

China-EU - international trade in goods statistics

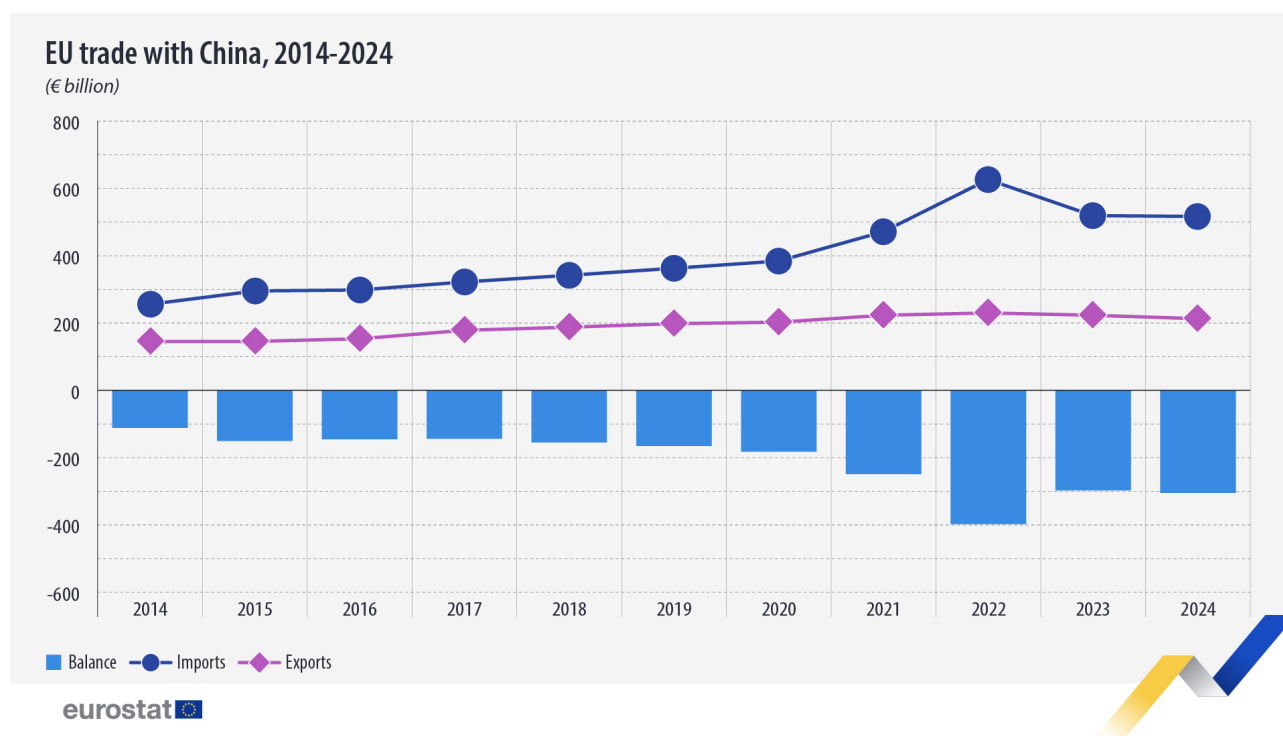
Statistics Explained

Data extracted in February 2025
Planned article update March 2026

Highlights

" In 2024, China was the third largest partner for EU exports of goods (8.3%) and the largest partner for EU imports of goods (21.3%)."

" Among EU countries, the Netherlands was the largest importer of goods from China and Germany was the largest exporter of goods to China in 2024."



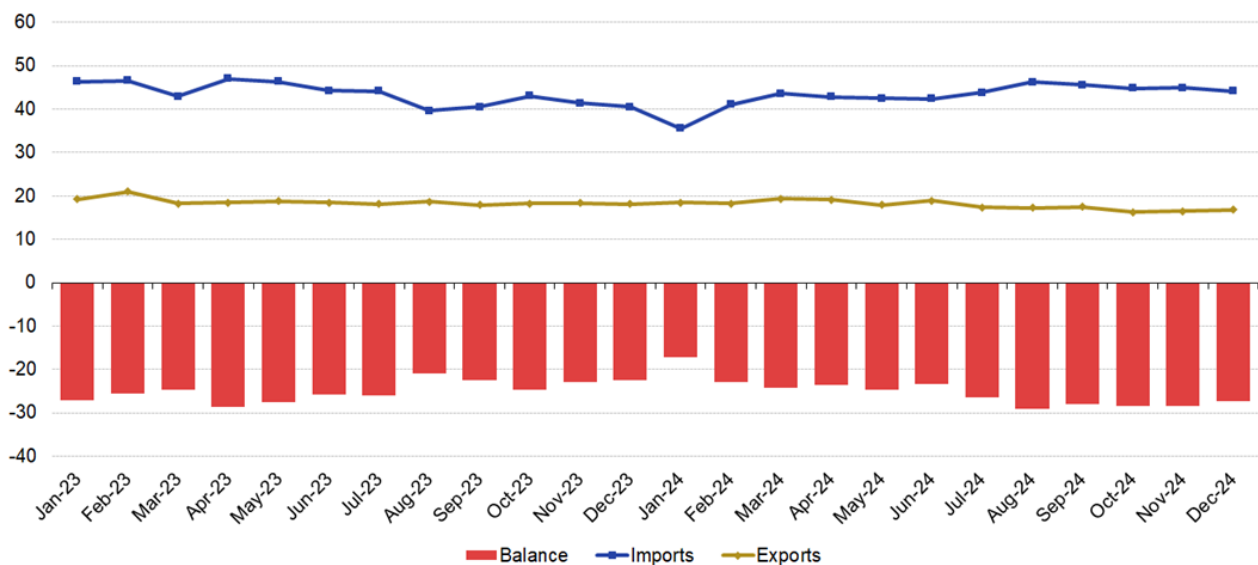
This article provides a picture of the international trade in goods between the [European Union \(EU\)](#) and China. It analyses the type of goods exchanged between the two economies and the shares of each EU country in those exchanges.

This article is part of an [online publication](#) providing recent statistics on international trade in goods, covering information on the EU's main partners, main goods traded, specific characteristics of trade as well as background information.

Recent developments

EU exports to China decreased between January 2023 (€ 19.2 billion) and December 2024 (€ 16.8 billion). They reached a low of € 16.3 billion in October 2023 and a high of € 21.0 billion in February 2023 (Figure 1). Imports from China dropped from € 46.4 billion in January 2023 to € 44.1 billion in December 2024. In this period they reached a high of € 47.0 billion in April 2023 and a low of € 35.6 billion in January 2024. In January 2023 the trade deficit was € 27.2 billion, It reached a high of € 29.0 billion in August 2024, falling to € 27.3 billion in December 2024.

EU trade in goods with China, 2023-2024 (€ billion, seasonally and working-day adjusted)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ext_st_eu27_2020sitc)

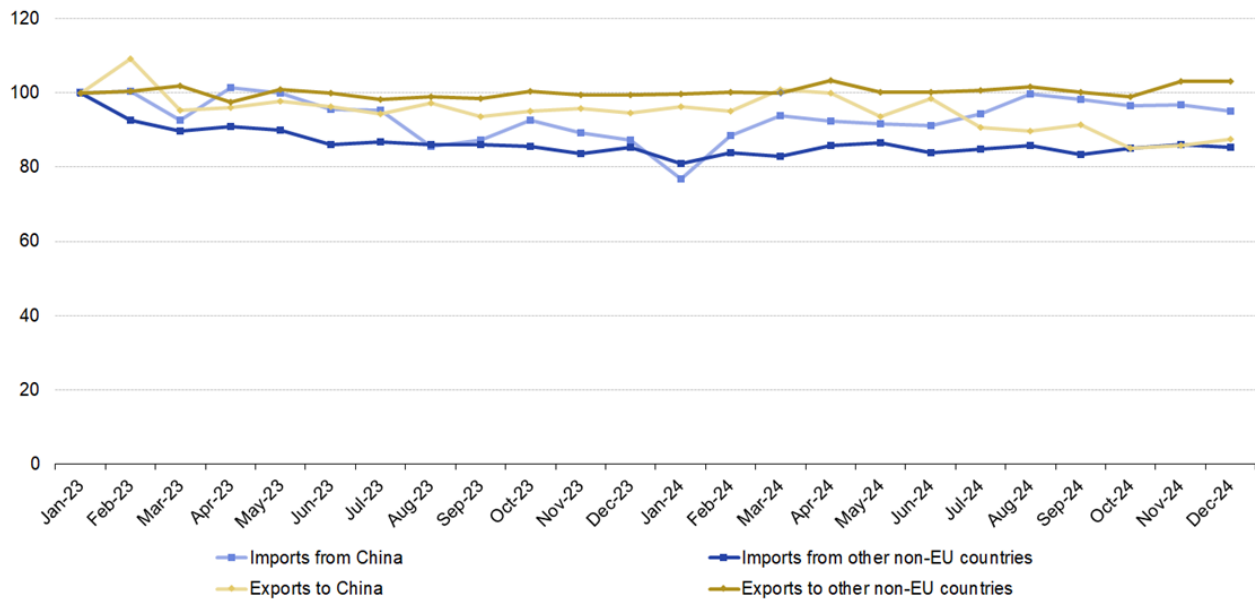
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Figure 1: EU trade in goods with China, 2022-2023 (€ billion, seasonally and working-day adjusted) Source: Eurostat (ext_st_eu27_2020sitc)

Figure 2 compares EU trade with China against EU trade with other non-EU countries. Between January 2023 and December 2024, EU imports from China decreased by 4.9%. Imports from other non-EU countries (14.8%) dropped more in this period. EU exports to China decreased by 12.5% while exports to other non-EU countries increased by 3.0%.

EU trade in goods with China and other non-EU countries, 2023-2024

(Jan 2023 = 100 %, seasonally and working-day adjusted)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ext_st_eu27_2020sitc)



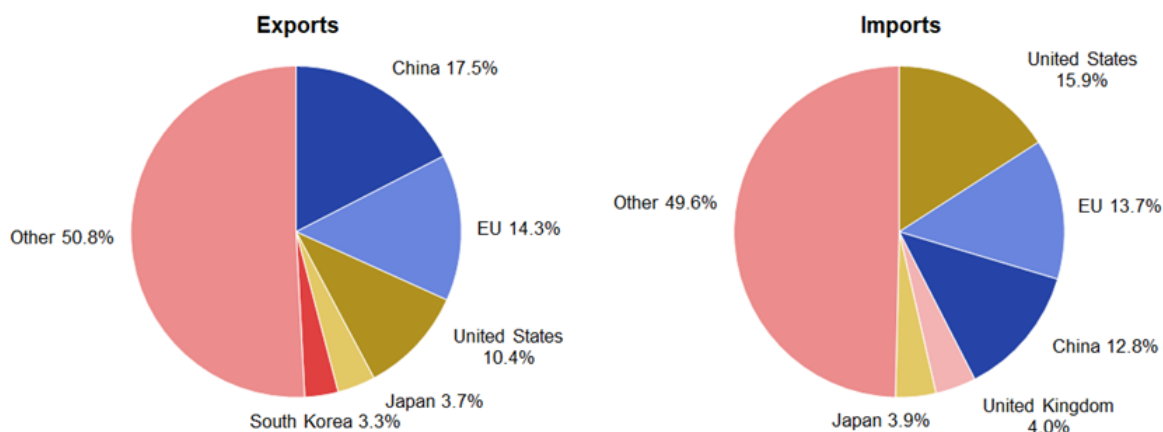
Figure 2: EU trade in goods with China and other non-EU countries, 2022-2023 (Jan 2022 = 100%, seasonally and working-day adjusted) Source: Eurostat (ext_st_eu27_2020sitc)

EU and China in world trade in goods

Figure 3 shows the world's largest traders of goods. In 2023, China (€ 3 125 billion, 17.5%) was the largest exporter in the world, followed by the EU (€ 2 557 billion, 14.3%), the United States (€ 1 869 billion, 10.4%), Japan (€ 663 billion, 3.7%) and South Korea (€ 585 billion, 3.3%). China (€ 2 364 billion, 12.8%) was the third largest importer in the world, preceded by the United States (€ 2 934 billion, 15.9%) and the EU (€ 2 523 billion, 13.7%) and followed by the United Kingdom (€ 732 billion, 4.0%) and Japan (€ 727 billion, 3.9%).

China among the world's largest traders of goods, 2023

(% share of world exports/imports)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ext_lt_introeu27_2020) and UNCTAD

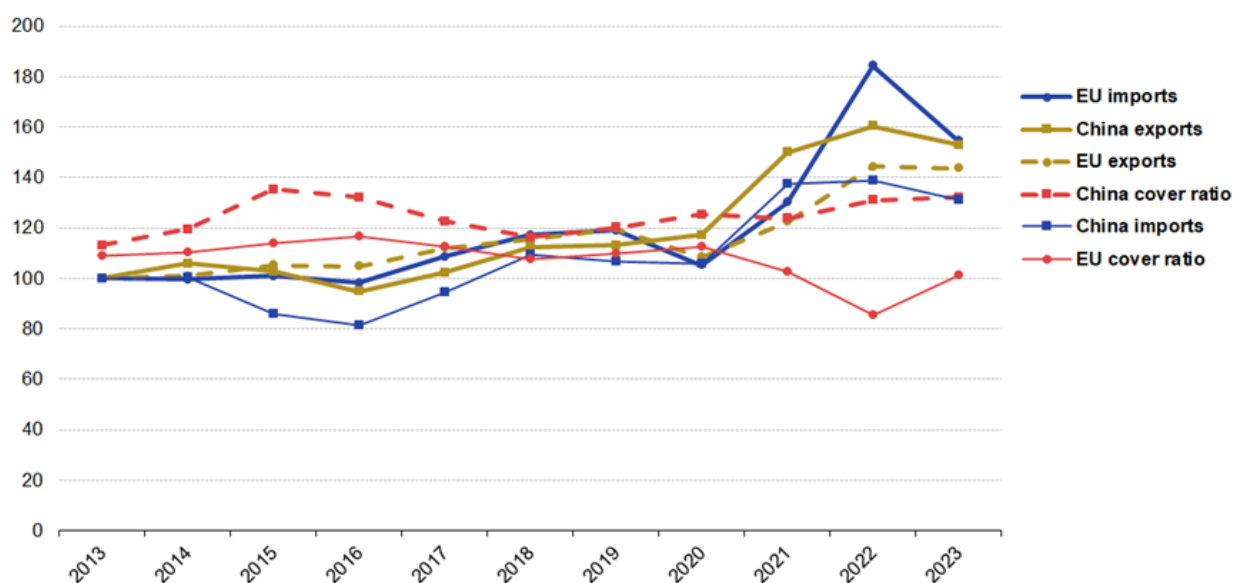
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Figure 3: China among the world's largest traders of goods, 2023 (% share of world exports/imports) Source: Eurostat (ext_lt_introeu27_2020) and UNCTAD

The imports and exports of goods of the EU and China indexed at 100 in 2013 for the period to 2024 are shown in Figure 4. It also shows the cover ratio (exports / imports) for this period. Exports from the EU were lowest in 2013 (100) and highest in 2022 and 2023 (both 144). Imports to the EU were lowest in 2016 (98) and highest in 2022 (184). The cover ratio for the EU was lowest in 2022 (85%) and highest in 2016 (116%). Exports from China were lowest in 2016 (95) and highest in 2022 (160). Imports to China were lowest in 2016 (81) and highest in 2022 (139). The cover ratio for China was lowest in 2013 (113%) and highest in 2015 (135%).

Trade in goods of the EU and China, 2013-2023

(exports and imports indexed at 100 in 2013)



Notes:

- While the trade balance provides information on the absolute value of trading positions, the cover ratio provides a relative
- Exports and imports are indexed at 100 in 2013

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ext_lt_introeu27_2020) and UNCTAD

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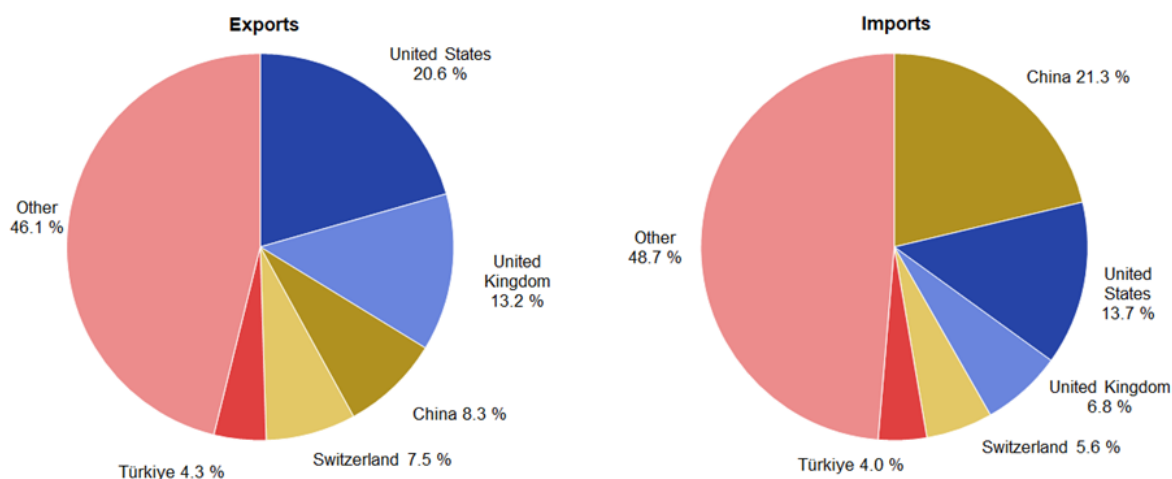
Figure 4: Trade in goods of the EU and China, 2012-2022 (exports and imports indexed at 100 in 2013, cover ratio in %) Source: Eurostat (ext_lt_introeu27_2020) and UNCTAD

China largest partner for EU imports of goods in 2024

The position of China among the largest trade partners of the EU in 2024 can be seen in Figure 5. In 2024, China was the third largest partner for EU exports of goods (8.3%). It was preceded by the United States (20.6%) and the United Kingdom (13.2%) and followed by Switzerland (7.5%) and Türkiye (4.3%). In 2023, China was the largest partner for EU imports of goods (21.3%), followed by the United States (13.7%), the United Kingdom (6.8%), Switzerland (5.6%) and Türkiye (4.0%).

China among the EU's main partners for trade in goods, 2024

(% share of extra-EU exports/imports)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ext_st_eu27_2020sitc)

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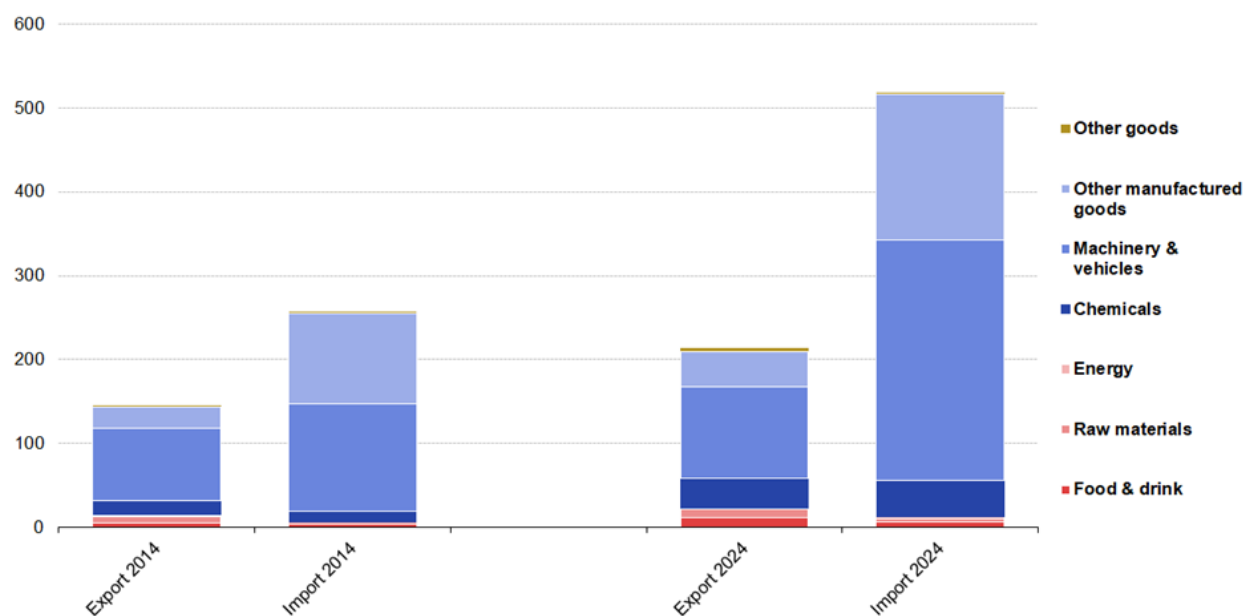
Figure 5: China among the EU's main partners for trade in goods, 2024 (% share of extra-EU exports/imports)
Source: Eurostat (ext_st_eu27_2020sitc)

EU-China trade by type of goods

The breakdown of EU trade with China by **SITC** groups is shown in Figure 6. The red shades denote the primary goods: food & drink, raw materials and energy, while the blue shades show the manufactured goods: chemicals, machinery & vehicles and other manufactured goods. Finally, other goods are shown in green. In 2024, EU exports of manufactured goods (88%) had a much higher share than primary goods (11%). The most exported manufactured goods were machinery & vehicles (51%), followed by other manufactured goods (20%) and chemicals (17%). In 2024, EU imports of manufactured goods (97%) also had a much higher share than primary goods (2%). The most imported manufactured goods were machinery & vehicles (55%), followed by other manufactured goods (34%) and chemicals (8%).

EU trade with China by product group, 2014 and 2024

(€ billion)



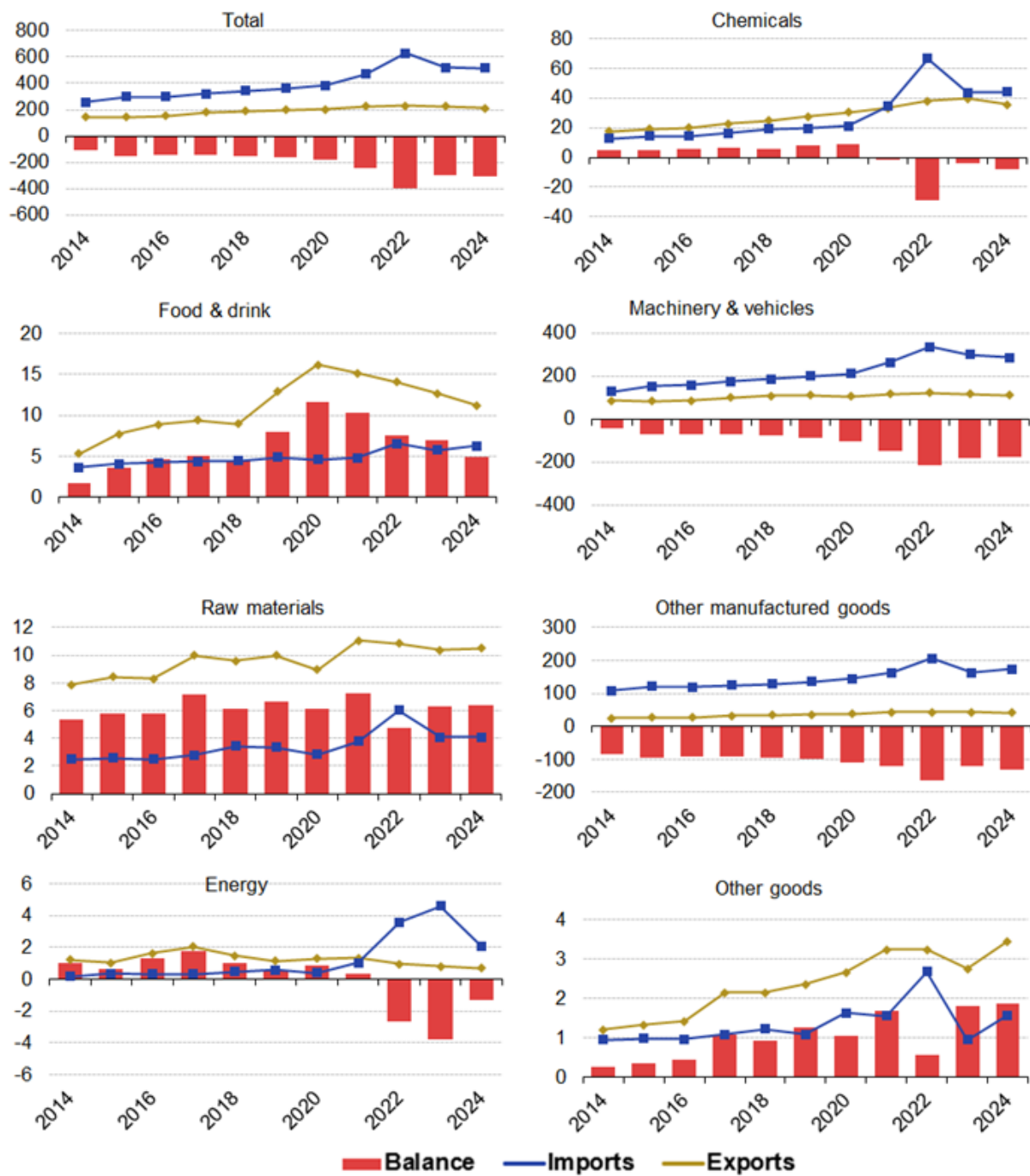
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ext_st_eu27_2020sitc)

eurostat

Figure 6: EU trade with China by product group, 2014 and 2024 (€ billion) Source: Eurostat (ext_st_eu27_2020sitc)

Figure 7 shows the evolution of EU imports and exports by SITC group since 2014. In 2024, the EU had trade surpluses in other goods (€ 1.9 billion), raw materials (€ 6.4 billion) and food & drink (€ 4.9 billion). By contrast, the EU had trade deficits in energy (€ 1.3 billion), chemicals (€ 8.4 billion), other manufactured goods (€ 131.4 billion) and machinery & vehicles (€ 176.7 billion).

EU trade with China by group, 2014-2024 (€ billion)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ext_st_eu27_2020sitc)



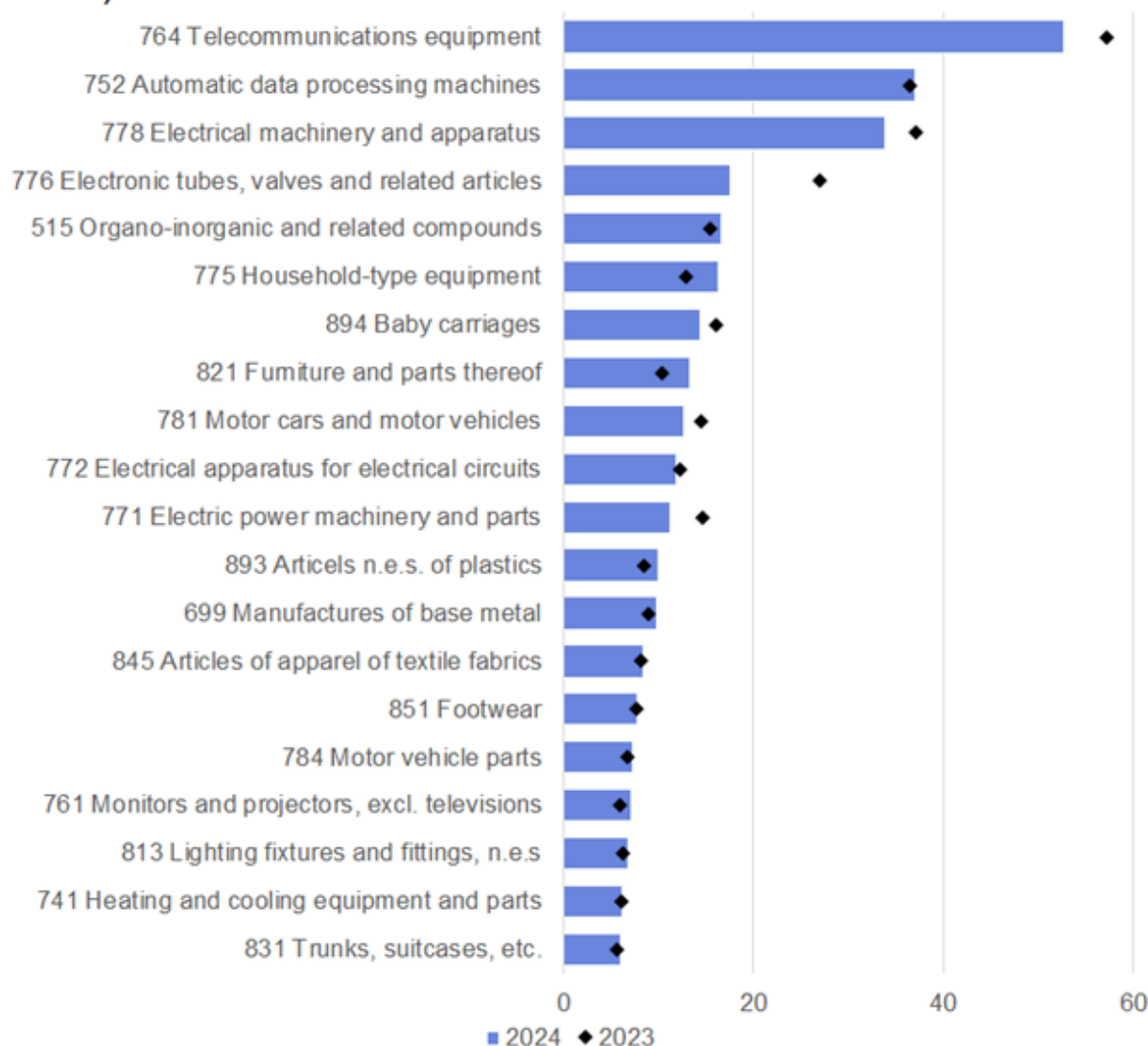
Figure 7: EU trade with China by group, 2014-2023 (€ billion) Source: Eurostat (ext_st_eu27_2020sitc)

EU-China most traded goods

More detail about the goods imported by the EU from China is given in Figure 8, showing the 20 most imported goods at SITC-3 level. These top 20 goods covered 59% of total imports from China in 2024. Eleven belonged to machinery and vehicles, 8 to other manufactured goods and 1 to chemicals. The most traded group of goods at this level was telecommunications equipment.

EU most imported goods from China, 2024

(€ billion)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-059331)

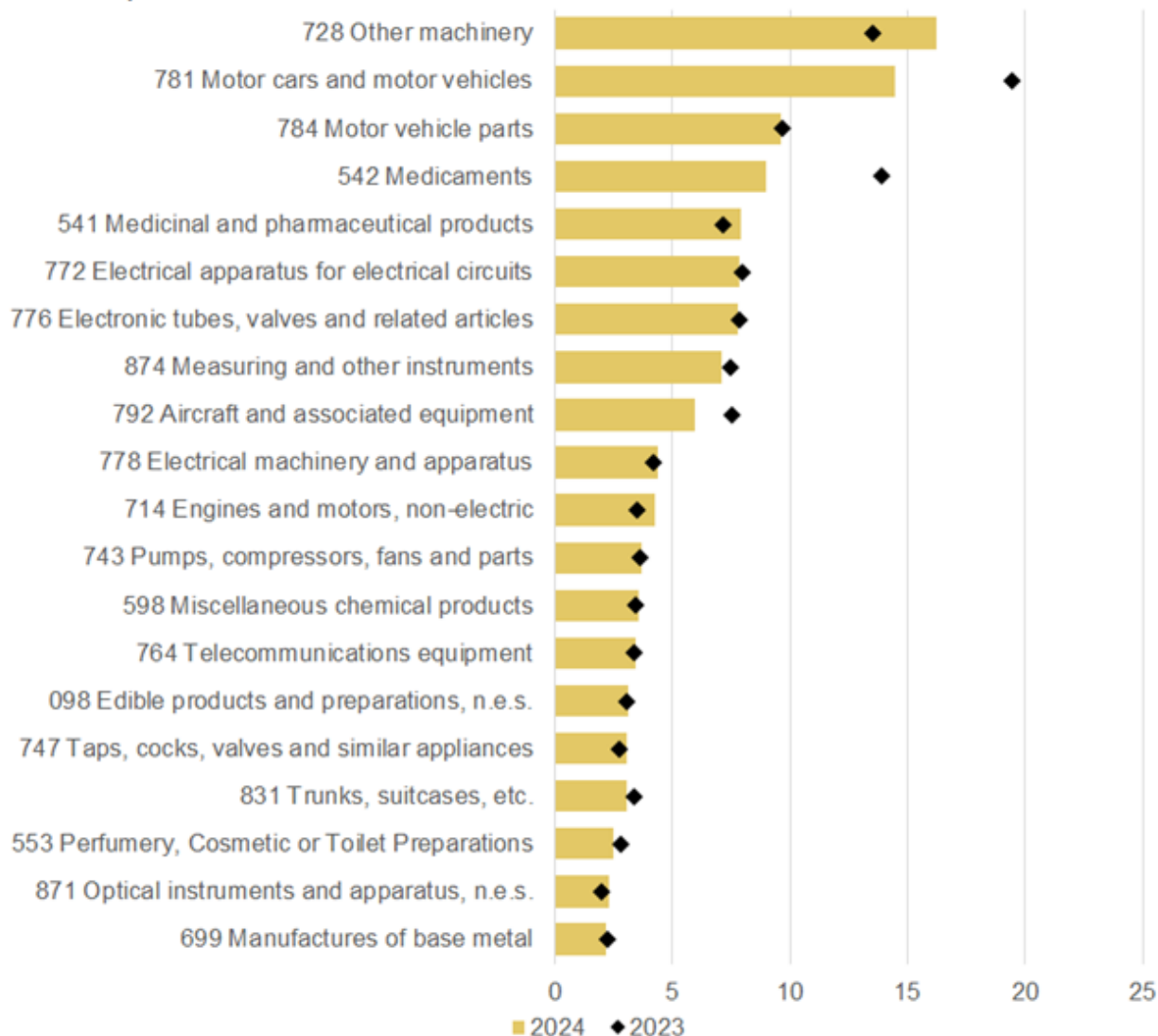
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Figure 8: EU most imported goods from China, 2024 (€ billion) Source: Eurostat Comext (ds-059331)

Figure 9 shows the 20 most exported goods at SITC-3 level. These top 20 goods covered 57% of total exports to China in 2024. 'Other machinery' was the top exported product to China in 2024, with exports growing by € 2.7 billion compared with 2023. Exports of medicaments (falling by € 5.0 billion) and motor cars and motor vehicles (falling by € 4.9) fell strongly between 2023 and 2024.

EU most exported goods to China, 2024

(€ billion)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-059331)



Figure 9: EU most exported goods to China, 2024 (€ billion) Source: Eurostat Comext (ds-059331)

Trade with China by EU country

Table 1a shows the imports of goods from China by EU country. The three largest importers from China in the EU were the Netherlands (€ 109 billion), Germany (€ 96 billion) and Italy (€ 50 billion). Czechia (41.7%) had the highest share for China in its extra-EU imports.

EU imports of goods from China, 2024

	€ million	% of China in extra EU imports
Netherlands	108 933	25.2
Germany	95 764	21.1
Italy	49 578	20.6
France	43 707	17.3
Spain	36 841	19.1
Poland	34 300	30.0
Belgium	32 104	17.9
Czechia	25 557	41.7
Sweden	10 324	18.0
Hungary	10 226	26.1
Ireland	9 289	12.0
Slovenia	9 232	20.2
Denmark	8 702	23.1
Romania	7 837	22.3
Greece	6 944	16.9
Austria	6 181	14.5
Portugal	5 122	18.7
Finland	3 952	18.3
Slovakia	3 894	18.5
Bulgaria	2 749	12.9
Lithuania	1 882	14.5
Croatia	1 463	15.1
Estonia	984	30.1
Cyprus	943	18.8
Latvia	832	21.6
Malta	348	11.4
Luxembourg	157	8.2

Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-059331)



Table 1a: EU imports of goods from China, 2024 Source: Eurostat Comext (ds-059331)

Table 1b shows the exports of goods to China by EU country. The three largest exporters to China in the EU were Germany (€ 90 billion), France (€ 24 billion) and the Netherlands (€ 24 billion). Germany (12.7%) had the highest share for China in its extra-EU exports.

EU exports of goods to China, 2024

	€ million	% of China in extra EU exports
Germany	89 937	12.7
France	23 855	8.7
Netherlands	23 772	9.0
Italy	15 344	5.0
Ireland	9 433	7.0
Belgium	7 881	4.8
Spain	7 467	5.1
Sweden	6 558	7.9
Denmark	5 889	10.5
Austria	5 303	8.4
Finland	3 509	11.6
Poland	3 311	3.6
Czechia	3 109	6.2
Slovakia	2 569	10.9
Hungary	1 508	4.6
Bulgaria	752	4.9
Romania	720	2.8
Portugal	614	2.7
Greece	415	1.8
Slovenia	300	0.9
Estonia	244	5.1
Luxembourg	237	8.1
Lithuania	207	1.7
Latvia	201	3.5
Croatia	112	1.3
Cyprus	31	1.1
Malta	29	1.7

Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-059331)



Table 1b: EU exports of goods to China, 2024 Source: Eurostat Comext (ds-059331)

The trade in goods balance between the EU countries and China is shown in Table 1c. It shows that only Ireland and Luxembourg had trade surpluses with China. The other 25 EU countries all had trade deficits with China. The largest deficit was held by the Netherlands (€ 85 billion).

EU trade balance of goods with China, 2024

(€ million)

	€ million
Ireland	144
Luxembourg	80
Malta	-319
Finland	-442
Latvia	-631
Estonia	-740
Austria	-878
Cyprus	-911
Slovakia	-1 324
Croatia	-1 351
Lithuania	-1 675
Bulgaria	-1 997
Denmark	-2 813
Sweden	-3 766
Portugal	-4 509
Germany	-5 826
Greece	-6 529
Romania	-7 118
Hungary	-8 718
Slovenia	-8 931
France	-19 852
Czechia	-22 449
Belgium	-24 224
Spain	-29 374
Poland	-30 989
Italy	-34 234
Netherlands	-85 160

Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-059331)



Table 1c: EU trade balance of goods with China, 2024 Source: Eurostat Comext (ds-059331)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [EU - China international trade in goods statistics - graphs and tables](#)

Data sources

EU data is taken from [Eurostat's COMEXT](#) database. COMEXT is the reference database for international trade in goods. It provides access not only to both recent and historical data from the EU Member States but also to statistics of a significant number of non-EU countries. International trade aggregated and detailed statistics disseminated via the Eurostat website are compiled from COMEXT data according to a monthly process.

Data are collected by the competent national authorities of the EU Member States and compiled according to a harmonised methodology established by EU regulations before transmission to Eurostat. For extra-EU trade, the statistical information is mainly provided by the traders on the basis of customs declarations.

EU data are compiled according to EU guidelines and may, therefore, differ from national data published by the Member States. Statistics on extra-EU trade are calculated as the sum of trade of each of the 27 EU Member States with countries outside the EU. In other words, the EU is considered as a single trading entity and trade flows are measured into and out of the area, but not within it.

Dutch trade flows are over-estimated because of the so-called ' [Rotterdam effect](#) ' (or quasi-transit trade): 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.

Data for the non-EU countries used in Figures 3 and 4 are taken from the UNCTAD database of the United Nations. For the calculation of shares, the world trade is defined as the sum of EU trade with non-EU countries (source: Eurostat) plus the international trade of non-EU countries (source: UNCTAD).

Methodology

According to the EU concepts and definitions, extra-EU trade statistics (trade between EU Member States and non-EU countries) do not record exchanges involving goods in transit, placed in a customs warehouse or given temporary admission (for trade fairs, temporary exhibitions, tests, etc.). This is known as 'special trade'. The partner is the country of final destination of the goods for exports and the country of origin for imports.

Product classification

Information on commodities exported and imported is presented according to the [Standard international trade classification \(SITC\)](#) . A full description is available in this [document](#)

Unit of measure

Trade values are expressed in millions or billions (10⁹) of euros. They correspond to the statistical value, i.e. to the amount which would be invoiced in the event of sale or purchase at the national border of the reporting country. It is called a **FOB** value (free on board) for exports and a **CIF** value (cost, insurance, freight) for imports.

Context

Trade is an important indicator of Europe's prosperity and place in the world. The bloc is deeply integrated into global markets both for the products it sources and the exports it sells. The EU trade policy is one of the main pillars of the EU's relations with the rest of the world.

Because the 27 EU Member States share a single market and a single external border, they also have a single trade policy. EU Member States speak and negotiate collectively, both in the [World Trade Organisation](#) , where the rules of international trade are agreed and enforced, and with individual trading partners. This common policy enables them to speak with one voice in trade negotiations, maximising their impact in such negotiations. This is even more important in a globalised world in which economies tend to cluster together in regional groups.

The openness of the EU's trade regime has meant that the EU is the biggest player on the global trading scene and remains a good region to do business with. Thanks to the ease of modern transport and communications, it is now easier to produce, buy and sell goods around the world which gives European companies of every size the potential to trade outside Europe.

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