of the business economy total. Compared with the previous year, an increase of 2.9% can be seen in the number of persons employed, while the value added of the administrative and support services sector increased by 12.7% compared with 2021. This strong increase can partly be explained by the COVID-19 pandemic that impacted on the European economy in 2021.

Key indicators: Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022

	Value
Main indicators	
Number of enterprises (number)	1 828 468
Number of persons employed (number)	14 002 200
Net turnover (€ million)	1 122 439
Purchases of goods and services (€ million)	567 516
Employee benefits expense (€ million)	376 320
Value added (€ million)	580 789
Gross operating surplus (€ million)	204 497
Share in business economy total (%)	
Number of enterprises	5.7
Number of persons employed	8.7
Value added	5.8
Derived indicators	
Apparent labour productivity (thousand € per head)	41.5
Employee benefits expense (thousand € per head)	29.9
Wage-adjusted labour productivity (%)	139.0
Gross operative rate (%)	18.2

Source: Eurostat (online data code: sbs_oww_act)



Table 1: Key indicators: Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022 Source: Eurostat (sbs_oww_act)

[Average employee benefits expense \(average personnel costs\)](#) for the EU's administrative and support services sector in 2022 were equal to € 29 900 per employee, which was below the business economy average (€ 41 100 per employee). This was one of the lowest levels of average employee benefits expense among the (NACE) sections of the business economy, this sector being traditionally characterised as employing a high proportion of part-time employees, which has a downward influence on average employee benefits expense (which are measured in terms of a head count). The [wage-adjusted labour productivity ratio](#) is based on the relation between value added and employee benefits expense and is expressed as a percentage and not a per head value, and so is not directly influenced by the incidence of part-time employment. For the administrative and support services sector the wage-adjusted labour productivity ratio was 130.0% in the EU in 2022, still below the business economy average (152.6%). The [gross operating rate](#) (the relation between the [gross operating surplus](#) and [turnover](#)) stood at 18.2% for the EU's administrative and support services sector in 2022, well above the business economy average (11.8%).

Sectoral analysis

Figure 1 shows the varied contributions, depending upon whether value added or employment is chosen, of the various subsectors to the administrative and support services sectorial total. Employment activities (including recruitment and personnel selection services; Division 78) accounted for the highest share of sectorial value added (27.5%) and second highest share for employment (31.8%).

Capital-intensive rental and leasing activities subsector (Division 77) had the second highest contribution to value added share (23.2%), closely followed by services to buildings and landscape activities subsector (Division 81) – 21.0%. Their employment share differentiate strongly: only 5.2% for rental and leasing activities, indicating a very high [apparent labour productivity](#) ratio, and 33.7% for services to buildings and landscape activities, the highest contribution to the employment share.

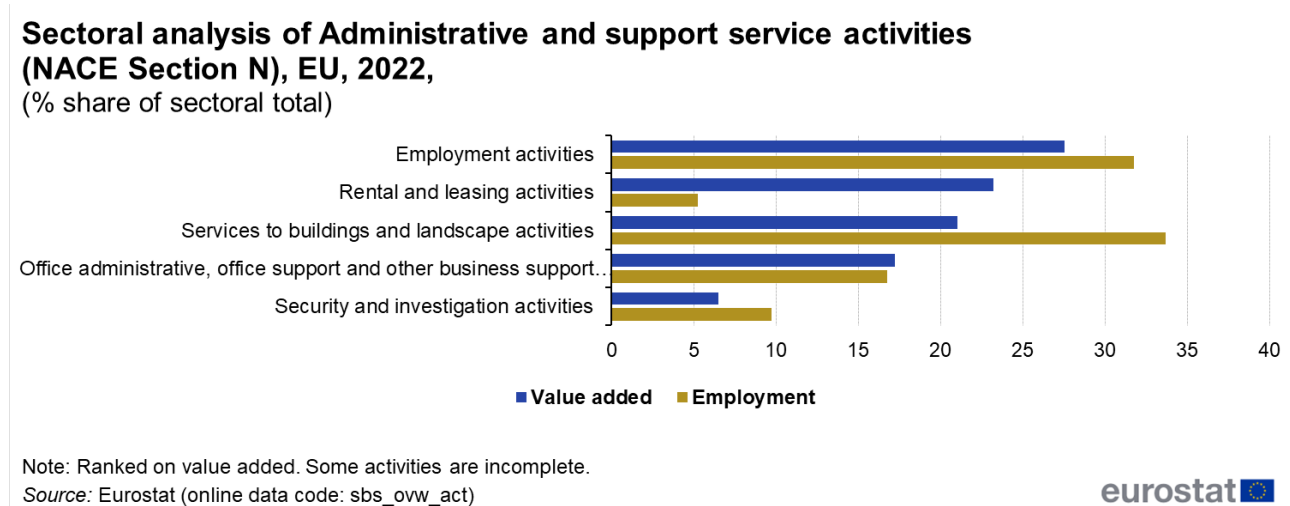


Figure 1: Sectoral analysis of administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022
Source: Eurostat (sbs_ovw_act)

In 2022, the apparent labour productivity and average employee benefits expense for five subsectors (for which data is available) were below the business economy average. The EU's rental and leasing subsector was the main exception, as the person employed in this subsector generated on average € 184 200 value added per employee, while the average employee benefits expense were € 47 300 per employee. This high level of apparent labour productivity for the rental and leasing subsector reflects the nature of the activity, which often involves purchasing capital assets and generating operating income from these assets. The rental and leasing subsector typically has very low operating expenditure while the levels of depreciation, financial charges or extraordinary expenditure may be high - none of these charges are taken into account in the calculation of value added. The elevated apparent labour productivity and relatively subdued average employee benefits expense translated into a very high wage-adjusted labour productivity ratio for the EU's rental and leasing subsector, namely 389.8%. At the NACE division level, this was among the highest wage-adjusted labour productivity ratio across the whole of the business economy. Among the 4 remaining administrative and support services subsectors (for which data is available) no other activity recorded a wage-adjusted labour productivity ratio in the EU that was above the business economy average (152.6%) in 2022.

Sectoral analysis of key indicators: Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022

	Number of enterprises (thousands)	Number of persons employed	Net turnover	Value added (€ million)	Employee benefits expense
Administrative and support service activities	1 828.5	14 002.2	1 122 438.8	580 789.2	376 319.5
Rental and leasing activities	217.4	731.8	280 756.1	134 823.1	28 871.5
Employment activities	82.8	4 447.8	:	160 000.0	150 000.0
Travel agency, tour operator and other reservation service and related activities	109.8	396.0	:	:	:
Security and investigation activities	54.9	1 360.0	60 000.0	37 800.0	32 860.9
Services to buildings and landscape activities	627.7	4 716.2	201 677.6	122 046.2	91 561.2
Office administrative, office support and other business support activities	735.9	2 347.1	230 000.0	100 000.0	60 000.0

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Source: Eurostat (online data code: sbs_ovw_act)

eurostat 

Table 2a: Sectoral analysis of key indicators: Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022 Source: Eurostat (sbs_ovw_act)

Sectoral analysis of key indicators: Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022

	Apparent labour productivity (thousand € per head)	Average employee benefits expense	Wage-adjusted labour productivity	Gross operative rate
Administrative and support service activities	41.5	29.9	139.0	18.2
Rental and leasing activities	184.2	47.3	389.8	37.7
Employment activities	36.0	34.2	105.3	:
Security and investigation activities	27.8	25.1	110.8	8.3
Services to buildings and landscape activities	25.9	21.8	118.8	15.1
Office administrative, office support and other business support activities	42.6	33.9	125.8	18.2

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Source: Eurostat (online data code: sbs_ovw_act)

eurostat 

Table 2b: Sectoral analysis of key indicators: Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022 Source: Eurostat (sbs_ovw_act)

As well as its very high levels of productivity, the EU's rental and leasing subsector also had a very high gross operative rate. Indeed, it recorded the highest gross operative rate (37.7%) in 2022 among all of the NACE divisions within the business economy, just slightly lower than Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding (Division K64). The lowest gross operative rate in sector for which data is available was recorded for Security and investigation activities with only 8.3% in 2022.

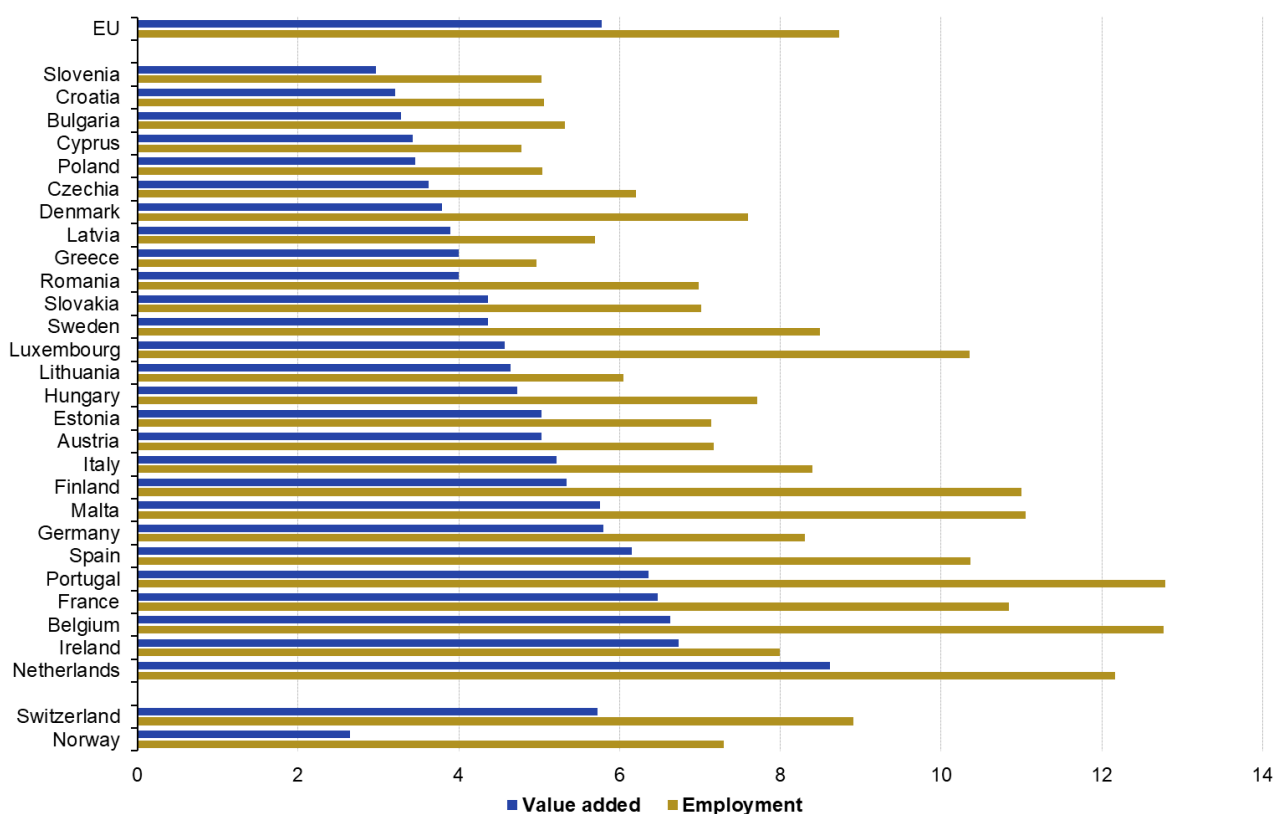
Country overview

In value added terms, the Netherlands was the most specialised EU country, as 8.6% of its business economy value added was generated in the administrative and support service activities sector. It was followed by Ireland (6.7%) and Belgium, France, Portugal and Spain, which were also relatively specialised in terms of value added. By contrast, Slovenia with 3.0%, Croatia with 3.2%, and Bulgaria with 3.3% recorded the lowest shares of its business economy value added generated in the administrative and support service activities sector (compared with an EU average of 5.8%).

In Belgium and in Portugal, the administrative and support service activities sector provided employment to 12.8% of the business economy employment, while Cyprus had the lowest share in employment terms, as the administrative and support service activities sector provided work to 4.8% of its business economy employment (compared with an EU average of 8.7%).

Relative importance of Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022

(% share of value added and employment in the business economy total)



Ranked on value added

Source: Eurostat (online data code: sbs_oww_act)

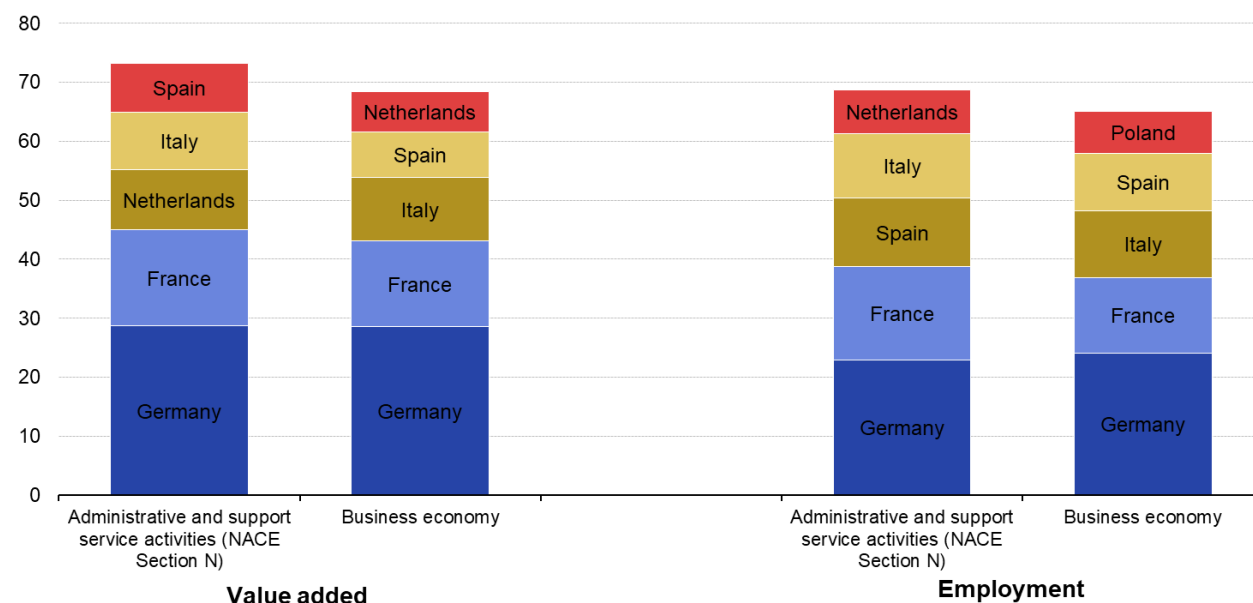
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Figure 2: Relative importance of administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), 2022
Source: Eurostat (sbs_oww_act)

Within the administrative and support service activities sector, value added and employment were relatively concentrated in geographical terms: the five largest EU countries generated 73.2% of EU added value, while their share in the administrative and support services' employment was 68.7%.

Concentration of value added and employment, Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022

(cumulative share of the five principal Member States as a % of the EU total)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: sbs_ovw_act)

eurostat

Figure 3: Concentration of value added and employment, Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), 2022 Source: Eurostat (sbs_ovw_act)

Germany had the largest administrative and support services sector among the EU countries, generating around € 166.7 billion of added value (some 28.6% of the EU total), ahead of France (€ 94.5 billion). Germany also had the largest employment, 3.2 million persons, equivalent to 23.0% of the EU total, while there were 2.2 million persons employed in the administrative and support services sector in France, or 15.9% of the EU total.

Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022

	Number of enterprises	Number of persons employed	Turnover	Value added	Gross investment in tangible non-current assets	Employee benefits expense
	(thousands)					
EU	1 828.5	14 002.2	1 122 438.8	580 789.2	376 319.5	124 890.7
Belgium	58.6	496.0	48 673.8	25 703.1	16 949.7	8 868.2
Bulgaria	11.6	115.1	3 392.3	1 632.8	1 170.1	498.0
Czechia	41.2	262.4	14 685.3	5 518.7	3 867.1	1 368.2
Denmark	20.9	168.4	20 799.8	8 584.6	6 975.3	1 593.9
Germany	222.8	3 216.7	295 205.8	166 735.5	92 428.6	41 395.6
Estonia	8.0	38.8	2 392.5	1 056.5	689.0	284.0
Ireland	20.7	183.1	55 244.0	28 554.4	8 714.3	2 058.5
Greece	25.6	169.4	8 813.1	3 635.0	2 016.5	808.6
Spain	217.7	1 612.3	93 271.3	47 658.1	35 372.2	8 012.6
France	290.5	2 219.6	175 531.0	94 452.7	76 209.7	20 170.3
Croatia	13.1	63.5	2 934.9	1 154.7	739.2	135.5
Italy	170.4	1 527.9	116 154.7	56 939.2	37 916.1	10 511.1
Cyprus	4.5	18.1	1 114.9	611.9	383.1	55.1
Latvia	7.1	39.0	2 059.4	778.1	500.8	155.9
Lithuania	13.6	75.2	4 374.7	1 808.3	1 112.5	404.7
Luxembourg	2.5	40.8	5 352.5	2 406.9	1 556.4	949.5
Hungary	63.8	259.6	12 045.5	4 561.6	2 871.4	1 275.9
Malta	3.2	26.2	1 940.8	741.4	514.7	147.3
Netherlands	112.0	1 041.5	113 683.7	59 186.8	36 710.1	10 382.0
Austria	25.3	269.0	26 404.3	14 417.3	9 849.0	5 097.0
Poland	101.5	579.5	33 269.2	13 199.7	9 047.8	3 203.0
Portugal	221.1	558.0	16 886.1	9 022.6	5 881.8	2 365.2
Romania	45.7	328.2	9 553.6	5 341.7	3 594.3	1 206.1
Slovenia	9.5	39.2	2 196.9	1 083.8	772.1	121.3
Slovakia	54.0	127.4	9 117.2	2 531.6	1 434.0	848.9
Finland	24.4	194.2	15 451.6	7 161.0	5 989.1	1 035.4
Sweden	39.1	332.9	31 889.9	16 311.3	13 054.9	1 973.2
Norway	23.1	142.7	22 784.8	11 302.7	7 714.6	2 343.2
Switzerland	9.5	317.3	49 907.4	26 126.7	:	1 762.6

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Source: Eurostat (online data code: sbs_oww_act)

eurostat

Table 3a: Key indicators: Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), 2022 Source: Eurostat (sbs_oww_act)

Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022

	Apparent labour productivity	Average employee benefits expense	Wage-adjusted labour productivity	Gross operative rate
	(thousand € per head)		(%)	(%)
EU	41.5	29.9	139.0	18.2
Belgium	51.8	38.3	135.3	18.0
Bulgaria	14.2	11.0	129.3	13.6
Czechia	21.0	19.7	106.5	11.3
Denmark	51.0	44.3	115.2	7.7
Germany	51.8	30.8	168.3	25.2
Estonia	27.2	19.6	139.3	15.4
Ireland	155.9	50.3	310.2	35.9
Greece	21.5	13.6	157.9	18.4
Spain	29.6	23.9	123.7	13.2
France	42.6	36.5	116.5	10.4
Croatia	18.2	13.4	135.4	14.2
Italy	37.3	27.6	134.8	16.4
Cyprus	33.8	23.4	144.8	20.5
Latvia	20.0	13.9	143.5	13.5
Lithuania	24.0	16.6	145.2	15.9
Luxembourg	59.0	38.4	153.6	15.9
Hungary	17.6	14.7	119.8	14.0
Malta	28.3	21.4	132.2	11.7
Netherlands	56.8	37.7	150.7	19.8
Austria	53.6	40.6	131.9	17.3
Poland	22.8	18.5	123.1	12.5
Portugal	16.2	16.8	96.2	18.6
Romania	16.3	11.8	138.0	18.3
Slovenia	27.6	24.1	114.8	14.2
Slovakia	19.9	16.9	117.4	12.3
Finland	36.9	32.7	112.9	7.6
Sweden	91.3	63.9	143.0	10.1
Norway	79.2	56.5	140.4	15.8
Switzerland	82.4	:	:	13.4

(:) not available

Source: Eurostat (online data code: sbs_ovw_act)

eurostat 

Table 3b: Key indicators: Administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N), EU, 2022 Source: Eurostat (sbs_ovw_act)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Businesses in the administrative and other services sector - 2022 data](#)

Data sources

Coverage

Administrative and support services (Section N) include the following six NACE divisions:

- rental and leasing of motor vehicles, personal and household goods, machinery and equipment, and intellectual property (Division 77);
- employment activities including recruitment and personnel selection services, as well as job placement services (Division 78);
- travel agency, tour operator, reservation services and related activities (Division 79);
- security and investigation activities, including the transportation of valuables (Division 80);
- services to buildings and landscape activities including combined facilities support and cleaning services (Division 81);
- office administrative, office support and other business support activities, including call centers and the organisation of trade shows (Division 82).

The administrative and support services sector does not include financial leasing which is considered as a financial service. Renting of real estate is also excluded as is the renting of equipment with operator which is included as appropriate in the construction sector (Section F) or the transportation and storage sector (Section H). Employment activities do not include agents of individual artists which are considered to be part of a professional activity (Section M) as is the provision of security consultancy and landscape design (rather than landscaping itself). Security services do not include public order and safety activities (for example, by the police). Cleaning services do not include car washing which is part of motor trades within the activity of distributive trades (Section G).

Data sources

The analysis presented in this article is based on the main dataset for [structural business statistics \(SBS\)](#), size class data and regional data, all of which are published annually.

The main series provides information for each EU Member State as well as a number of non-member countries at a detailed level according to the activity classification NACE. Data are available for a wide range of variables.

In structural business statistics, size classes are generally defined by the number of persons employed. A limited set of the standard structural business statistics variables (for example, the number of enterprises, turnover, persons employed and value added) are analysed by size class, mostly down to the three-digit (group) level of NACE. The main size classes used in this article for presenting the results are:

- small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs): with 1 to 249 persons employed, further divided into:
 - micro enterprises: with less than 10 persons employed;
 - small enterprises: with 10 to 49 persons employed;
 - medium-sized enterprises: with 50 to 249 persons employed;
- large enterprises: with 250 or more persons employed.

Structural business statistics also include regional data. Regional SBS data are available at NUTS levels 1 and 2 for the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway, mostly down to the two-digit (division) level of NACE. The main variable analysed in this article is the number of persons employed. The type of statistical unit used for regional SBS data is normally the [local unit](#), which is an enterprise or part of an enterprise situated in a geographically identified place. Local units are classified into sectors (by NACE) normally according to their own main activity, but in some EU countries the activity code is assigned on the basis of the principal activity of the enterprise to which the local unit belongs. The main SBS data series are presented at national level only, and for this national data the statistical unit is the enterprise. It is possible for the principal activity of a local unit to differ from that of the enterprise to which it belongs. Hence, national SBS data from the main series are not necessarily directly comparable with national aggregates compiled from regional SBS.

Context

The freedom to provide services and the freedom of establishment are central principles to the [internal market](#) for services. They guarantee EU enterprises the freedom to establish themselves in other Member States, and the freedom to provide services on the territory of another EU Member State. The [Directive on services in the internal market](#) (COM(2006) 123) aims to achieve a genuine internal market in services, removing legal and administrative barriers to the development of services activities between Member States. As well as covering most administrative and support service activities (with the notable exception of services of temporary work agencies and private security services), the Directive applies to a wide variety of services including many industrial and construction activities, as well as distributive trades, accommodation and food services, real estate, and professional, scientific and technical services.

Rental and leasing services are provided to households and to business clients. The use of renting or operating leasing can increase financial flexibility, reducing the need to commit own capital, whether for machinery, equipment or appliances. Personnel services may be supplied to persons looking for work or to an enterprise trying to hire. Security and investigation activities as well as services to buildings and landscape activities are mainly business services, although there is also a market for these services among households.

Travel agencies are enterprises that are engaged in arranging transport, accommodation and catering on behalf of travellers. Travel agents act as retailers selling travel services or packaged trips to the customer. Traditionally, tour operators acted as wholesalers to travel agents but they have moved more recently towards selling directly to customers. Tourist guides and tourist information services play a supporting role, offering information and services usually at the tourism destination, but also online.

Explore further

Other articles

- [Other analyses of the business economy by NACE Rev. 2 sections](#)
- [Structural business statistics introduced](#)
- [Structural business statistics – overview article](#)
- [Structural business statistics at regional level](#)

Thematic section

- [Structural business statistics webpage](#)

Publications

- [Structural business statistics](#) – SBS metadata file

Selected datasets

- [Structural business statistics \(sbs\)](#)

External links

- [European Commission – Internal market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs](#) , see:
- [Tourism](#)
 - [Single market for services](#)
- [European Commission – Justice and Consumers](#) , see:
- [Package travel](#)

Legislation

- [Details on SBS Legislation](#)
- [European Business Statistics Regulation](#)