

*Data extracted in December 2019.  
Planned article update: February 2021.*

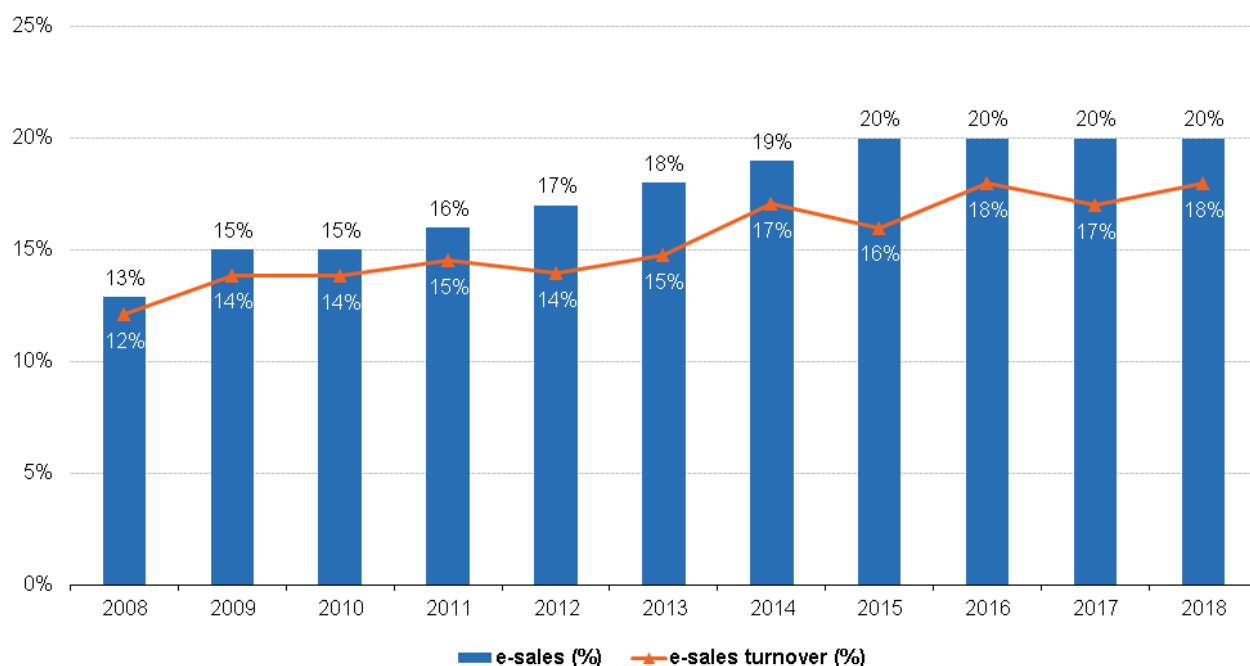
This article focuses on the electronic commerce ( [e-commerce](#) ) statistics in the [European Union \(EU\)](#) and is based on the results of the 2019 [survey on 'ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises'](#) . E-commerce refers here to the trading of goods or services over computer networks such as the internet by methods specifically designed for the purpose of receiving or placing orders. It can be divided into e-commerce sales (e-sales) and e-commerce purchases (e-purchases) depending whether an enterprise receives or places orders respectively.

This article refers in particular to e-commerce sales carried out during 2018.

### **E-sales remain stable over recent years**

In the [EU-28](#) , during the period 2008 to 2018, the percentage of enterprises that had e-sales increased by 7 percentage points, from 13 % in 2008 to 20 % in 2018. Similarly, the enterprise turnover generated from e-sales increased by 6 percentage points during the same period, namely from 12 % in 2008 to 18 % in 2018.

## E-sales and turnover from e-sales, EU-28, 2008 to 2018 (% enterprises, % total turnover)



Note: 2008 data without enterprises in the NACE Rev 2 group 95.1 referring to 'Repair of computers and communication equipment'.

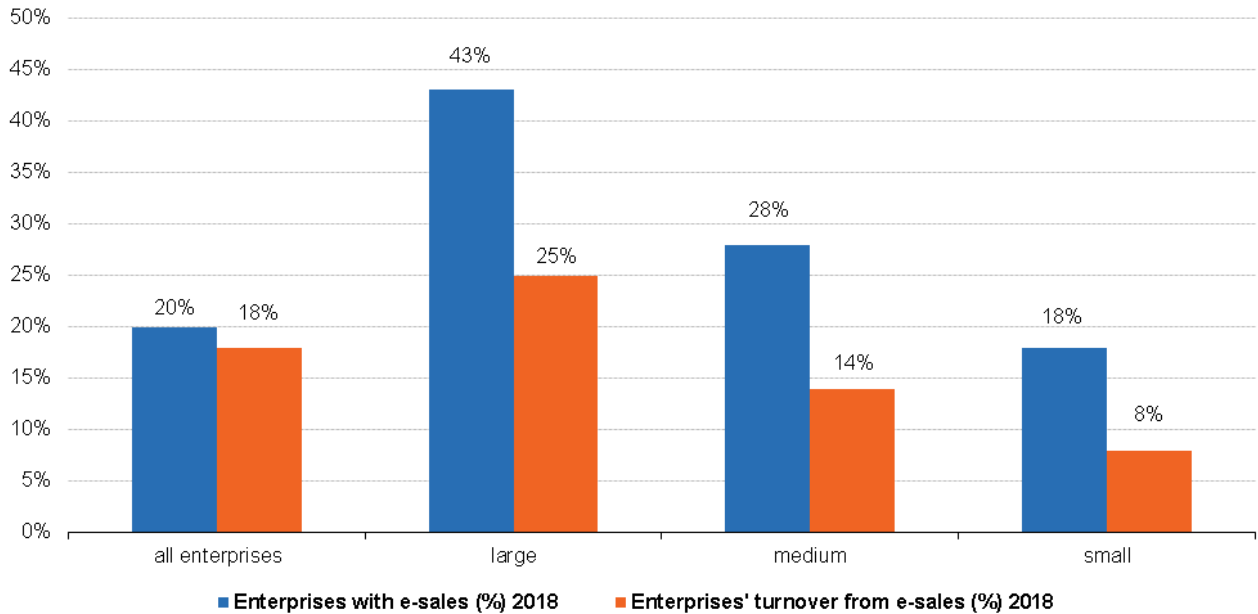
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_ci\_eu\_en2)

eurostat 

**Figure 1: E-sales and turnover from e-sales, EU-28, 2008-2018 (% enterprises, % total turnover)**  
Source: Eurostat (isoc\_ci\_eu\_en2)

As Figure 2 shows, there was a significant variation in the share of enterprises conducting e-sales and in the turnover generated from e-sales according to enterprise size.

**E-sales and turnover from e-sales, by size class, EU-28, 2018**  
 (% enterprises, % total turnover)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_ci\_eu\_en2)



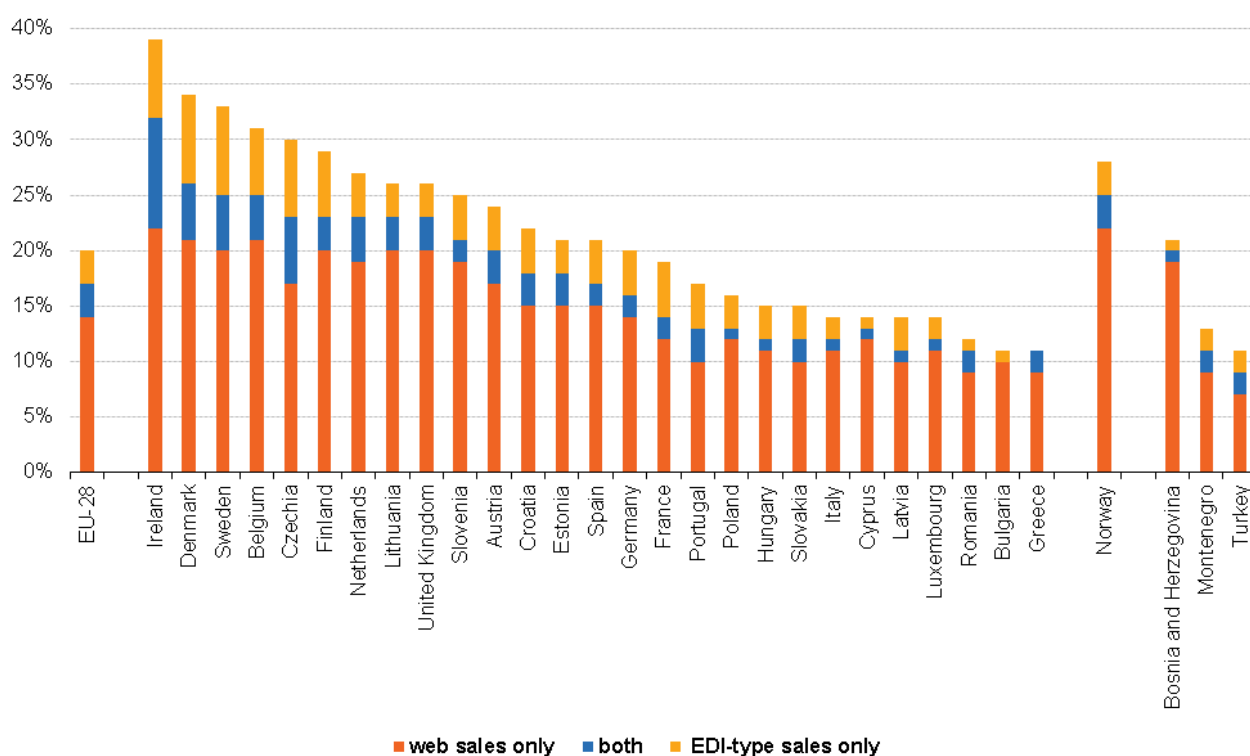
**Figure 2: E-sales and turnover from e-sales, by size class, EU-28, 2018 (% enterprises, % total turnover)** Source: Eurostat (isoc\_ci\_eu\_en2)

During 2018, 43 % of large enterprises conducted e-sales, corresponding to an e-sales value of 25 % of total turnover in this size class. Similarly, 28 % of medium sized enterprises made e-sales generating 14 % of total turnover in this size class. By contrast, 18 % of small enterprises engaged in e-sales, generating only 8 % of the turnover of such enterprises.

**Web sales dominant in all EU countries**

E-sales can be carried out via websites or apps (web sales) or in an automated way via [EDI \(electronic data interchange\)](#) type messages; enterprises may offer one or both options to their clients. In 2018, among the EU-28, the percentage of enterprises making e-sales ranged from 11 % in Bulgaria and Greece to 39 % in Ireland, followed by Denmark (34 %), Sweden (33 %), Belgium (31 %) and Czechia (30 %) (Figure 3).

### E-sales broken down by web sales and EDI-type sales, 2018 (% enterprises)



Only countries displayed that have both web sales and EDI-type sales.  
 Note: EDI-type sales for Greece and both for Bulgaria are less than 1% and not visible in the graph  
 Not available: EDI-type sales for Malta (unreliable), e-sales and EDI-type sales for Iceland (no data), web sales for Serbia (unreliable), North Macedonia (no data)  
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_ec\_eseln2)



**Figure 3: E-sales broken down by web and EDI-type sales, 2018 (% enterprises) Source: Eurostat (isoc\_ec\_eseln2)**

As shown in Figure 3, during 2018, 14 % of EU enterprises conducted e-sales using only websites or apps, 3 % used only EDI-type sales while another 3 % used both.

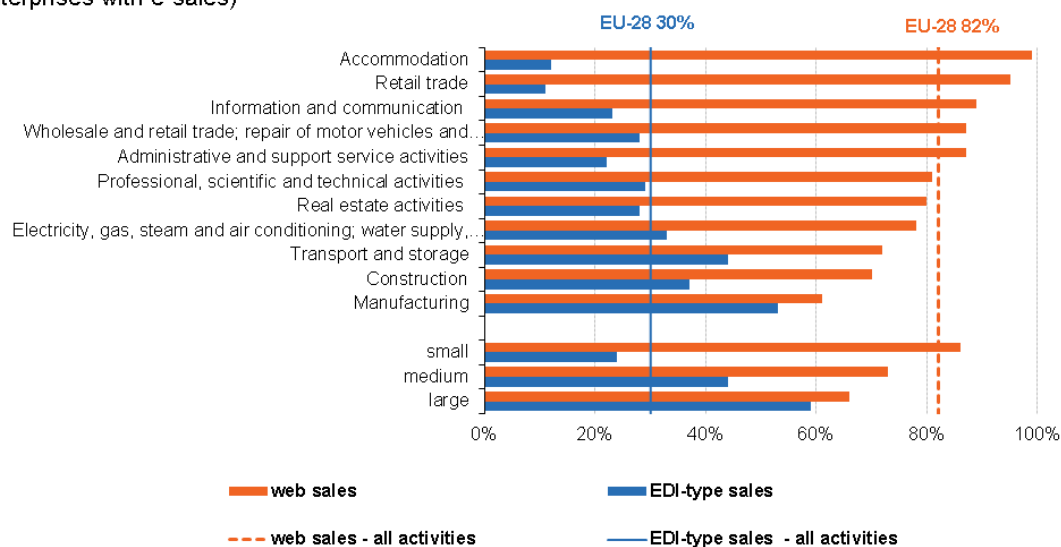
Web sales was the dominant mode of conducting e-sales in all EU Member States in 2018. The percentage of enterprises receiving electronic orders only over websites or apps ranged from 22 % in Ireland to 9 % in Greece and Romania. Enterprises consider it important to be visible on the internet. Consequently, websites or apps are increasingly offered by enterprises or third parties for various purposes. In particular, websites or apps allow customers to purchase by placing their orders electronically.

By contrast, during 2018, the percentage of enterprises that used only EDI-type messages for their sales ranged from below 1 % of enterprises in Greece to 8 % in Denmark and Sweden. The percentage of enterprises using both channels was highest in Ireland (10 %) and Czechia (6 %).

Considering the economic activity breakdown, as shown in Figure 4, during 2018, almost all enterprises conducting e-sales in the 'Accommodation' branch received orders via websites or apps (99 %), while 12 % had e-sales via EDI-type messages.

## E-sales broken down by web and EDI-type sales, by economic activity and size, EU-28, 2018

(% enterprises with e-sales)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_ec\_eseln2)

eurostat

**Figure 4: E-sales broken down by web and EDI-type sales, by economic activity and size, EU-28, 2018 (% enterprises with e-sales)** Source: Eurostat (isoc\_ec\_eseln2)

More than half of 'Manufacturing' enterprises making e-sales reported that they received orders via EDI-type messages, followed by enterprises in the 'Transport and storage' sector (44 %) and Construction (37 %).

For 'Manufacturing' enterprises, the percentages of those that conducted e-sales via websites or apps and those who used EDI-type messages were close, 61 % and 53 % respectively. For all other economic activities, enterprises received their electronic orders in most cases via websites or apps.

It is noticeable that, among the small enterprises making e-sales, 86 % of enterprises had web sales, whereas among the large enterprises 66 % received orders via websites or apps. The percentage gap between web and EDI-type sales was closest for large enterprises (Figure 4).

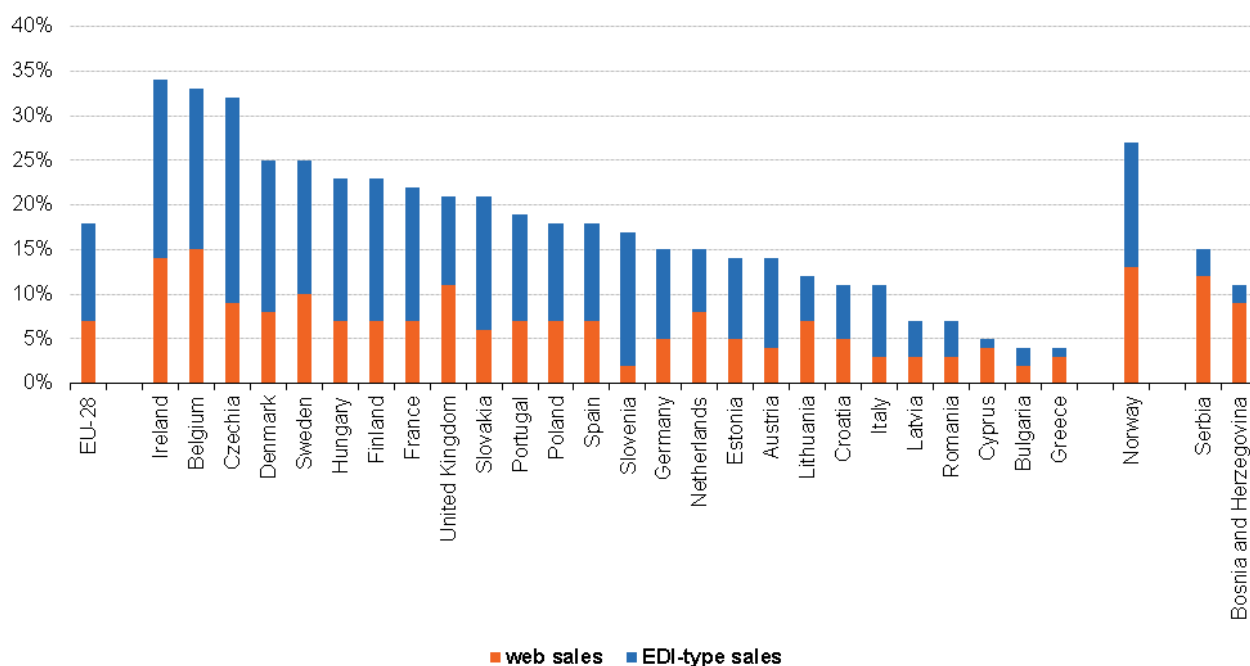
### Share of turnover greater from EDI-type sales than web sales

During 2018, EU enterprises generated 18 % of their total turnover from e-sales, consisting of orders via websites or apps (7 % of the total turnover) or via EDI-type messages (11 % of the total turnover).

Among all EU Member States, the percentage of turnover from e-sales ranged from 4 % in Bulgaria and Greece to 34 % in Ireland, followed by Belgium (33 %), Czechia (32 %), Denmark and Sweden (both 25 %).

Figure 5 shows the contribution of web sales and EDI-type sales to total turnover. The share of the total turnover from EDI-type sales ranged from 1 % in Greece and Cyprus to 23 % in Czechia and 20 % in Ireland. In addition, the share of total turnover from web sales ranged from 2 % in Bulgaria and Slovenia to 15 % in Belgium and 14 % in Ireland.

## Turnover from e-sales broken down by web and EDI-type sales, 2018 (% total turnover)



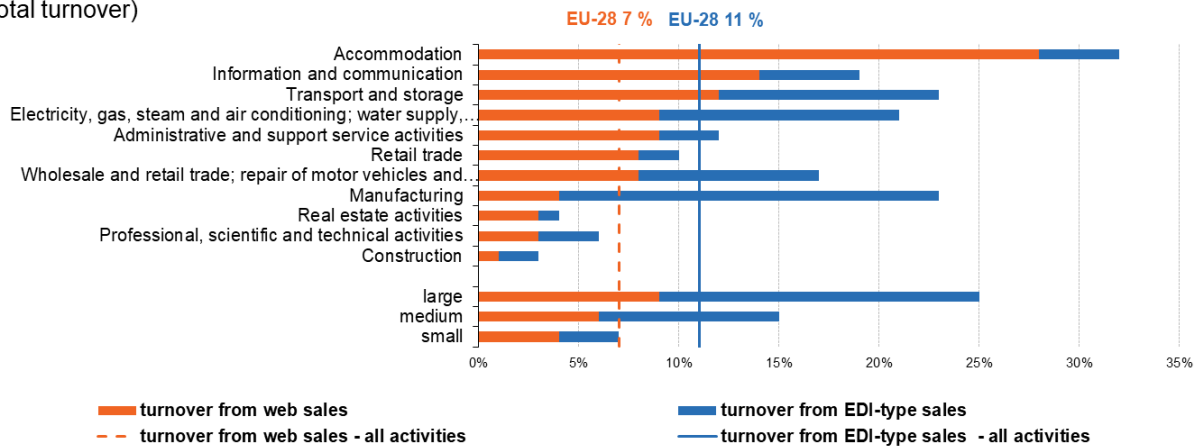
Note: Only countries with available results for both indicators are displayed.  
 Not available: Luxembourg (confidential), Malta: EDI-type sales (unreliable), Iceland: EDI-type sales (not available), Montenegro (unreliable), North Macedonia (no data)  
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_ec\_evaln2)

eurostat

**Figure 5: Turnover from e-sales broken down by web and EDI-type sales, 2018 (% total turnover)**  
**Source: Eurostat (isoc\_ec\_evaln2)**

As Figure 6 shows, large enterprises – with 250 or more persons – rely in principle on ICT and standards that integrate EDI-type sales within their business processes. In fact, large enterprises reported the highest share of turnover from e-sales (25 %), most of it from EDI-type sales (16 %). In addition, the highest shares of total turnover from e-sales were reported by enterprises in 'Accommodation' (32 %), 'Manufacturing' (24 %) and 'Transport and storage' (23 %). However, enterprises in 'Accommodation' generated most of their e-sales turnover from web sales (28 %) whereas those in 'Manufacturing' from EDI-type sales (19 %). Enterprises in 'Transport and storage' realised slightly more turnover from web sales (12 %) than from EDI-type sales (11 %).

**Turnover from e-sales broken down by web and EDI-type sales, by economic activity and size, EU-28, 2018**  
(% total turnover)



Note: Differences between total e-sales turnover and the sum of turnover from web sales and turnover from EDI-type sales displayed in the graph are due to rounding.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_ec\_evaln2)



**Figure 6: Turnover from e-sales broken down by web and EDI-type sales, by economic activity and size, 2018, (% total turnover) Source: Eurostat (isoc\_ec\_evaln2)**

### Web sales predominantly done via own website or apps

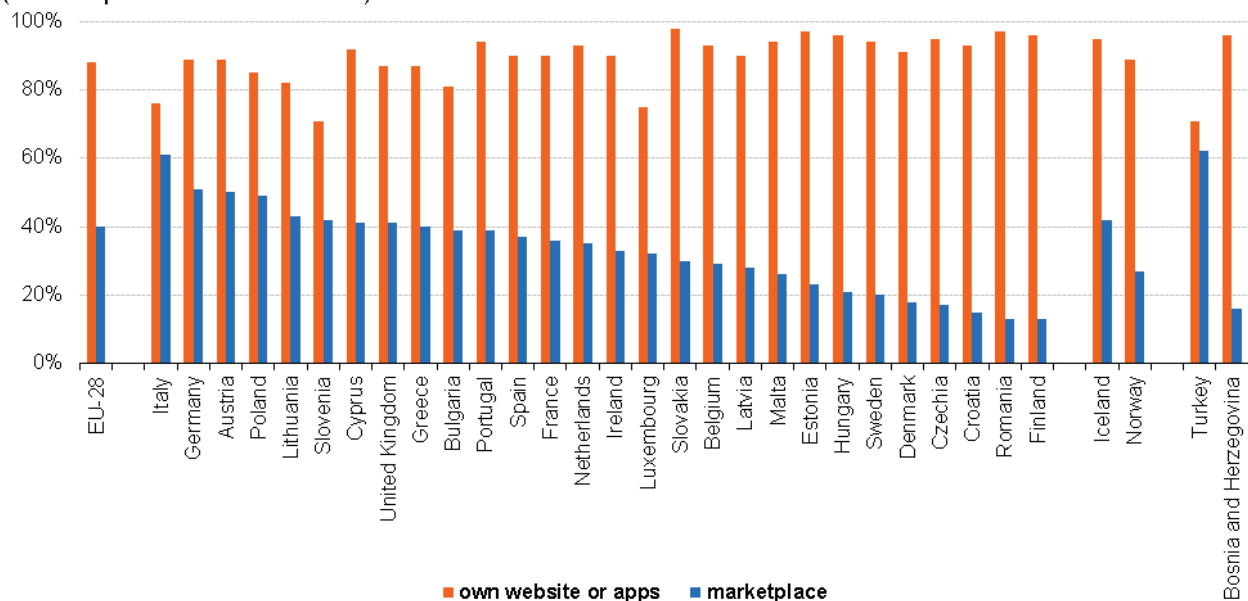
Looking further into web sales, these can be carried out via own websites or apps or via e-commerce marketplaces available on external websites or apps. E-commerce marketplaces, and in general online platforms, may facilitate economic growth by enabling sellers to access new markets and reach new customers at lower cost.

For the survey on 'ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises', the respondents were asked to indicate if they received orders for goods or services via the enterprise's own website or apps and/or via an e-commerce marketplace website or apps. An enterprise may use one or both web sales possibilities.

As Figure 7 shows, during 2018, 88 % of EU enterprises with web sales used their own websites or apps, while 40 % used an e-commerce marketplace. The highest percentages of enterprises with web sales via own sites or apps were registered in Slovakia (98 %), Estonia and Romania (each 97 %), while the lowest were registered in Luxembourg (75 %) and Slovenia (71 %). On the other hand, Finland (13 %), Romania (13 %) and Croatia (15 %) had the lowest percentages of web sales via marketplaces. Using web sales via marketplaces was most common in Italy (61 %), Germany (51 %) and Austria (50 %).

## Web sales broken down by own website or apps and marketplace, 2018

(% enterprises with web sales)



Note: Only countries with available results for both indicators are displayed.

Not available: Montenegro (unreliable), own website or apps for Serbia (unreliable), North Macedonia (no data)

Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_ec\_eseln2)

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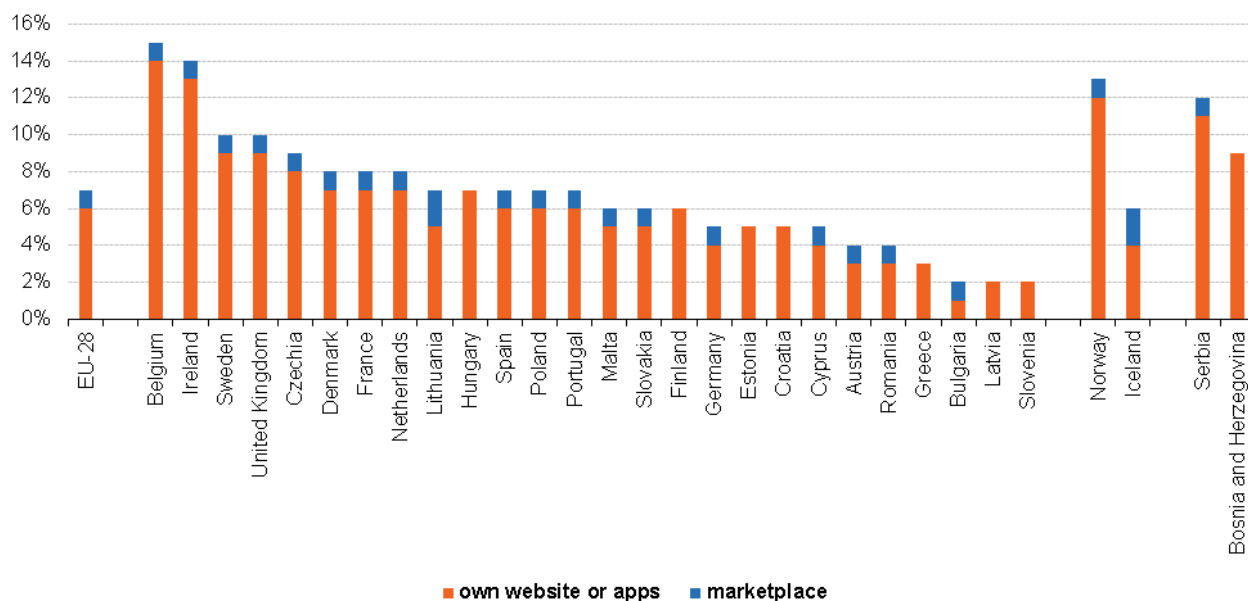
Figure 7: Web sales broken down by own website or apps and marketplace, 2018 (% enterprises with web sales) Source: Eurostat (isoc\_ec\_eseln2)

### Share of turnover from web sales mainly via own websites or apps

Moreover, as far as the turnover generated from web sales is concerned, EU enterprises realised 7 % of their total turnover from web sales during 2018, where 6 % was realised from web sales via own websites or apps and only 1 % from sales via online marketplaces. The highest percentages of turnover realised through web sales via marketplaces were registered in Lithuania (2 %) (Figure 8).



## Turnover from web sales broken down by own website or apps and marketplace, 2018 (% total turnover)



Note: Only countries with available results for both indicators are displayed.  
 Web sales via marketplace for Hungary, Finland, Estonia, Croatia, Greece, Latvia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are less than 1% and not visible in the graph  
 Not available: Luxembourg (confidential), Italy (unreliable), Montenegro (unreliable), North Macedonia (no data)  
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_ec\_evaln2)

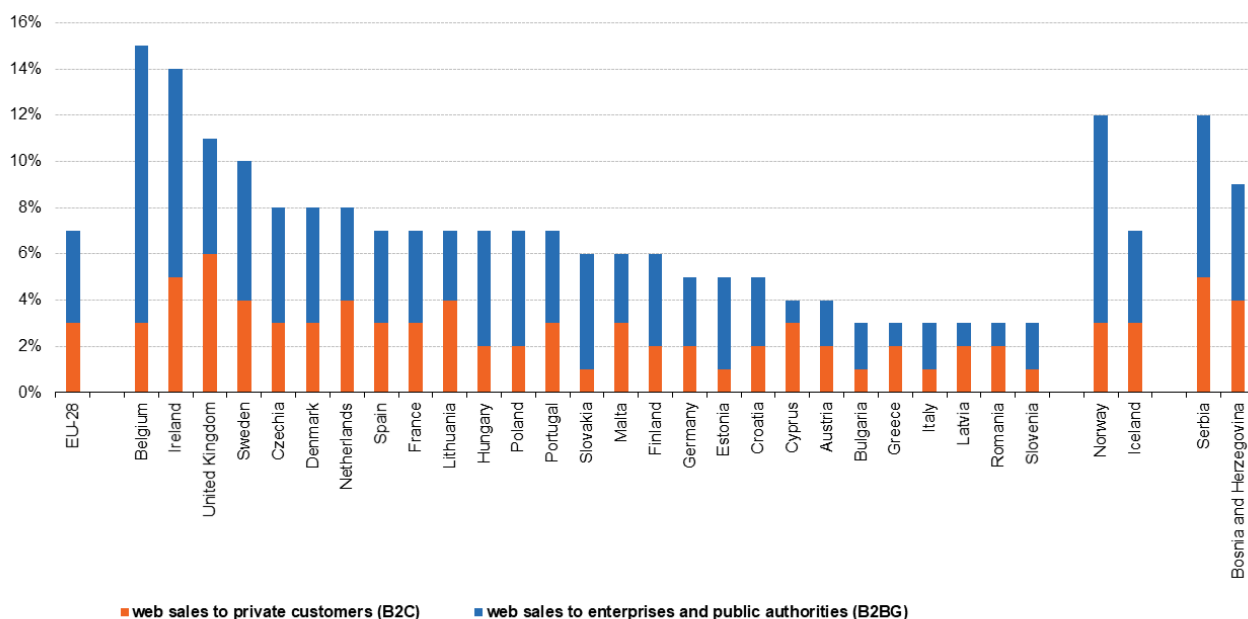
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**Figure 8: Turnover from web sales broken down by own website or apps and marketplace, 2018 (% total turnover) Source: Eurostat (isoc\_ec\_evaln2)**

### Turnover from web sales mainly from other enterprises and public authorities

During 2018, web sales accounted for 7 % of the total turnover of the enterprises. Of this, 4 % came from web sales to other enterprises and public authorities while 3 % came from web sales to private consumers (Figure 9). The highest percentages of turnover resulting from web sales to other enterprises and public authorities (B2BG) were registered in Belgium (12 %), while in Cyprus, Greece, Latvia and Romania the share recorded was 1 %. The share of web sales to private consumers (B2C) in the total turnover of the enterprises ranged from 1 % in Slovakia, Estonia, Bulgaria, Italy and Slovenia to 6 % in the United Kingdom.

**Turnover from web sales broken down by type of customer (B2C and B2BG), 2018**  
(% total turnover)



Note: only countries that have web sales to both private customers (B2C) and enterprises and public authorities (B2BG) are presented.  
Not available: Luxembourg (confidential), Montenegro (unreliable), North Macedonia (no data)  
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_ec\_evaln2)



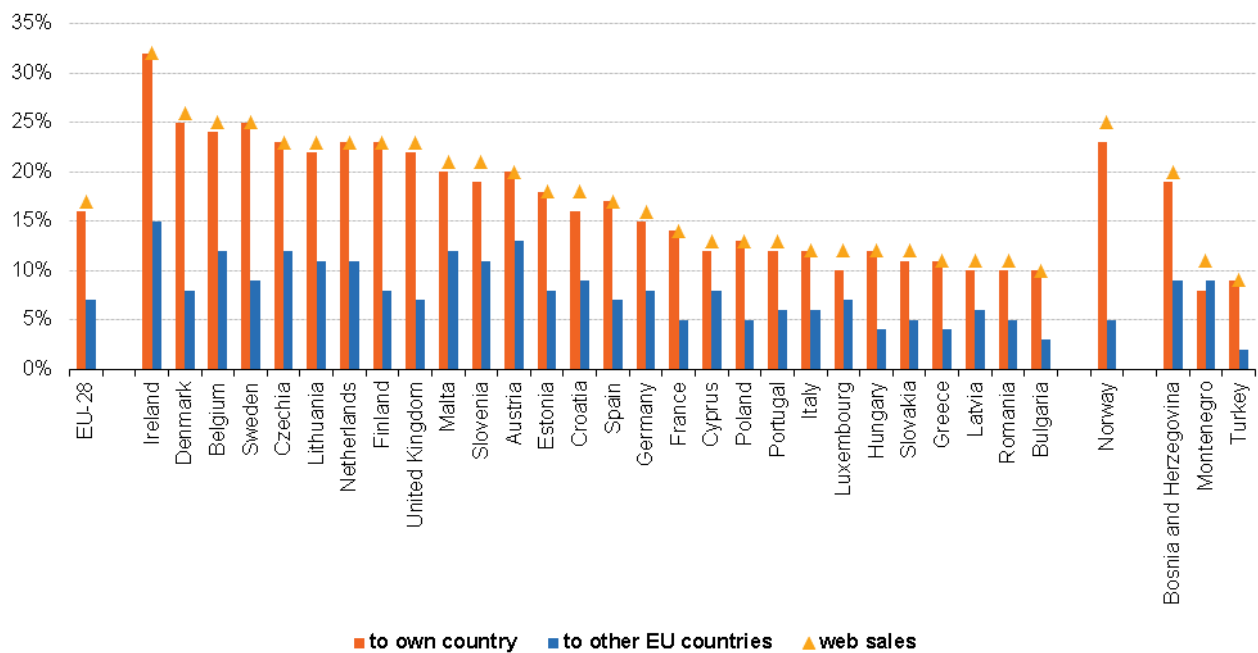
**Figure 9: Turnover from web sales broken down by B2BG and B2C, 2018 (% total turnover)**  
Source: Eurostat (isoc\_ec\_evaln2)

### Cross-border web sales within the EU not fully exploited by enterprises

E-commerce enables enterprises to establish their presence in the market at national level and also to extend their economic activities beyond borders in order to pursue opportunities elsewhere. Moreover, e-commerce has the potential to reshape the European Single Market for enterprises and private consumers by enabling price and product-related comparisons in a borderless market environment.

In 2018, in the EU-28, while almost all EU enterprises with web sales reported that they sold to customers in their own country (16 % out of 17 % with web sales), only 7 % of enterprises made web sales to other EU countries (Figure 10). The largest proportions of EU enterprises in 2018 with web sales to other EU countries were recorded in Ireland (15 %), followed by Austria (13 %). By contrast, the web sales to other EU countries were lowest in Bulgaria (3 %), Greece and Hungary (both 4 %).

**Web sales to own country and other EU countries, 2018**  
(% enterprises)



Not available: Iceland (no data), web sales for Serbia (unreliable), North Macedonia (no data)  
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_ec\_eseln2)



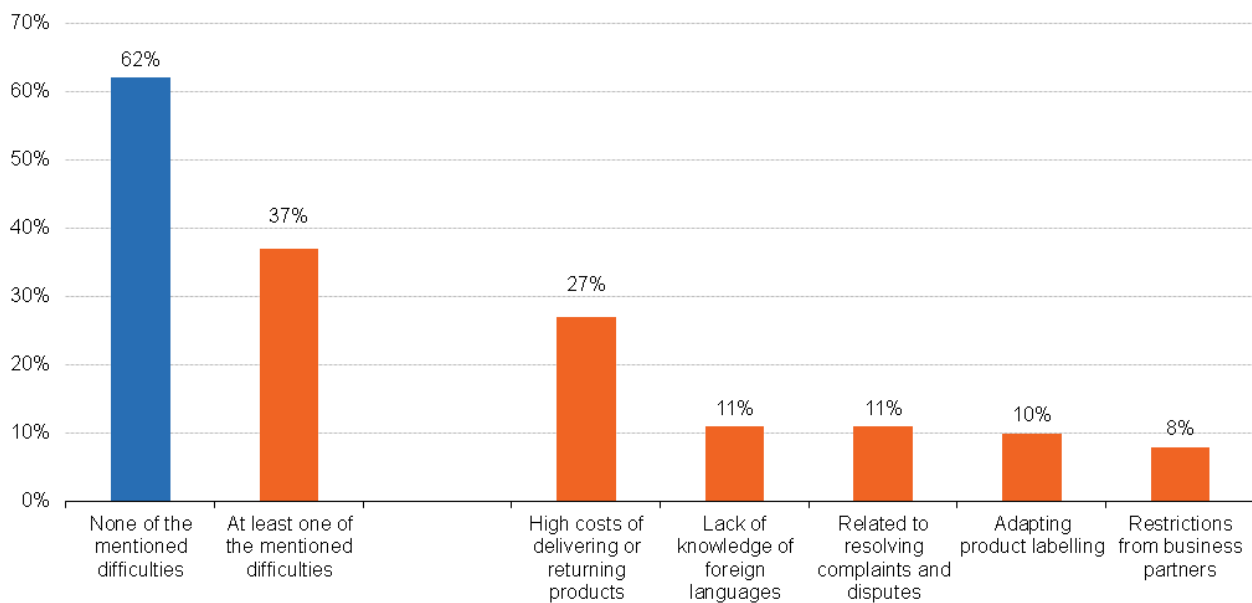
**Figure 10: Web sales to own country and other EU countries, 2018 (% enterprises)** Source: Eurostat (isoc\_ec\_wsobs\_n2)

### Transport charges main impediment to cross-border web sales within the EU

The majority (62 %) of EU enterprises having received orders via a website or via apps during 2018 reported no difficulties for their web sales to other EU Member States. However, almost four in ten (37 %) reported hampering factors. These mainly concerned: economic reasons – such as the high costs of delivering or returning products (27 %); linguistic and technical barriers – such as the lack of knowledge of foreign languages (11 %) or adapting product labelling (10 %); and/or judicial reasons related for instance to resolving complaints and disputes (11 %).

## Difficulties experienced when selling to other EU countries, EU-28, 2018

(% of enterprises with web sales to other EU countries)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_ec\_wsobs\_n2)

eurostat 

Figure 11: Difficulties experienced when selling to other EU countries, EU-28, 2018 (% of enterprises with web sales to other EU countries) Source: Eurostat (isoc\_ec\_wsobs\_n2)

### Source data for tables and graphs

- [E-commerce statistics 2019 - graphs and tables](#)

### Data sources

Data presented in this article are based on the results of the 2019 survey on 'ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises'. Statistics were obtained from enterprise surveys conducted by National Statistical Authorities in the first months of each year. The surveys' reference period was the current situation of the survey period or for questions on e-commerce the preceding calendar year.

In 2019, 160 000 enterprises, with 10 or more persons employed, out of 1.7 million in EU-28 were surveyed. Out of these 1.7 million enterprises approximately 83 % were enterprises with 10-49 persons employed, 14 % with 50-249 and 3 % with 250 or more.

The observation statistical unit is the enterprise, as defined in the [Regulation \(EC\) No 696/1993](#) of 15 March 1993. The survey covered enterprises with at least 10 persons employed. Economic activities correspond to the classification [NACE Revision 2](#). The sectors covered are manufacturing, electricity, gas and steam, water supply, construction, wholesale and retail trades, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, transportation and storage, accommodation and food service activities, information and communication, real estate, professional, scientific and technical activities, administrative and support activities and repair of computers and communication equipment. Enterprises are broken down by size; small (10-49), medium (50-249) and large enterprises (250 or more persons employed).

Source data shown as ':' refer to data that are unavailable, unreliable, confidential or not applicable. Unreliable data are included in the calculation of European aggregates. Data presented in this article may differ from the data in the database on account of updates made after the data extractions used for this article. Data in the database are organised according to the survey year.

## Context

The [Digital Single Market](#) for Europe is a major priority of the European Commission. The strategy is built on three pillars: (1) better access for consumers and businesses to digital goods and services across Europe; (2) creating the right conditions and a level playing field for digital networks and innovative services to flourish; (3) maximising the growth potential of the digital economy. More specifically, for the first pillar, the Digital Single Market strategy aims at removing the key differences between online and offline worlds, and to break down barriers to cross-border online activity. [New EU rules on e-commerce](#) include actions related to making cross-border parcel delivery more affordable and efficient and promoting customer trust through better protection and enforcement.

## Other articles

- [Cloud computing - statistics on the use by enterprises](#)
- [Internet advertising of businesses - statistics on usage of ads](#)
- [ICT specialists - statistics on hard-to-fill vacancies in enterprises](#)
- [E-business integration](#)
- [ICT security in enterprises](#)
- [Social media - statistics on the use by enterprises](#)
- [Digital economy and society statistics - enterprises](#)

## Tables

- [Digital economy and society](#)

## Database

- [Digital economy and society](#) , see:

ICT usage in enterprises (isoc\_e)

Summary of EU aggregates (isoc\_ci\_eu\_en2)

E-commerce (isoc\_ec)

E-commerce sales (isoc\_ec\_eseln2)

Value of e-commerce sales (isoc\_ec\_evaln2)

Obstacles for web sales (isoc\_ec\_wsobs\_n2)

## Dedicated section

- [Digital economy and society](#)

## Publications

- [Digital economy & society in the EU](#) Digital publication
- [Recent Eurostat publications on Digital economy and society](#)

## Methodology

- [ICT usage and e-commerce in enterprises](#) (ESMS metadata file — isoc\_e\_esms)

## Legislation

- [Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 of 21 April 2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society](#)
- [Summaries of EU legislation: Statistics on the information society](#)
- [Statistics on the information society](#)
- [Regulation \(EC\) No 960/2008 of 30 September 2008 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society](#)
- [Regulation \(EC\) No 1023/2009 of 29 October 2009 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 821/2010 of 17 September 2010 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 937/2011 of 21 September 2011 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 1083/2012 of 19 November 2012 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 859/2013 of 5 September 2013 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 1196/2014 of 30 October 2014 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) 2015/2003 of 10 November 2015 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/2015 of 17 November 2016 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/1515 of 31 August 2017 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 concerning Community statistics on the information society](#)
- [Regulation \(EC\) No 696/1993 of 15 March 1993 on the statistical units for the observation and analysis of the production system in the Community](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1798 of 21 November 2018 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 808/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning Community statistics on the information society for the reference year 2019](#)

## External links

- [Digital Agenda for Europe](#)