

This article presents [business services](#) in the [European Union \(EU\)](#) , here defined as [NACE Rev. 1.1 Divisions 72 and 74](#). Business services are a driver of a knowledge-based economy and their labour-intensive nature suggests their potential importance as providers of new jobs in the future.

### Context

Contributing to the recent increase in the demand for business services, the growing trend in [outsourcing](#) has seen many [enterprises](#) use service providers for [non-core](#) professional activities.

Technological progress and the internet are also important factors which have provided new production possibilities and new modes of supply.

Beyond the establishment of the framework of the [General agreement on trade in services \(GATS\)](#) and greater openness of international markets, the [European Services Directive 123/2006](#) should further strengthen the business services sector on the international stage. It seeks to:

- promote an [internal market](#) in services through the removal of legal and administrative barriers that have prevented enterprises from one Member State providing similar services in another Member State;
- make it easier for businesses to provide and use cross-border services within the EU, increasing cross-border competition.

Given the flexibility and dynamics of the business services sector, it is important for analysts to have a detailed knowledge of both clients and products (which are becoming increasingly non-standard and customised according to client needs) in order to further their understanding of market forces in this domain.

### Data collection

In order to improve statistical coverage and respond to user needs, [Eurostat](#) has developed statistics on these dynamic areas of the economy since early 2000 with participating countries providing statistics on a voluntary basis.

From the [reference year](#) 2008 onwards, the business services data collection has become part of the regular annual data collection of SBS. Business services statistics are now based on Annex VIII of the [recast SBS Regulation 295/2008](#) .

### Main findings

- In 2006, 4.4 million enterprises in the [EU-27](#) had as their main activity the provision of business services. They employed 22.2 million persons and generated total gross [turnover](#) of EUR 1 763 billion, equivalent to 17.1 % of the [non-financial business economy workforce](#) and to 7.9 % of total turnover.

- Legal, accounting, auditing and business management services accounted for 29.8 % of business services turnover in the EU-27, computer and related activities for 21.0 %, architecture, engineering and consultancy (15.3 %), advertising (8.2 %), and labour recruitment and provision of personnel (7.3 %).
- An analysis based on the location of clients gives information on the exports of business services to residents in other Member States or outside of the EU. In 2005, domestic clients accounted for upwards of 90 % of the turnover that was generated in the business services sectors of Germany, Spain, Greece and Portugal; at the other end of the range, Latvia was the only country where more than 20 % of sales were accounted for by exports.
- The activities with the highest proportion of their sales coming from exports in 2005 were technical testing and analysis (21.0 %), business and management consulting (16.5 %) and market research and public opinion polling (16.3 %).

## See also

- [Structural business statistics](#) - theme navigation page
- [Structural business statistics introduced](#) - background article

## Main tables

- [Structural business statistics \(t\\_sbs\)](#) , see:

SBS - services (t\_serv)

Financial services statistics (t\_serv\_fin)

## Database

- [Structural business statistics \(sbs\) \(New activity classification \(NACE Rev 2\)\)](#) , see:

SBS-services (serv)

Business services statistics (bs)

Business Services: from 2008 onwards (bs2008)

Business Services: reference year 2007 (bs2007)

Business Services: reference year 2006 (bs2006)

Business Services: reference year 2005 (bs2005)

Business services: reference year 2004 (bs2004)

Business services: reference year 2003 (bs2003)

Business services: reference year 2001 (bs2001)

Business services: reference year 2000 (bs2000)

## Dedicated section

- [Structural business statistics](#)

## Publications

- [EU-27 business services: thriving in the wake of outsourcing and liberalisation](#) - Statistics in focus 76/2007
- [Eurostat regional yearbook 2007 - Chapter 8: Structural business statistics](#) ; focus on business services
- [Exports of business services](#) - Statistics in focus 74/2007
- [Main features of EU-27 Business services](#) - Statistics in focus 101/2008
- [Provision and export of computer services in Europe](#) - Statistics in focus 15/2006

## Methodology / Metadata

- [Business services statistics](#) (ESMS metadata file — bs\_esms)

## Legislation

- [Directive 123/2006](#) of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market ( [Summary](#) )
- [Regulation 295/2008](#) of 11 March 2008 concerning structural business statistics (recast) ( [Summary](#) )
- [Regulation 250/2009](#) of 11 March 2009 implementing Regulation 295/2008 as regards the definitions of characteristics, the technical format for the transmission of data, the double reporting requirements for NACE Rev.1.1 and NACE Rev.2 and derogations to be granted for structural business statistics
- [Regulation 251/2009](#) of 11 March 2009 implementing and amending Regulation 295/2008 as regards the series of data to be produced for structural business statistics and the adaptations necessary after the revision of the statistical classification of products by activity (CPA)