

Main goods in extra-EU exports

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in March 2022
Planned article update: April 2023*

" Machinery and equipment, followed by pharmaceutical products and motor vehicles, were the most exported products from the EU every year between 2017 and 2021. "

" In 2021, the top 5 EU export products were machinery and equipment (12.9 % of total exports), pharmaceutical products (10.7 %), motor vehicles (10.3 %), chemical products (9.1 %) and computer, electronic and optical products (7.9 %). "

" Germany was the biggest EU exporter of all top 5 export products in 2020 - machinery and equipment, pharmaceutical products, motor vehicles, chemical products and computer, electronic and optical products. "

This article focuses on the most significant goods by value (according to the CPA classification) in extra-EU exports and presents statistics for the EU from 2017 to 2021. Statistics on goods traded between the EU and the world — especially the size and evolution of exports — enable the EU and national authorities to evaluate the health and competitiveness of EU industries. The article discusses the contribution of individual Member States to total extra-EU exports for the five most exported product groups. Additionally, it shows the share these product groups have in each Member State's total extra-EU exports of goods. 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 products traded, specific characteristics of trade as well as background information.

EU exports by CPA groups

The [CPA classification](#) consists of 40 products. The 24 most exported products are shown in Table 1, while the other 16 are grouped as "Other". Among the 24 products, 21 recorded a drop in exports in 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The three exceptions were pharmaceuticals, food products and agricultural products. In contrast, in 2021 exports of all products increased.

Extra-EU exports of main CPA groups, 2017 - 2021

€ billion

CPA code	CPA label	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Trend
TOTAL	Total	1 994.3	2 059.8	2 132.0	1 933.1	2 180.4	
28	Machinery and equipment n.e.c.	264.2	272.8	276.3	251.2	280.8	
21	Basic pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical preparations	166.3	178.5	205.3	215.2	233.9	
29	Motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers	248.2	242.5	241.0	205.8	224.5	
20	Chemicals and chemical products	167.9	173.9	176.3	169.4	198.4	
26	Computer, electronic and optical products	159.4	161.9	171.8	162.1	171.2	
10	Food products	102.3	102.8	109.8	114.5	119.8	
27	Electrical equipment	104.5	107.4	108.4	101.6	113.1	
30	Other transport equipment	115.4	123.2	129.0	89.4	99.1	
24	Basic metals	69.7	73.2	78.2	73.3	82.3	
32	Other manufactured goods	65.5	67.9	72.9	64.6	74.5	
25	Fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment	57.1	57.7	57.3	52.8	59.0	
19	Coke and refined petroleum products	77.7	90.1	83.0	51.1	77.8	
22	Rubber and plastics products	49.6	51.1	52.2	49.6	56.6	
1	Products of agriculture, hunting and related services	30.0	29.4	32.7	33.8	36.3	
14	Wearing apparel	34.4	36.3	39.3	33.2	36.5	
11	Beverages	30.5	31.4	33.6	30.7	35.9	
17	Paper and paper products	30.1	31.6	31.7	28.9	32.7	
15	Leather and related products	28.0	29.8	33.4	28.3	32.1	
23	Other non-metallic mineral products	26.5	27.1	26.9	24.5	28.3	
13	Textiles	20.1	20.6	20.8	18.4	20.7	
31	Furniture	18.1	18.2	18.4	16.6	19.8	
16	Wood and of products of wood and cork, except furniture; articles of straw and plaiting materials	16.8	17.0	16.8	16.5	22.5	
38	Waste collection, treatment and disposal services; materials recovery services	11.2	11.9	12.2	12.0	19.0	
8	Other mining and quarrying products	12.5	12.0	9.7	7.3	10.4	
Other	Other	88.3	91.5	94.9	82.3	95.1	

Green is highest point, red is lowest point during 2017-2021

Source: Eurostat (online data code: Comext data code : DS-057009)

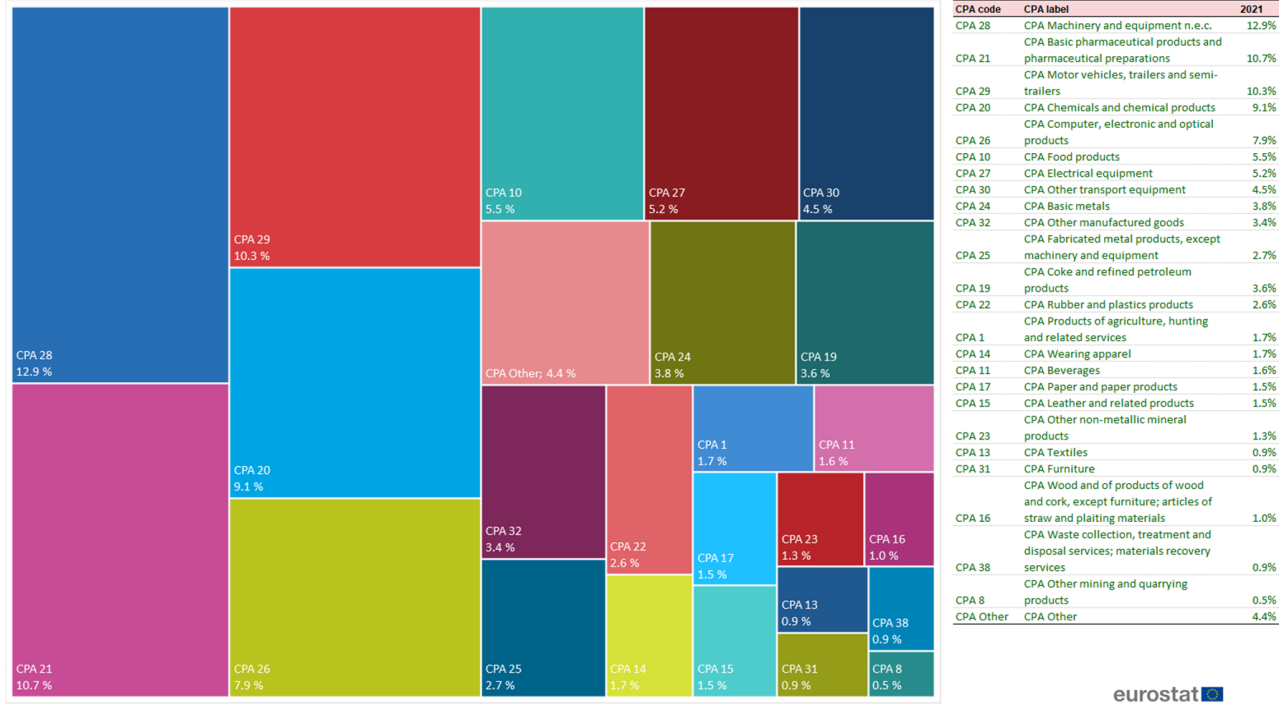
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Table 1: Extra-EU exports of main CPA groups, EU, 2017 - 2021 (€ billion) Source: Eurostat (Comext database DS-057009)

The composition of total exports of goods in 2021 in the 24 CPA groups in Table 1 is shown Figure 1. The top five products 'Machinery and equipment n.e.c.' (**machines**), 'Basic pharmaceutical products' (**pharmaceuticals**), 'Motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers' (**cars**) 'Chemical Products' (**chemicals**) and 'Computers, electronic and optical products' (**computers**) account for just over half of all exports. The rest of this article will concentrate on these top five products.

For readability, the designation of these products given in bold between brackets in the paragraph above is used. However, readers should keep in mind that these do not correspond exactly to the definition of these product groups.

Share of main CPA groups in extra-EU exports, 2021
%



Source: Eurostat (online data code: Comext data code: DS-057009)

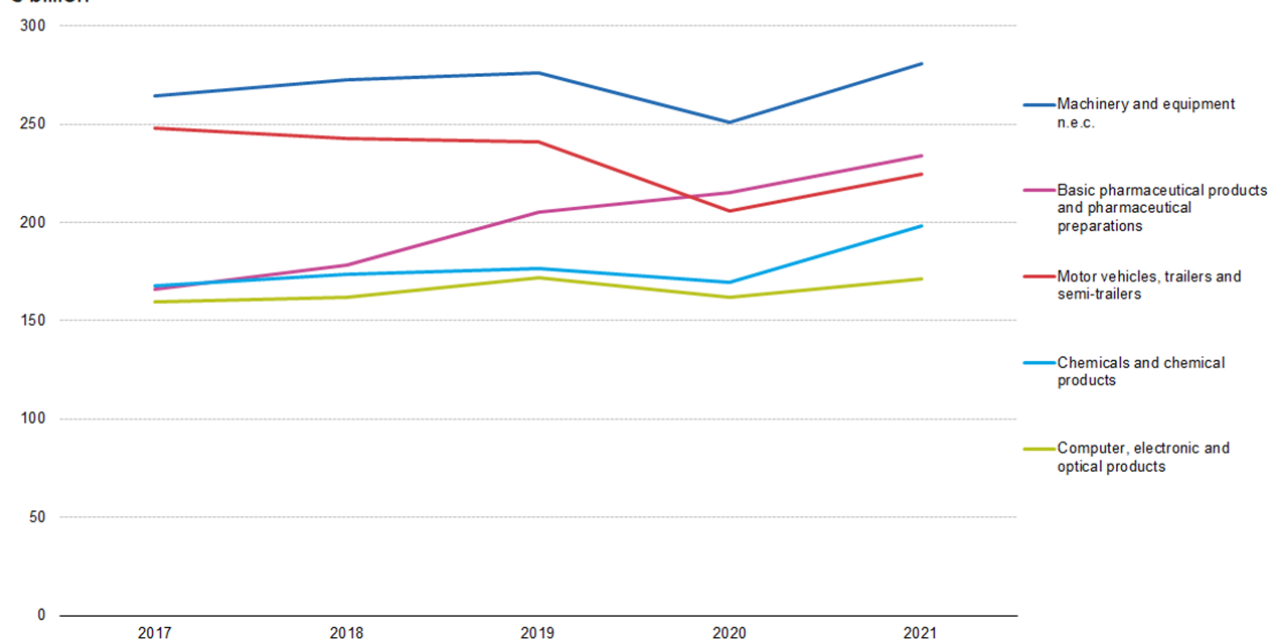
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Figure 1: Share of main CPA groups in total EU exports, 2021 (%) Source: Eurostat (Comext database DS-057009)

From 2017 to 2021, these five products were continuously in the top 5. Throughout the period the most exported product was machines whose exports grew from € 264 billion in 2017 to € 281 billion in 2021 (Figure 2). Cars fell from € 248 billion in 2017 to € 225 billion in 2021. The exports of pharmaceuticals, chemicals and computers were close together in 2017 and 2018. However, pharmaceuticals grew more strongly than any of the other top-5 products and overtook chemicals in 2018 and cars in 2020, becoming the second most exported product.

Top 5 CPA categories in extra-EU exports, 2017 - 2021

€ billion



Source: Eurostat (online data code: Comext data code : DS-057009)

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Figure 2: Top 5 CPA categories in extra-EU exports, 2017 - 2021 (€ billion) Source: Eurostat (Comext database DS-057009)

Other machinery and equipment

In 2021, Germany was the largest exporter of machines in the EU. Its exports of € 107 billion were 38.0 % of total EU exports to countries outside the EU. Italy (€ 46 billion, 16.5% of total EU exports) was the second largest exporter. There were seven Member States where the share of machines in their total exports to countries outside the EU was above 15 %. These were Luxembourg (19.2 %), Italy (18.8 %), Finland, Austria (both 17.2 %), Germany (16.9 %), Denmark and the Netherlands (both 15.3 %).

Extra-EU exports of machinery and equipment n.e.c., 2021

€ billion and %

	Total exports (EUR million)	Machinery and equipment n.e.c. (EUR million)	Share by Member State (%)	Share in total extra-EU exports (%)
EU	2 180 402	280 797	100.0	12.9
Germany	632 546	106 734	38.0	16.9
Italy	246 457	46 235	16.5	18.8
Netherlands	216 786	33 273	11.8	15.3
France	224 511	17 746	6.3	7.9
Belgium	155 638	10 001	3.6	6.4
Sweden	74 235	9 938	3.5	13.4
Austria	53 045	9 106	3.2	17.2
Spain	121 556	8 937	3.2	7.4
Denmark	50 115	7 675	2.7	15.3
Poland	72 170	6 776	2.4	9.4
Finland	30 364	5 222	1.9	17.2
Czechia	37 465	5 170	1.8	13.8
Hungary	26 073	2 485	0.9	9.5
Ireland	99 348	1 786	0.6	1.8
Romania	19 830	1 762	0.6	8.9
Slovakia	17 080	1 662	0.6	9.7
Lithuania	14 642	1 356	0.5	9.3
Slovenia	15 705	936	0.3	6.0
Portugal	18 123	930	0.3	5.1
Bulgaria	11 413	573	0.2	5.0
Greece	18 467	562	0.2	3.0
Luxembourg	2 703	520	0.2	19.2
Estonia	6 031	488	0.2	8.1
Croatia	6 032	427	0.2	7.1
Latvia	6 372	410	0.1	6.4
Malta	1 348	55	0.0	4.1
Cyprus	2 349	33	0.0	1.4

Source: Eurostat (online data code: Comext data code : DS-057009)

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Figure 3: Extra-EU exports of 'other machinery and equipment', 2021 (€ billion and %) Source: Eurostat (Comext database DS-057009)

Pharmaceutical products

In 2021, Germany was the largest exporter of pharmaceuticals in the EU. Its exports of € 57 billion were 24.4 % of total EU exports to countries outside the EU. Belgium (€ 47 billion, 20.2 % of total EU exports) was the second largest exporter. There were three Member States where the share of pharmaceuticals in their total exports to countries outside the EU was above 15 %. These were Ireland (42.2 %), Slovenia (39.1 %) and Belgium (30.3 %).

Extra-EU exports of basic pharmaceutical products and preparations, 2021

€ billion and %

	Total exports (EUR million)	Basic pharmaceutical products and preparations (EUR million)	Share by Member State (%)	Share in total extra-EU exports (%)
EU	2 180 402	233 944	100.0	10.7
Germany	632 546	57 095	24.4	9.0
Belgium	155 638	47 155	20.2	30.3
Ireland	99 348	41 898	17.9	42.2
Netherlands	216 786	19 227	8.2	8.9
France	224 511	17 563	7.5	7.8
Italy	246 457	13 641	5.8	5.5
Spain	121 556	7 149	3.1	5.9
Slovenia	15 705	6 143	2.6	39.1
Sweden	74 235	5 952	2.5	8.0
Austria	53 045	5 246	2.2	9.9
Denmark	50 115	4 989	2.1	10.0
Hungary	26 073	1 980	0.8	7.6
Poland	72 170	1 398	0.6	1.9
Greece	18 467	785	0.3	4.3
Finland	30 364	629	0.3	2.1
Portugal	18 123	517	0.2	2.9
Croatia	6 032	476	0.2	7.9
Czechia	37 465	461	0.2	1.2
Bulgaria	11 413	386	0.2	3.4
Romania	19 830	316	0.1	1.6
Lithuania	14 642	295	0.1	2.0
Latvia	6 372	294	0.1	4.6
Cyprus	2 349	163	0.1	6.9
Malta	1 348	108	0.0	8.1
Slovakia	17 080	57	0.0	0.3
Estonia	6 031	18	0.0	0.3
Luxembourg	2 703	4	0.0	0.1

Source: Eurostat (online data code: Comext data code : DS-057009)

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Figure 5: Extra-EU exports of 'pharmaceutical products', 2021 (€ billion and %) Source: Eurostat (Comext database DS-057009)

Motor vehicles

In 2021, Germany was the largest exporter of cars in the EU. Its exports of € 123 billion were 54.7 % of total EU exports to countries outside the EU. Italy (€ 15 billion, 6.6 % of total EU exports) was the second largest exporter. There were three Member States where the share of cars in their total exports to countries outside the EU was above 15 %. These were Slovakia (51.3 %), Czechia (20.5 %) and Germany (19.4 %).

Extra-EU exports of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers, 2021

€ billion and %

	Total exports (EUR million)	Motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers (EUR million)	Share by Member State (%)	Share in total extra-EU exports (%)
EU	2 180 402	224 513	100.0	10.3
Germany	632 546	122 850	54.7	19.4
Italy	246 457	14 785	6.6	6.0
Spain	121 556	13 892	6.2	11.4
France	224 511	11 397	5.1	5.1
Belgium	155 638	9 227	4.1	5.9
Sweden	74 235	9 226	4.1	12.4
Slovakia	17 080	8 759	3.9	51.3
Czechia	37 465	7 683	3.4	20.5
Netherlands	216 786	5 456	2.4	2.5
Poland	72 170	5 222	2.3	7.2
Austria	53 045	5 114	2.3	9.6
Hungary	26 073	2 871	1.3	11.0
Romania	19 830	2 408	1.1	12.1
Portugal	18 123	1 505	0.7	8.3
Slovenia	15 705	1 074	0.5	6.8
Lithuania	14 642	735	0.3	5.0
Finland	30 364	626	0.3	2.1
Denmark	50 115	620	0.3	1.2
Bulgaria	11 413	302	0.1	2.6
Ireland	99 348	255	0.1	0.3
Croatia	6 032	128	0.1	2.1
Latvia	6 372	125	0.1	2.0
Estonia	6 031	115	0.1	1.9
Luxembourg	2 703	65	0.0	2.4
Greece	18 467	52	0.0	0.3
Cyprus	2 349	16	0.0	0.7
Malta	1 348	4	0.0	0.3

Source: Eurostat (online data code: Comext data code : DS-057009)

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Figure 4: Extra-EU exports of 'motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers', 2021 (€ billion and %) Source: Eurostat (Comext database DS-057009)

Chemical products

In 2021, Germany was the largest exporter of chemicals in the EU. Its exports of € 55 billion were 27.5 % of total EU exports to countries outside the EU. France (€ 29 billion, 14.7 % of total EU exports) was the second largest exporter. Only for Estonia (18.4 %) and Lithuania (17.8 %) was the share of chemicals in their total exports to countries outside the EU above 15 %.

Extra-EU exports of chemicals and chemical products, 2021

€ billion and %

	Total exports (EUR million)	Chemicals and chemical products (EUR million)	Share by Member State (%)	Share in total extra-EU exports (%)
EU	2 180 402	198 439	100.0	9.1
Germany	632 546	54 523	27.5	8.6
France	224 511	29 167	14.7	13.0
Netherlands	216 786	24 777	12.5	11.4
Belgium	155 638	19 863	10.0	12.8
Italy	246 457	14 420	7.3	5.9
Ireland	99 348	13 268	6.7	13.4
Spain	121 556	12 221	6.2	10.1
Poland	72 170	5 265	2.7	7.3
Sweden	74 235	4 678	2.4	6.3
Denmark	50 115	3 419	1.7	6.8
Lithuania	14 642	2 603	1.3	17.8
Austria	53 045	2 073	1.0	3.9
Finland	30 364	1 896	1.0	6.2
Hungary	26 073	1 770	0.9	6.8
Czechia	37 465	1 678	0.8	4.5
Portugal	18 123	1 206	0.6	6.7
Estonia	6 031	1 111	0.6	18.4
Bulgaria	11 413	892	0.4	7.8
Romania	19 830	802	0.4	4.0
Greece	18 467	762	0.4	4.1
Slovenia	15 705	755	0.4	4.8
Slovakia	17 080	350	0.2	2.0
Croatia	6 032	329	0.2	5.5
Latvia	6 372	304	0.2	4.8
Luxembourg	2 703	136	0.1	5.0
Cyprus	2 349	121	0.1	5.2
Malta	1 348	51	0.0	3.8

Source: Eurostat (online data code: Comext data code : DS-057009)

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Figure 6: Extra-EU exports of 'chemical products', 2021 (€ billion and %) Source: Eurostat (Comext database DS-057009)

Computer, electronic and optical products

In 2021, Germany was the largest exporter of computers in the EU. Its exports of € 57 billion were 33.1 % of total EU exports to countries outside the EU. The Netherlands (€ 30 billion, 17.4 % of total EU exports) was the second largest exporter. There were four Member States where the share of computers in their total exports to countries outside the EU was above 15 %. These were Malta (26.6 %), Estonia (23.1 %), Czechia (19.1 %), Hungary (16.3 %).

Extra-EU exports of computer, electronic and optical products, 2021

€ billion and %

	Total exports (EUR million)	Computer, electronic and optical products (EUR million)	Share by Member State (%)	Share in total extra-EU exports (%)
EU	2 180 402	171 162	100.0	7.9
Germany	632 546	56 740	33.1	9.0
Netherlands	216 786	29 862	17.4	13.8
Ireland	99 348	13 811	8.1	13.9
France	224 511	12 868	7.5	5.7
Italy	246 457	9 233	5.4	3.7
Czechia	37 465	7 157	4.2	19.1
Sweden	74 235	6 441	3.8	8.7
Poland	72 170	6 297	3.7	8.7
Hungary	26 073	4 246	2.5	16.3
Denmark	50 115	3 831	2.2	7.6
Belgium	155 638	3 713	2.2	2.4
Austria	53 045	3 690	2.2	7.0
Spain	121 556	2 433	1.4	2.0
Finland	30 364	2 327	1.4	7.7
Slovakia	17 080	1 929	1.1	11.3
Estonia	6 031	1 393	0.8	23.1
Portugal	18 123	970	0.6	5.4
Romania	19 830	845	0.5	4.3
Lithuania	14 642	769	0.4	5.3
Bulgaria	11 413	562	0.3	4.9
Latvia	6 372	522	0.3	8.2
Slovenia	15 705	507	0.3	3.2
Malta	1 348	358	0.2	26.6
Greece	18 467	339	0.2	1.8
Croatia	6 032	168	0.1	2.8
Luxembourg	2 703	101	0.1	3.7
Cyprus	2 349	51	0.0	2.2

Source: Eurostat (online data code: Comext data code : DS-057009)

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Figure 7: Extra-EU exports of 'computer, electronics and optical products', 2021 (€ billion and %) Source: Eurostat (Comext database DS-057009)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Most traded products in extra-EU exports](#)

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 third 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 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 Community 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.

The United Kingdom is considered as an extra-EU partner country for the EU for the whole period covered by this article. However, the United Kingdom was still part of the internal market until the end of the transitory period (31 December 2020), meaning that data on trade with the United Kingdom are still based on statistical concepts applicable to trade between the EU Member States. Consequently, while imports from any other extra-EU trade partner are grouped by country of origin, the United Kingdom data reflect the country of consignment. In practice this means that the goods imported by the EU from the United Kingdom were physically transported from the United Kingdom but part of these goods could have been of other origin than the United Kingdom. For this reason, data on trade with the United Kingdom are not fully comparable with data on trade with other extra-EU trade partners.

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

Classification of products by activity ([CPA](#)) is a statistical classification of products and services obligatory for all EU Member States. CPA classifies products by activity in which they are produced. Products are transportable goods and services. The CPA is a product classification whose elements are related to activities as defined by NACE Rev. 2. Each product - whether it be a transportable or a non-transportable good or a service - is assigned to one single NACE Rev. 2 activity. The linkage to activities as defined by NACE Rev. 2 gives the CPA a structure parallel to that of NACE Rev. 2 at all levels distinguished by NACE Rev. 2.

Unit of measure

Trade values are expressed in millions (106) 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 an important element of the external dimension of the 'Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' and 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 Organization](#) , 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.

Other articles

- [International trade in goods](#)
- [Extra-EU trade in goods](#)

Main tables

- [International trade in goods](#) , see:

International trade in goods - long-term indicators (t_ext_go_lti)

International trade in goods - short-term indicators (t_ext_go_sti)

Database

- [International trade in goods](#) , see:

International trade in goods - aggregated data (ext_go_agg)

International trade in goods - detailed data (detail)

Dedicated section

- [International trade in goods](#)

Methodology

- [International trade in goods statistics - background](#)
- [International trade in goods](#) (ESMS metadata file — ext_go_esms)
- [User guide on European statistics on international trade in goods](#)

Visualisations

- [Top 5 partners in trade in goods](#)
- [My Country in a bubble](#)

Legislation

- [Regulation \(EC\) No 471/2009](#) of 6 May 2009 on Community statistics relating to external trade with non-member countries
- [Summaries of EU Legislation: Extrastat: statistics relating to trade with non-EU countries](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 92/2010](#) of 2 February 2010 implementing Regulation (EC) No 471/2009, as regards data exchange between customs authorities and national statistical authorities, compilation of statistics and quality assessment
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 113/2010](#) of 9 February 2010 implementing Regulation (EC) No 471/2009 , as regards trade coverage, definition of the data, compilation of statistics on trade by business characteristics and by invoicing currency, and specific goods or movements.

External links

- [European Commission — Trade](#)