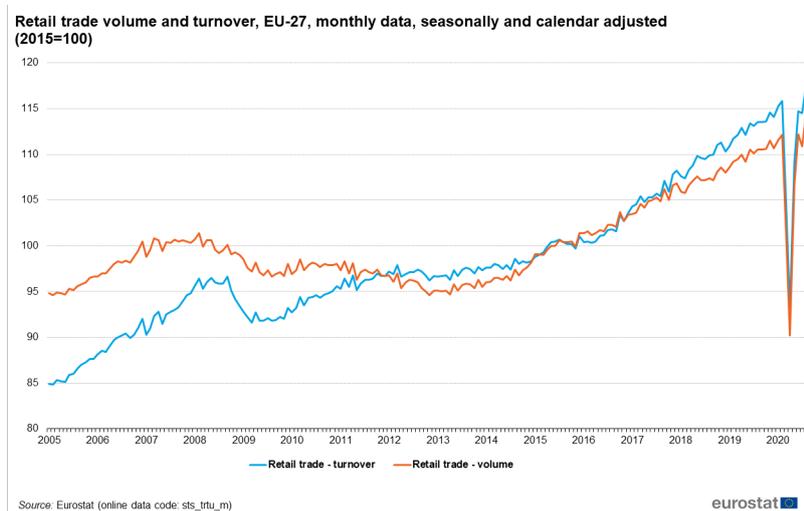


Retail trade volume index overview

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in November 2020.
Planned article update: November 2021.*

Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on EU retail trade - latest information



Retail trade volume and turnover, EU-27, monthly data, seasonally and calendar adjusted (2015=100), Source: Eurostat (sts_trtu_m)

The index of the volume of retail trade is a business indicator which measures the monthly changes of the deflated turnover of retail trade both at the level of the [European Union \(EU\)](#) and [euro area](#) , and of individual EU Member States (as well as some [candidate](#) and [EFTA](#) countries). This article provides an overview of the development of the index over recent years and describes how it is calculated.

Please also see the monthly [Eurostat News Release 4 February 2021](#) .

Retail trade developments

After several years of a steady increase the volume of [retail trade](#) in the [EU-27](#) peaked in early 2008 (Figure 1). After that a decline set in which lasted until mid-2013. Since the first half of 2013 the retail volume has again increased relatively steadily and at in the middle of 2019 reached a level of more than 10 percentage points above the pre-crisis high. With the Covid-19 crisis and national health prevention measures setting in during the Spring of 2020 the retail trade saw an unprecedented decline in March and April 2020. In the subsequent month retail trade recovered almost as quickly as it had fallen and by autumn 2020 the pre-crisis level had been more or less regained. (See the special article on the [impact of the COVID-19 crisis on EU retail trade](#) .)

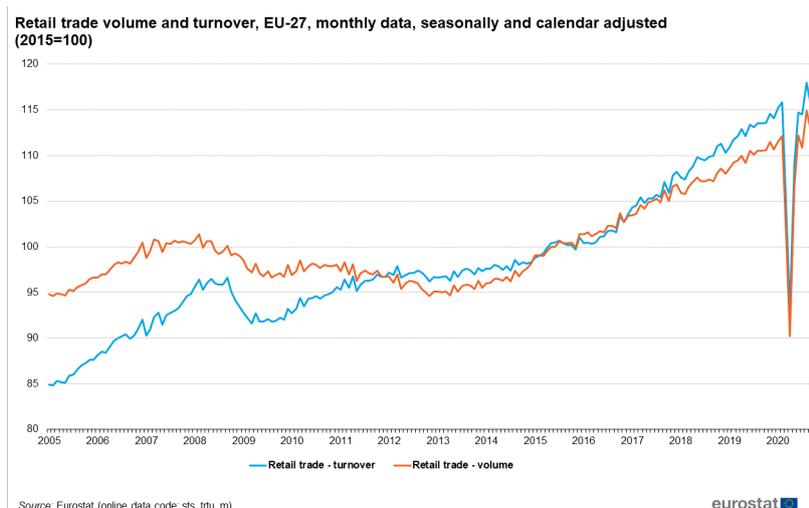


Figure 1: Retail trade volume and turnover, EU-27, monthly data, seasonally and calendar adjusted (2015=100) - Source: Eurostat (sts_trtu_m)

Figure 1 not only shows the (real) volume of EU retail trade but also the (nominal) turnover indicator which combines both volume and price changes. The graphs of the volume and turnover measure suggest a raising level of prices until 2013 (with the exception of the financial crisis). Since then the price development appears rather stable. During the Covid-19 crisis no significant changes in the overall price level was observed.

Turnover for retail and wholesale trade

Turnover data (but not trade volume data) are currently available for the whole NACE Rev. 2 section G, which includes not only retail trade (NACE Rev. 2, division 47) but also wholesale trade (NACE Rev. 2, division 46) and the sale (wholesale and retail) and repair of motor vehicles (NACE Rev. 2, division 45). Figure 2 shows the development of these turnover indicators for the EU-27. It becomes apparent that wholesale trade and the trade in motor vehicles reacted much more strongly during the crisis of 2008/2009 as well as during the Covid-19 crisis than the turnover of retail trade. However the recovery of the trade and repair of motor vehicles was also much more dynamic after the financial crisis and also in the second half of 2020.

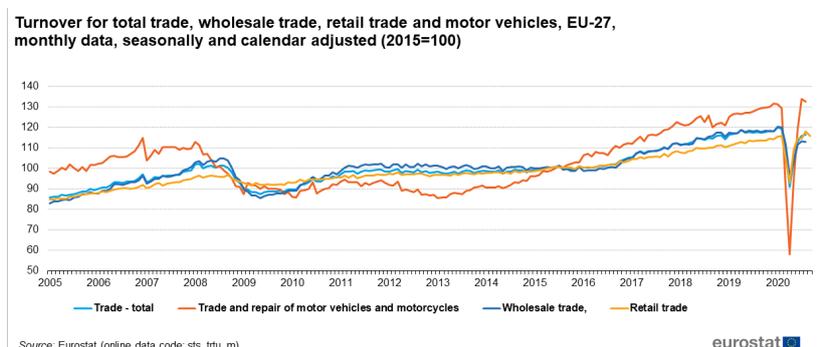


Figure 2: Turnover for total trade, wholesale trade, retail trade and motor vehicles, EU-27, monthly data, seasonally and calendar adjusted (2015=100), Source: Eurostat (sts_trtu_m)

Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the retail trade volume for the three main product groups: non-food articles (excluding fuel); food, beverages and tobacco; and automotive fuel. The retail volume of food products (plus drinks and tobacco) reacted less strongly during the economic and financial crisis as well as during the Covid-19

crisis than the trade volume of non-food products. However both product groups generally develop in largely comparable ways. The retail volume of fuel (sold in specialised stores, i.e. filling stations) has followed a less clearer trend since the year 2000 with temporary peaks in the summer of 2003, late 2006, early and late 2008. Between 2009 and 2012, a relatively steady decline could be observed, since then the volume of sales of fuel has increased again. During the Covid-19 crisis with lockdowns in many European countries the sales of automotive fuel dropped by more than 40 %. The sales of fuel recovered during the summer and autumn however without regaining the pre-crisis levels.

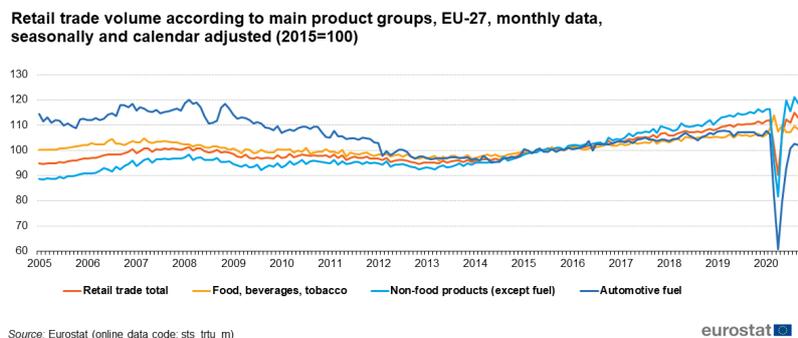


Figure 3: Retail trade volume according to main product groups, EU-27, monthly data, seasonally and calendar adjusted (2015=100), Source: Eurostat (sts_trtu_m)

Development of the retail trade volume according to the type of sale

Figure 4 shows the development of the retail trade volume according to the type of sale (non-specialised stores with the sales of food and drinks prevailing, i.e. supermarkets, other non-specialised stores, i.e. department stores and internet sales). As can be seen the sales via the internet have developed in an highly dynamic manner (starting from a low level in the early years).

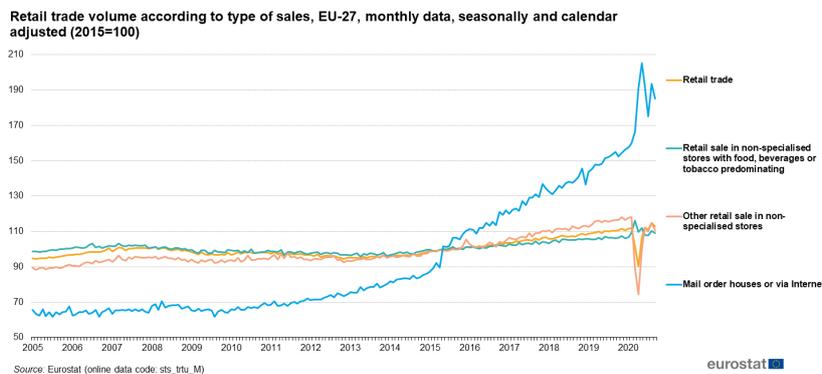


Figure 4: Retail trade volume according to type of sales and product groups, EU-27, monthly data, seasonally and calendar adjusted (2015=100), Source: Eurostat (sts_trtu_m)

The retail trade volume in the EU Member States generally increased during the last decade, but the magnitude of the changes differ substantially (table 1). Between 2005 and 2007, the year before the financial crisis, retail trade volume increased in almost all EU Member States (with the exceptions of Italy and Malta). Especially strong were the increases in Bulgaria, Romania and the [Baltic countries](#) .

Retail trade volume annual rates of change, 2005-2019, calendar adjusted

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EU-27	2.3	2.9	2.0	-0.4	-2.5	0.5	-0.6	-1.4	-0.4	1.5	3.3	2.1	2.9	2.0	2.5
EU-19	1.9	2.1	1.5	-0.9	-2.7	0.5	-0.6	-1.6	-0.7	1.2	2.8	1.6	2.6	1.5	2.4
Belgium	2.7	1.1	1.8	0.2	1.4	-0.1	0.4	0.9	0.0	1.5	2.4	-0.6	0.1	-0.7	0.9
Bulgaria	14.4	13.1	18.8	9.0	-7.7	-8.4	0.7	5.2	3.8	10.2	11.7	6.1	5.5	3.3	3.3
Czechia	6.1	7.7	6.5	3.0	-1.2	-0.7	0.1	-1.0	-0.1	2.5	5.8	4.7	5.9	5.0	4.8
Denmark	4.7	3.7	1.4	-2.1	-3.6	-1.7	-2.8	-3.2	-1.3	1.3	1.0	1.3	0.8	1.6	0.7
Germany	1.5	0.5	-1.3	-0.3	-2.7	1.3	1.0	0.1	0.4	1.2	3.8	2.0	3.6	1.6	3.2
Estonia	14.6	17.6	10.6	-4.4	-18.3	-0.4	4.7	5.7	1.6	7.2	4.7	4.0	1.7	1.0	4.4
Ireland	3.7	8.8	8.3	-2.0	-6.3	3.2	-2.8	-0.6	1.5	5.7	5.0	5.0	6.0	4.1	4.9
Greece	4.7	9.0	2.1	1.3	-11.4	-6.3	-10.2	-12.2	-8.0	-0.4	-1.5	-0.6	1.2	1.5	0.8
Spain	1.4	1.6	2.6	-5.9	-5.3	-2.2	-6.1	-8.2	-5.1	1.2	4.2	3.9	0.8	0.7	2.3
France	2.6	3.2	3.9	0.8	0.8	3.3	3.3	1.9	1.8	1.8	3.6	2.9	3.7	2.8	2.6
Croatia	4.2	4.7	5.0	1.2	-5.6	-3.5	-0.6	-3.8	0.4	-0.5	3.3	1.3	3.6	4.4	4.2
Italy	-1.0	1.0	-0.4	-2.7	-1.3	12.9	-2.1	0.6	-0.4	-0.3	7.2	2.8	5.3	1.8	6.9
Cyprus	4.6	6.4	8.3	5.1	-3.3	-1.1	-4.6	-4.6	-7.1	2.0	5.0	4.8	6.1	5.2	3.8
Latvia	18.1	18.3	12.9	-7.4	-25.5	-3.0	2.2	7.4	4.0	3.6	4.9	2.1	4.4	3.9	2.3
Lithuania	12.0	11.5	15.7	1.9	-20.8	-6.9	5.9	3.4	4.7	5.3	5.5	6.5	4.6	6.6	5.5
Luxembourg	0.3	6.7	5.0	2.4	2.7	9.0	21.1	19.1	12.6	8.1	-28.9	-56.7	-31.2	3.4	4.9
Hungary	5.0	4.9	-1.9	-1.6	-5.3	-2.2	0.1	-2.0	1.9	5.2	5.6	4.8	5.7	6.8	6.2
Malta	-5.0	-3.4	8.4	-2.7	-1.3	12.9	-2.1	0.6	-0.4	-0.3	7.2	2.8	5.3	1.8	6.9
Netherlands	0.6	4.3	2.8	0.2	-4.9	-1.0	-1.3	-3.0	-3.5	1.3	2.4	1.5	3.2	3.0	2.0
Austria	2.4	1.5	0.7	-1.1	2.0	2.0	-1.3	-0.4	-0.2	0.3	1.6	0.8	1.1	0.7	1.1
Poland	-0.4	12.3	9.3	3.5	2.2	5.2	-0.8	-1.4	4.4	0.9	6.5	5.5	6.4	6.4	4.7
Portugal	8.7	-0.2	0.4	0.3	-0.9	-0.8	-8.2	-5.8	-1.6	0.6	2.5	2.8	4.1	4.1	4.1
Romania	16.3	23.1	20.3	17.0	-9.6	-7.3	-1.1	4.3	0.6	6.5	9.4	12.3	11.2	5.5	7.4
Slovenia	8.6	3.1	6.3	11.4	-10.5	-0.3	1.5	-2.2	-3.2	-0.3	0.8	4.0	8.3	4.7	3.4
Slovakia	10.1	8.2	5.5	26.6	-10.1	-2.2	-2.3	-1.0	0.2	3.6	1.7	2.1	6.1	3.6	-1.3
Finland	4.9	4.9	5.3	0.7	-2.2	2.0	2.6	1.3	-0.9	-1.1	0.4	1.4	3.2	1.9	2.2
Sweden	5.8	6.0	0.7	1.0	0.6	2.6	0.8	1.8	2.4	2.5	7.1	2.2	1.9	1.4	2.0
United Kingdom	1.2	3.8	2.7	-0.5	1.0	-1.0	-1.0	0.3	1.0	4.0	3.6	4.7	1.6	2.6	2.9
Norway	2.6	4.9	5.9	1.2	-0.4	1.2	1.6	2.8	1.8	1.2	0.5	-0.9	2.3	0.8	0.1
Switzerland	2.1	2.8	4.4	3.2	0.7	2.7	1.1	3.6	1.9	1.0	-1.4	-2.0	0.1	0.0	0.3
Montenegro	14.1	-8.7	35.2	17.2	-1.7	-0.9	20.6	4.5	9.4	3.8	2.1	2.4	3.3	3.4	5.2
North Macedonia	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.5	-5.9	-6.6	-6.4	4.4	8.8	-1.6	6.7	8.5
Albania	-	26.5	-2.7	26.5	4.0	1.4	5.1	3.8	5.4	5.0	5.9	6.5	1.2	2.5	3.6
Serbia	24.6	8.9	22.4	6.9	-14.7	0.7	-18.2	-2.7	-5.8	2.1	1.2	7.6	4.1	4.2	9.9
Turkey	-	-	-	-	-	-	11.3	6.1	6.2	3.8	6.7	2.2	5.7	1.5	-0.1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	-	13.0	12.5	-7.1	17.1	7.2	2.0	5.2	1.6	7.6	7.0	5.1	8.2	5.0

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Source: Eurostat (online data code: sts_trtu_a)

eurostat

Table 1: Retail trade volume annual rates of change, 2005-2019, calendar adjusted Source: Eurostat (sts_trtu_a)

In most countries the dynamic development stopped in 2008 and 2009. In the Baltic countries the high pre-crisis growth rates were followed by comparatively high negative rates of change. Substantial decreases of more than 10% in the years of the crisis were also observed in Greece, Spain, and Slovakia. Indeed, few EU-countries came through the crisis without any negative development of retail trade volume. During the years from 2010 to 2013 the overall development was still negative, however the decline was somewhat slower than in the years before. Since 2014 the recovery has been quite dynamic, especially high increases were observed in Bulgaria, Czechia, Ireland, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. The massive decrease of the figures for Luxembourg is due to the restructuring of a large multinational online retailer who moved its operations and turnover away from Luxembourg. The effects of the Covid-19 crisis will only be visible in the 2020 annual rates.

Data sources

The retail trade volume index represents the value of retail trade turnover in constant prices (deflated turnover) (Commission Regulation (EC) No 1503/2006). (Note that in principle, the STS-Regulations require the production and transmission of a deflator of sales, i.e. a price indicator. If this indicator is not available the retail trade volume indicator can be used as an alternative. This is the option that all Member States actually have chosen.)

The definition of retail trade turnover (and turnover in general) is laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1503/2006. It comprises the total invoiced by the statistical unit (observation unit) during the reference period. It includes all charges such as packaging and transport but excludes VAT and similar deductible taxes. (For more details see the glossary article on turnover in STS.)

The volume of retail trade is conceptually different from the volume of retail trade services. The latter indicator (not available at European level) does not relate to the sales as such but to the sales service provided by the retail businesses. Because of the methodological difficulties in construction a genuine sales service indicator the volume of retail trade is usually used as an approximation.

The latest results for the development of retail trade are published in monthly news releases by Eurostat. Trade volume data are available on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis, in calendar adjusted and seasonally adjusted form (seasonal adjustment includes also calendar adjustment). All data are either available as indices or as growth rates. Eurostat publishes aggregated data for the EU-28, for the euro areas, the EU Member States and some other European countries (see above).

Context

Retail trade generates around 5% of the total value added of the European economies. The index of deflated retail turnover (retail trade volume) is the key European indicator for the short-term development of retail trade. The indicator is also one of the ' [Principal European economic indicators \(PEEI\)](#) ' which are used to monitor and steer economic and monetary policies in the EU and in the euro area.

Other articles

- [All articles on short-term business statistics](#)

Publications

- [All News Releases](#)
- [An international comparison of short-term statistics, Statistics in focus 53/2011](#)
- [Recession in the EU: its impact on retail trade, Statistics in focus 88/2009](#)

Main tables

- [Short-term business statistics \(t_sts\)](#) , see:

Trade and services (t_sts_ts)

Wholesale and retail trade (NACE G) (t_sts_wrt)

Turnover and volume of sales (t_sts_wrt_ts)

Database

- [Short-term business statistics \(sts\)](#) , see:

Trade and services (sts_ts)

Wholesale and retail trade (NACE G) (sts_wrt)

Turnover and volume of sales index (sts_wrt_ts)

Dedicated section

- [Short-term business statistics](#)

Methodology

- [Methodology of short-term business statistics – interpretation and guidelines](#)
- [Methodology of short-term business statistics – associated documents](#)
- [Short-term business statistics - Metadata in SDMX format](#) (ESMS metadata file — sts_esms)
- [More information on Metadata in Eurostat](#)