

Culture statistics - international trade in cultural goods

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in February 2019.
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Statistics on international trade in [cultural goods](#) enable the monitoring of the value of international exchanges of these goods and show the weight of cultural trade in the whole [EU](#) international trade.

This article analyses the data from 2012 to 2017 and presents the following information pertaining to international trade:

- [export](#) and [import](#) values in absolute and in relative terms (EUR million and % of total trade);
- [extra-EU](#) and [intra-EU](#) trade;
- the type of cultural goods traded;
- the EU's main trading partners.

Cultural trade 2012–2017 at EU and national level

This article analyses recent statistics on cultural trade in the European Union (EU). The set of data is also available and presented for Albania, Serbia, North Macedonia, Turkey and Montenegro.

'Cultural goods' are the products of artistic creativity that convey artistic, symbolic and aesthetic values; examples are antiques, works of art, jewellery, books, newspapers, photos, films, music, video games and video game consoles. For film, music and video games, the category includes all media, magnetic or optical, which are the support access to these cultural contents. Musical instruments, which are not cultural goods in themselves but represent a means of artistic expression, are also included. Cultural goods exclude products of large scale manufacturing, even if they facilitate access to cultural content (e.g. TV sets, CD players or smartphones).

Cultural goods do not penetrate markets and are not consumed by households in the same way as products of mass consumption. The category is also very heterogeneous as concerns the values of the traded products. There is much lower demand for embroidery, maps, and architectural plans and drawings, for example, than for books, video game consoles or jewellery. The differences in consumption characteristics of cultural products, the specialisation of the economic sectors in different Member States, and the technological innovations driving new consumption trends, all have an impact on patterns of imports and exports of cultural goods. .

In EU international trade statistics, the term 'goods' means all **movable** property, i.e. products having a physical and tangible dimension. International trade in licenses and copyrights is, therefore, not included.

EU cultural trade — growing trade surplus

EU figures presented here exclude intra-EU trade. In other words, the EU is deemed to be a single entity and internal exchanges (between Member States) are not counted. However, national figures concern both intra- and extra-EU trade.

Over the 5-year period from 2012 until 2017, the EU's cultural goods [trade balance](#) recorded a growing trade

surplus from EUR 6.3 billion in 2012 to EUR 8.6 billion in 2017, reflecting the increase in value of exports from 22.8 billion to 28.1 billion in 2017 against those in imports from 16.5 billion to 19.5 billion.

The ratio of exports to imports was at 1.4 both in 2012 and 2017, meaning that exports and imports increased at a comparable pace (see Table 1).

While the EU overall **annual average growth rate** (AAGR) was +4.2 % for exports and +3.3 % for imports, a growth breakdown by product revealed different trends. Between 2012 and 2017, growth rates were positive in both exports and imports for antiques, works of art, craft articles, jewellery, photographic plates and films, video game consoles and musical instruments. Works of art and jewellery, by their growth dynamic and volume in total cultural trade, were the largest contributors to the rise of trade surplus in 2017. As regards newspapers, journals and periodicals and architecture plans and drawings, despite the trade surplus, the AAGR between 2012 and 2017 was negative for both exports and imports. Books and recorded media (CDs, DVDs, Blu-rays, magnetic tapes and gramophone records) recorded a fall in imports, but a slight growth in exports. And finally, there was an increase in import value and a decrease in export value for maps.

The falling pattern in the import of newspapers, journals and periodicals (-14 %) and also of recorded media (-5 %), reflects the digital shift that particularly affected the press and media; more and more products of cultural content are available in digital form via the internet. Architectural plans and drawings, showing the strongest decrease in exports among all the analysed products (-9 % per year), kept the highest export/import ratio (11, compared with 1.4 for all cultural products) in 2017.

Extra-EU trade in cultural goods, EU-28, 2012 and 2017

	2012				2017				AAGR 2012-17	
	Imports	Exports	Balance	Ratio	Imports	Exports	Balance	Ratio	Imports	Exports
	(million EUR)				(million EUR)				%	
Total	16 540	22 834	6 294	1.4	19 501	28 076	8 575	1.4	3.3	4.2
Antiques	981	1 219	238	1.2	1 284	1 524	240	1.2	5.5	4.6
Works of art	2 816	5 024	2 208	1.8	3 007	6 876	3 868	2.3	1.3	6.5
Craft articles	853	744	-109	0.9	1 084	790	-293	0.7	4.9	1.2
Jewellery	4 807	9 490	4 683	2.0	6 184	11 969	5 785	1.9	5.2	4.8
Books	1 994	2 652	658	1.3	1 708	2 723	1 015	1.6	-3.0	0.5
Newspapers, journals and periodicals	202	774	572	3.8	97	537	440	5.5	-13.6	-7.1
Maps	15	68	53	4.6	23	44	21	1.9	9.5	-8.3
Architectural plans and drawings	5	54	49	11.1	3	33	30	11.2	-9.3	-9.2
Photographic plates and films	48	48	0.3	1.0	152	160	8	1.1	26.1	27.2
Recorded media (e.g. CDs, DVDs, magnetic tapes, gramophone records) (*)	469	1 797	1 328	3.8	361	2 053	1 692	5.7	-5.1	2.7
Video game consoles	3 333	444	-2 889	0.1	4 540	759	-3 781	0.2	6.4	11.3
Musical instruments	1 017	519	-497	0.5	1 057	608	-449	0.6	0.8	3.2

(*) 2017: break in time series due to revision of Combined Nomenclature classification (CN).
Source: Eurostat (online data code: cult_trd_prd)

eurostat

Table 1: Extra-EU trade in cultural goods, EU-28, 2012 and 2017 Source: Eurostat (cult_trd_prd)

Uneven trends in cultural trade at country level: from two-digit increase to two-digit fall

The analysis of time series for imports and exports of cultural goods between 2012 and 2017 at country level reveals evolutions from a two-digit increase to a two-digit decrease.

In all, 22 EU Member States recorded a positive AAGR in value of **exports**. Cyprus and Poland had the highest annual growth at 30 %, followed by Czechia with a significant 18 % yearly increase between 2012 and 2017 (see Figure 1). In Cyprus exports grew from EUR 11 million to EUR 40 million and in Poland from around EUR 950 million to around EUR 3 600 million. In Cyprus this rise was substantially made up by the increase in exports of jewellery and in Poland due to an increase in exports of video game consoles, books and recorded media. Among the falling rates in cultural exports between 2012 and 2017, Malta (-22 %) recorded the sharpest decrease, followed by Ireland (-13 %), Austria (-10 %) and Finland (-4 %). In Malta the overall decrease was triggered by the decline in trade of jewellery articles. In Ireland the main cause was the drop in exports of recorded media, while in Finland the fall was driven by the decrease in exports of books and newspapers.

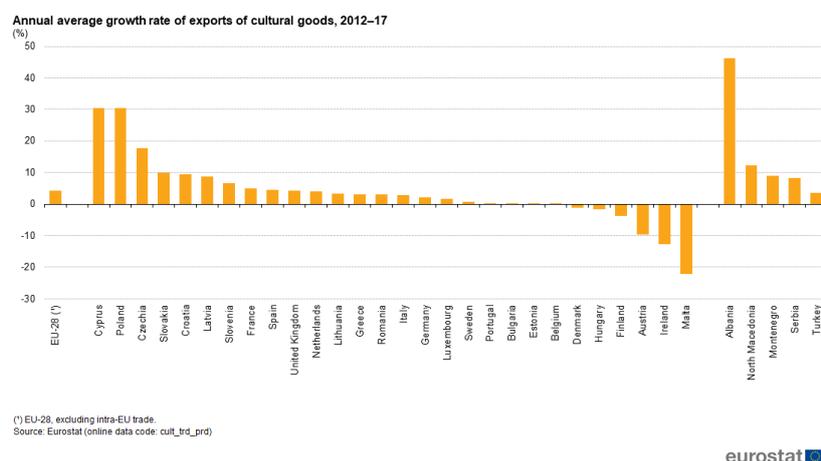


Figure 1: Annual average growth rate of exports of cultural goods, 2012–17 (%)Source: Eurostat (cult_trd_prd)

Regarding **imports**, the AAGR of Poland’s cultural imports (+34 %) was by far the highest growth rate in the EU (largely due to a big increase in imports of video game consoles and recorded media - see Figure 2). The AAGR was positive in another 17 EU Member States, most notably in Czechia, Spain and Croatia. The steepest fall for imports (by more than -5 % per year) was registered in three countries: Malta, Finland and Cyprus, with the former two experiencing also an important decrease in cultural exports.

Many factors may lead to a fall in imports or exports of cultural goods. The economic conjuncture, the digital shift for many support media and challenges created by new technologies, certainly affect the cultural consumption patterns and in consequence the composition of the basket of imports and exports of cultural goods.

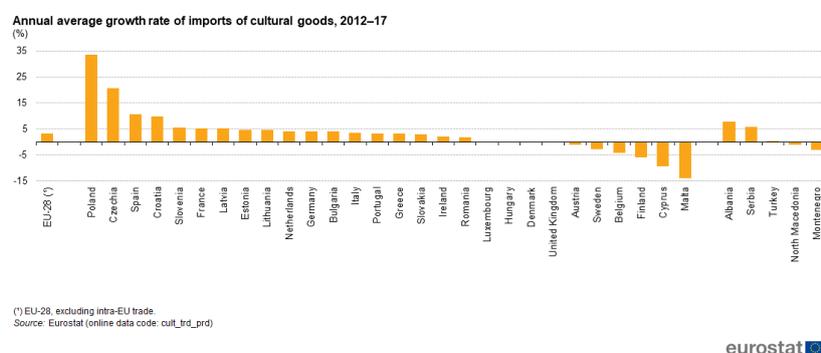


Figure 2: Annual average growth rate of imports of cultural goods, 2012–17 (%)Source: Eurostat (cult_trd_prd)

Contribution of cultural trade to overall trade

Despite the growth in cultural trade value between 2012 and 2017, extra-EU exports in cultural goods (see Figure 3) still accounted for quite a low proportion of total extra-EU exports (1.4 % in 2012 and 1.5 % in 2017).

At national level, only in the United Kingdom (3.5 %), Italy (1.8 %), Poland (1.7 %) and France (1.6 %), were the proportions of cultural exports (both intra- and extra-EU) in 2017 above the EU average (for extra-EU exports). The lowest shares were recorded in Finland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.

As regards the evolution of shares of cultural trade in total national trade (intra- and extra-EU) at country level, the contribution of cultural exports to total exports increased in nine countries with the most significant rises in Poland (from 0.7 % to 1.7 %) and in Cyprus (from 0.8 % to 1.4 %). In 11 Member States the ratio

remained unchanged. On the other hand, the shares of cultural exports decreased in eight EU Member States between 2012 and 2017. Ireland, Austria and Malta stood out with the largest relative reductions, with rates falling by almost a half.

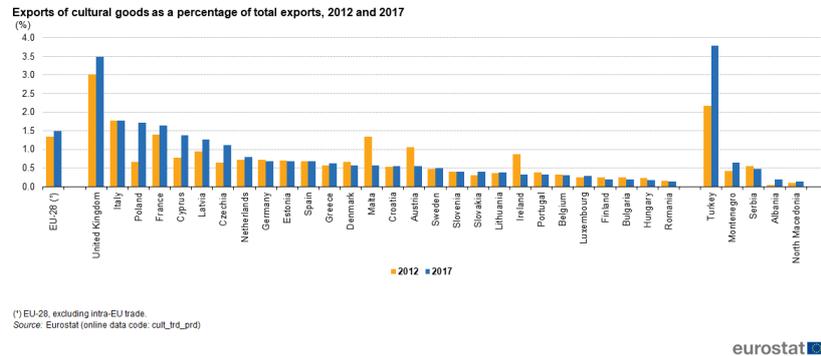


Figure 3: Exports of cultural goods as a percentage of total exports, 2012 and 2017 (%)Source: Eurostat (cult_trd_prd)

At EU level, cultural goods made up 1.1 % of total extra-EU imports in 2017 compared to 0.9 % in 2012 (see Figure 4). In 10 Member States the share of cultural imports in total imports (intra-EU and extra-EU) was greater in 2017 than in 2012. The contribution of cultural imports to total imports grew most notably in Poland and Czechia, while the largest proportion of cultural imports in total imports was recorded in the United Kingdom (1.5 %). Only two other countries registered shares slightly above the overall EU level: France and Poland. Cultural imports made up the lowest percentage of total imports in Romania, Hungary and Lithuania.

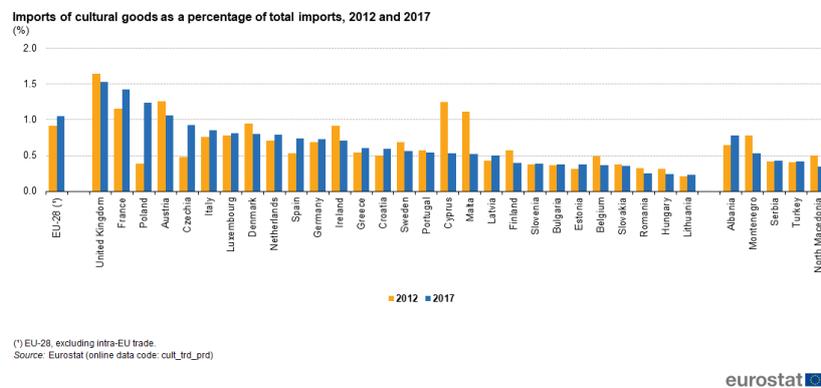


Figure 4: Imports of cultural goods as a percentage of total imports, 2012 and 2017(%)Source: Eurostat (cult_trd_prd)

Intra- and extra-EU trade

In 2017, EU Member States traded mainly with other EU members

EU trade can be analysed from two perspectives: as intra-EU trade (between EU Member States) and extra-EU trade (with non-EU countries). The ratio between the two is an indication of the heterogeneity of a country's trade patterns and, to some extent, reflects its historical ties and geographical location. However, it is essential that users interpret the indicator on trade intra- and extra-EU with some caution, in particular because of the phenomenon of **quasi-transit** (with relevance for some countries, e.g. the Netherlands).

In 2017, 49 % of overall Member States' value of cultural exports came from trade with other EU countries, while 51 % were due to extra-EU exports (see Figure 5). It should be noted that the trade of the few largest countries (the United Kingdom, Italy and France) impacted very strongly — by their size in the total trade

— the overall EU figure. The result is different when trade by partner is analysed for each country separately. In 21 Member States, at least 60 % of the value of cultural exports was made up of the trade with other EU Member States. In the case of Slovakia, Poland, Luxembourg and Czechia, at least 90 % of cultural exports stem from the trade with EU partners. In Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Italy, Finland, France and Sweden, however, extra-EU exports exceeded intra-EU exports.

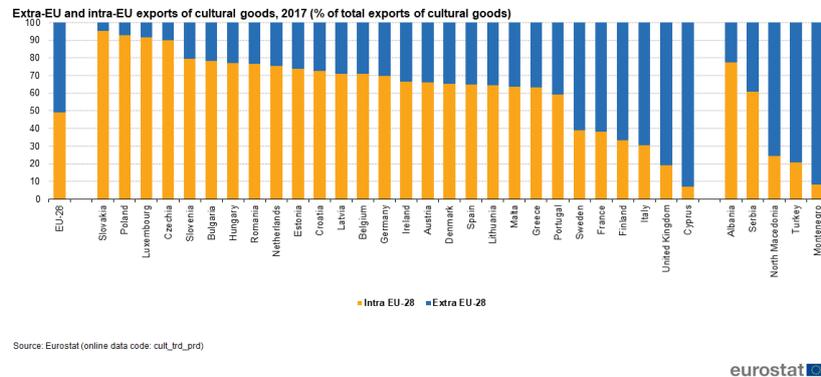


Figure 5: Extra-EU and intra-EU exports of cultural goods, 2017(% of total exports of cultural goods)Source: Eurostat (cult_trd_prd)

As regards EU Member States’ imports of cultural goods, in 2017, intra-EU trade (57 %) exceeded extra-EU trade (see Figure 6). Extra-EU imports predominated in only two EU Member States: the Netherlands (83 %) and the United Kingdom (59 %). In the remaining EU Member States, the proportion of intra-EU cultural imports was predominant but varied greatly across countries, ranging from 53 % in France to 93 % in Slovakia. In 20 EU countries, more than 70 % of import value stems from trade with other EU countries.

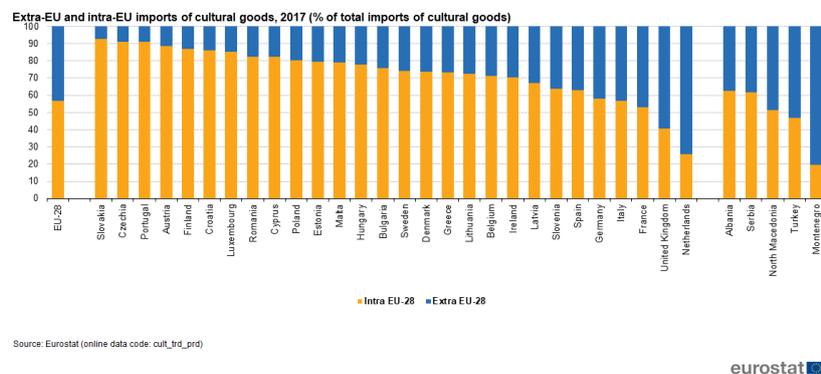


Figure 6: Extra-EU and intra-EU imports of cultural goods, 2017(% of total imports of cultural goods)Source: Eurostat (cult_trd_prd)

EU trade in cultural goods by product

Jewellery accounts for 43 % of extra-EU exports

In 2017, jewellery articles made of precious metal and stones was the leading category in extra-EU exports of cultural goods (43 %). Together with works of art, books, recorded media and antiques, they made up 90 % of extra-EU cultural exports. On the other hand, newspapers, photographic plates and films developed, architectural plans and drawings and maps did not exceed 2 % each of cultural total (see Table 2).

¹The high ranking of the Netherlands is due to the impact of quasi-transit of goods, i.e. the 'Rotterdam effect' affecting Member States with big ports at the EU's external border (see the 'Methodology/metadata' section for more details).

Exports of cultural goods by group of products, 2017

	Total cultural exports	Jewellery	Works of art	Books	Recorded media (*)	Antiques	Craft (†)	Video game consoles	Musical instruments	Newspapers, journals and periodicals	Photographic plates and films	Architectural plans and drawings	Maps
	(million EUR)												
		%											
EU-28 (‡)	28 076	42.6	24.5	9.7	7.3	5.4	2.8	2.7	2.2	1.9	0.6	0.1	0.2
Belgium	1 151	16.7	16.7	21.7	5.8	2.2	5.0	7.6	7.9	13.2	0.6	0.0	0.5
Bulgaria	93	21.3	2.5	32.0	16.7	0.3	8.0	9.1	6.4	3.2	0.7	0.1	0.7
Czechia	1 794	4.0	1.3	22.9	61.2	0.2	1.2	3.3	2.9	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.1
Denmark	525	16.9	5.9	14.0	11.4	3.6	6.7	29.9	4.0	7.6	0.0	0.0	0.1
Germany	8 983	20.3	7.7	16.7	24.8	1.7	3.5	10.7	6.6	6.3	1.4	0.1	0.1
Estonia	89	5.8	2.7	27.8	9.7	1.6	3.3	5.5	2.3	41.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ireland	408	9.7	4.8	0.4	61.0	2.7	0.3	2.4	0.7	2.9	6.9	0.0	0.3
Greece	193	26.6	3.7	22.3	20.1	0.1	15.5	7.4	0.4	0.8	-	0.0	3.2
Spain	1 932	19.9	4.9	26.9	4.4	0.6	7.5	30.4	1.8	3.7	0.0	0.2	0.7
France	7 765	57.7	14.0	7.8	5.6	3.9	2.8	1.5	3.1	3.3	6.1	0.1	0.1
Croatia	80	2.7	0.7	18.6	7.6	0.0	12.3	37.1	1.4	19.6	0.0	0.0	0.1
Italy	7 989	78.4	3.9	4.9	1.3	0.4	6.3	0.4	1.6	2.1	0.4	-	0.2
Cyprus	40	90.6	0.6	0.4	6.8	0.0	0.3	0.5	0.5	-	-	0.0	0.0
Latvia	157	13.7	0.2	62.1	2.8	0.7	9.9	4.0	2.1	4.3	-	0.0	0.2
Lithuania	100	7.8	2.0	51.5	5.3	2.6	8.5	6.8	2.2	13.0	0.1	0.0	0.2
Luxembourg	40	28.2	16.5	17.5	10.1	21.0	2.2	2.2	0.1	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hungary	180	4.4	2.2	36.9	21.5	0.3	16.9	4.6	3.5	9.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Malta	13	46.9	1.4	43.3	7.8	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
Netherlands	4 541	1.7	2.6	9.0	22.1	0.7	2.6	51.8	6.6	2.7	0.0	0.1	0.3
Austria	837	10.5	14.0	7.9	38.7	7.0	13.2	1.7	3.1	2.7	0.1	0.7	0.5
Poland	3 673	2.9	1.4	23.1	20.0	0.1	0.6	36.1	0.9	14.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Portugal	179	30.0	37.0	14.4	7.1	2.6	30.9	1.2	3.4	2.8	0.2	0.2	0.0
Romania	81	-	0.4	30.6	5.3	-	14.7	2.3	15.8	31.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Slovenia	141	3.2	1.9	48.9	13.6	0.0	19.9	4.5	3.9	3.0	0.0	0.4	0.5
Slovakia	303	2.4	1.3	30.3	4.1	0.0	1.7	41.9	3.9	10.3	0.0	4.3	0.1
Finland	121	3.3	5.1	11.6	27.3	0.4	1.2	11.1	2.4	37.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sweden	563	3.4	5.6	11.9	43.2	1.6	1.2	19.4	8.1	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.1
United Kingdom	13 919	39.9	35.5	16.1	4.1	7.4	0.5	1.7	0.8	2.4	0.2	0.1	0.3
Montenegro	2	16.3	5.0	14.3	0.0	-	0.6	-	3.7	59.9	-	-	0.0
North Macedonia	6	0.1	6.1	82.9	1.3	-	4.1	2.0	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.3
Serbia	68	3.5	1.5	32.7	12.6	0.1	21.5	0.3	0.8	26.2	0.0	1.7	0.2
Turkey	3 086	84.8	0.3	1.2	0.2	0.0	13.1	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Albania	4	56.9	4.2	17.8	3.5	0.0	17.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	-	-	0.2

(†) EU-28, excluding intra-EU trade.
 (*) CDs, DVDs, Blu rays, magnetic tapes, gramophone records, etc.
 (†) Hand made fabrics and ornamental articles.
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: cult_trd_prd)

eurostat

Table 2: Exports of cultural goods by group of products, 2017 Source: Eurostat (cult_trd_prd)

When considering trade (intra- and extra-EU) of various categories of cultural goods at country level, data show that some EU Member States developed particular specialisations². Jewellery accounted for the biggest share of cultural exports in six countries, most notably in Cyprus (91 %) Italy (78 %) and France (58 %). Works of art were the main cultural goods exported from the United Kingdom (36 %). Books were the leading category of cultural exports from six EU Member States, accounting for around 62 % of cultural exports in Latvia and 52 % in Lithuania. Five Member States recorded the highest proportions in exports of recorded media (including music, films, video and video games), with Ireland (61 %) at the top. Video game consoles ranked first in another six Member states, accounting for 52 % of cultural total in the Netherlands (see footnote 1). The biggest share of export value in Portugal (31 %) came from exports of craft articles (hand-made fabrics and ornamental articles). Newspapers, journals and periodicals were mostly exported from Estonia (41 %) and also from Romania and Finland.

As for the remaining groups of products, like antiques, musical instruments, photographic plates and films, maps or architecture plans, these shares did not exceed 10 %, with the exception of antiques in Luxembourg (21 %) and musical instruments in Romania (16 %).

Jewellery and video games consoles are the most imported products

In 2017, the main categories of EU **imports** of cultural products from non-EU countries (extra-EU trade) were jewellery (32 %), video game consoles (23 %), works of art (15 %), books (9 %) and antiques (7 %). These five categories together made up 86 % of the total extra-EU imports (see Table 3).

The Member States' (intra- and extra-EU) import patterns appear different from the EU figure that takes into account only extra-EU trade. In nine EU Member States, video game consoles was the most traded category. Eight countries mostly imported jewellery while in four others the highest import value stems from the import of books. Craft articles made up most of the imports in three EU countries. Recorded media ranked first in another three, while photographic plates and developed films accounted for the highest share in one Member State (Ireland).

²The exports and imports by EU Member State include all of the world's countries as trading partners (including the other EU Member States) so the figures by country in Tables 2 and 3 are not the breakdown of the EU aggregates which only relate to extra-EU trade.

Imports of cultural goods by group of products, 2017

	Total cultural imports	Jewellery	Video game consoles	Works of art	Books	Antiques	Craft (*)	Musical instruments	Recorded media (*)	Photographic plates and films	Newspapers, journals and periodicals	Maps	Architectural plans and drawings
	(million EUR)												
EU-28 (**)													
EU-28 (**)	19 501	31.7	23.3	15.4	8.8	6.6	5.6	5.4	1.8	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.0
Belgium	1 351	13.8	10.8	9.5	27.5	1.9	5.7	6.9	15.2	0.4	7.7	0.6	0.1
Bulgaria	114	9.2	12.2	1.0	7.0	0.1	56.0	2.7	10.5	0.3	0.8	0.1	0.1
Czech Republic	1 337	11.7	8.0	1.9	19.5	0.9	2.2	3.2	50.1	0.0	2.3	0.1	0.1
Denmark	864	16.9	31.9	2.5	18.0	4.2	4.8	5.8	13.4	0.1	2.1	0.2	0.1
Germany	7 521	19.6	22.8	4.8	16.2	2.3	3.4	7.6	19.1	0.4	3.5	0.2	0.0
Estonia	56	23.5	12.7	3.2	13.6	4.4	13.4	8.4	17.3	0.0	3.5	0.1	0.0
Ireland	558	10.9	11.1	2.2	20.7	0.2	2.1	3.7	11.8	21.1	14.6	1.5	0.1
Greece	209	20.8	15.3	2.1	16.0	0.3	12.5	3.9	23.0	0.1	4.7	1.3	0.0
Spain	2 307	16.1	41.6	4.5	11.7	0.6	4.4	5.2	12.4	0.0	3.1	0.3	0.1
France	7 860	49.9	12.6	8.1	8.6	2.4	2.8	4.2	7.6	0.5	3.2	0.1	0.1
Croatia	130	10.4	33.8	1.7	8.9	0.1	22.2	6.1	9.4	0.0	7.4	0.1	0.1
Italy	3 424	52.5	9.5	3.5	7.1	0.8	11.5	3.9	8.8	0.3	2.2	0.2	0.0
Cyprus	43	31.4	9.1	3.1	30.7	0.7	4.1	5.6	8.9	0.0	5.4	0.2	0.0
Latvia	74	42.8	9.3	1.1	10.1	1.3	8.6	7.4	16.1	0.0	3.7	0.4	0.0
Lithuania	68	22.8	10.7	2.8	12.3	2.0	28.2	8.3	7.6	0.1	4.5	0.5	0.1
Luxembourg	164	18.2	7.0	13.8	21.7	7.1	1.3	3.2	17.0	0.1	10.5	0.1	0.1
Hungary	225	14.3	11.9	1.1	11.2	0.2	25.4	3.6	29.9	0.0	3.3	0.1	0.0
Malta	27	29.4	6.4	4.9	29.3	9.0	3.0	6.4	7.8	0.0	3.7	0.1	0.1
Netherlands	3 992	7.8	56.5	2.6	9.5	5.5	3.2	5.0	6.7	0.1	2.9	0.3	0.1
Austria	1 655	14.9	5.2	11.1	24.5	3.3	3.6	6.0	23.1	0.2	8.7	0.1	0.1
Poland	2 571	6.5	50.5	0.5	16.4	0.3	2.8	1.9	19.9	0.0	1.0	0.1	0.0
Portugal	3 377	23.5	12.5	3.4	12.3	0.2	10.0	7.8	16.0	0.3	13.6	0.1	0.2
Romania	189	13.5	1.1	17.2	0.0	0.0	37.8	8.6	17.0	0.2	3.6	0.9	0.1
Slovenia	126	4.6	8.5	1.2	28.8	0.8	22.1	6.7	20.2	0.0	6.5	0.6	0.1
Slovakia	268	12.2	30.0	2.3	22.6	0.1	3.3	5.1	13.4	0.0	6.5	0.1	4.4
Finland	249	6.8	25.4	2.6	18.9	1.1	2.4	12.7	20.1	0.3	9.4	0.1	0.0
Sweden	764	8.5	28.4	6.1	19.8	3.6	2.7	6.1	20.0	0.2	4.4	0.2	0.1
United Kingdom	8 720	31.1	11.8	22.1	13.9	7.5	1.7	3.2	7.5	0.0	1.0	0.1	0.0
Montenegro	12	20.0	2.7	2.0	24.3	0.0	3.6	3.7	3.8	0.0	40.2	0.3	0.3
North Macedonia	24	5.4	4.1	0.8	24.9	0.0	55.5	2.1	3.5	0.1	2.5	0.1	0.1
Serbia	75	7.4	2.1	1.6	13.5	0.2	44.3	4.3	20.4	0.0	6.0	0.1	0.0
Turkey	762	53.1	4.2	3.8	6.9	0.5	20.2	4.0	8.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.3
Albania	36	21.2	1.1	0.5	12.3	0.0	33.9	0.8	28.7	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0

(*) EU-28, excluding intra-EU trade.
 (**) Hand made fabrics and ornamental articles.
 (***) CDs, DVDs, Blu rays, magnetic tapes, gramophone records, etc.
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: cult_trd_prd)

Table 3: Imports of cultural goods by group of products, 2017 Source: Eurostat (cult_trd_prd)

Main EU partners in cultural trade

Switzerland and the United States are the leading extra-EU markets for cultural exports

As regards extra EU partners for cultural exports, 26 % were earmarked for Switzerland and 24 % for the United States in 2017. Together with Hong Kong (10 %), these three countries accounted for 60 % of EU exports to non-EU countries (see Figure 7). Trade with the United States became even more significant between 2012 and 2017 (increasing from 18 % to 24 %). By contrast, the percentage for Switzerland fell from 30 % to 26 % and Hong Kong (being 4th in 2012) overtook the United Arab Emirates in 2017 and became third largest partner in cultural exports. Between 2012 and 2017, the top 10 destinations for EU cultural exports (in which Saudi Arabia moved up to take the place of Australia) increased their shares from 76 % to 79 % of the total.

Ten main partners in the extra EU-28 exports of cultural goods, 2012 and 2017 (%)

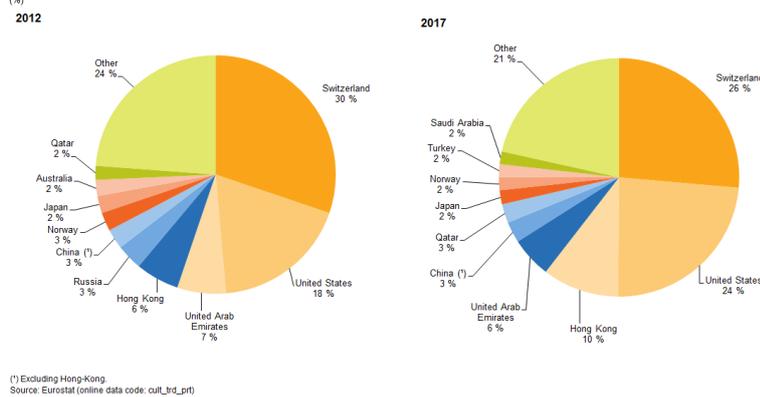


Figure 7: Ten main partners in the extra EU-28 exports of cultural goods, 2012 and 2017 (%) Source: Eurostat (cult_trd_prt)

China is the largest EU partner of cultural imports

The highest proportion of extra-EU imports of cultural goods in 2017 was from China (mostly video game consoles) and represented 30 % of all extra-EU imports (31 % in 2012) (see Figure 8). China was followed by Switzerland, whose share increased from 16 % in 2012 to 22 % in 2017 (mostly made up of jewellery articles) and overtook the United States (20 % in 2017 against 25 % in 2012). Overall, sources of imports were more concentrated than destinations of exports: in 2017, the EU's top 10 partners accounted for 93 % of its cultural

imports.

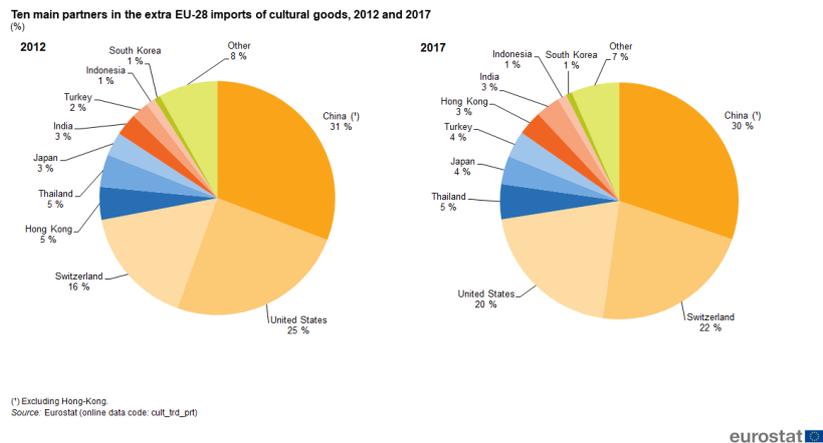


Figure 8: Ten main partners in the extra EU-28 imports of cultural goods, 2012 and 2017(%)Source: Eurostat (cult_trd_prt)

Data sources and availability

Eurostat compiles data on international trade in cultural goods from the [Comext](#) database, which contains statistics on international trade in goods for [EU Member States](#) , [EFTA](#) countries and [candidate countries](#) .

The Comext database includes statistics on international trade in tangible goods. 'Goods' means all movable property (including gas and electricity). They are classified according to several product classifications, which allows comparisons at EU and also at wider international level. Among the most commonly used classifications are the [Harmonized System](#) (HS) and the [Combined Nomenclature](#) (CN). The HS is a 6-digit code system used worldwide while the CN classification is designed to meet the needs of EU international trade statistics. It extends to eight-digit codes, of which the first six digits are identical to those in the HS.

The list of internationally traded cultural goods was established on the basis of CN. In the process of selection of cultural goods, the CN codes at the 8-digit level of disaggregation were identified within the 10 cultural domains acknowledged by the [ESSnet-Culture final report \(2012\)](#) (see methodology/metadata section). For the sake of consistency and in order to facilitate the analysis of trends, all the identified product-codes were aggregated into 12 meaningful cultural categories. The detailed list of cultural aggregates can be found in [Annex 2](#) to [Metadata on international trade in cultural goods](#) .

The dimensions available in the Comext database allow for the computation of the following indicators on imports and exports of cultural goods for declaring EU Member States and candidate countries. The data for EFTA countries are partial because of lack of data by CN-8 digit. The computed indicators are:

- value of trade in thousands of euros (THS_EUR);
- percentage of country's total trade (PC_TOT);
- percentage of total EU-28 trade (PC_EU28);
- percentage of total trade in cultural goods (PC).

Identification of cultural goods

Cultural goods according to cultural domains

CULTURAL DOMAIN	CULTURAL GOODS
Heritage	•Antiques, collections and collectors' pieces, postage or revenue stamps
Books and press	•Books •Newspapers, journals and periodicals •Maps and hydrographical and similar charts
Visual arts	•Works of art (paintings, engravings, sculpture, designs etc.) •Photographic plates and films developed
Art craft	•Knitted or crocheted fabrics, embroidery in the piece, tapestries •Ornamental articles (wood marquetry, ivory articles, articles of fine porcelain, etc.) •Jewellery (of precious metals and stones)
Performing arts	•Musical instruments
Audiovisual and multimedia	•Recorded media with music, films, video and video games (CDs, DVDs, Blu-rays, magnetic tapes, gramophone records, etc.) •Video game consoles
Architecture	•Architecture plans and drawings

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Figure 9: Cultural goods according to cultural domains

The ESSnet-Culture final report (2012) created a framework for culture statistics on the basis of cultural 'activities', which are intersections between ten cultural domains and six economic functions. Trade is an important aspect of the dissemination of culture and one of the six economic functions (together with creation, production/publishing, preservation, education and management/regulation).

Eurostat analysed ten cultural domains from a 'product perspective' in order to establish a list of internationally traded cultural goods. The analysis focused firstly on 'artistic creation', to cover products that convey and encompass symbolic, aesthetic, artistic and spiritual values (e.g. works of art or crafts). The scope was further extended to some products that do not meet the 'artistic creation' criterion, but enable artistic expression or access to cultural content (e.g. musical instruments, CDs and DVDs). Equipment in the wider sense (e.g. TV sets, CD players, cameras) is excluded.

On the basis of these criteria, cultural goods and products were identified in seven domains (see Figure 9). The initial list of cultural goods (proposed in 2015) was revised in 2016, with the aim of better harmonising the EU methodological framework with that proposed by UNESCO. The Working Group 'Culture statistics' agreed to the addition of jewellery (of precious and semi-precious metals and stones), some hand-made ornamental articles and some goods with audio-visual content.

Recently, the list has gone through another revision to take into account the changes brought to the CN classification in 2017. The revision in particular affected the codes related to supports for audio-visual content by removing the distinction in codes for sound only (music) on the one side and for sound and vision (film, video and video games) on the other. Henceforth, the codes reflecting music, films, videos and video games are presented under one broad category of **recorded media** covering formerly 'Music in manuscript, gramophone records, recorded magnetic tapes and optical media (CDs)' and 'Audio-visual and interactive media'. The video game consoles (previously under 'Audio-visual and interactive media'), could be carved out and presented as a separate group.

The impact of quasi-transit (the 'Rotterdam effect')

A Member State's trade flows may be overvalued because of 'quasi-transit' trade. The country's trade balance is not impacted, as the quasi-transit should increase by the same amount as the intra- and extra-EU trade flows (extra-EU imports followed by dispatches to the Member State of actual destination or arrivals from the Member State of actual export followed by extra-EU exports to the country of actual destination). Quasi-transit is known to impact mostly the Member States with big ports at the external EU border, in particular the Netherlands (hence its impact on figures is known as the 'Rotterdam effect'). In line with Community rules and as the country where goods are released for free circulation, the Netherlands records goods arriving in Dutch ports and destined for other EU Member States as extra-EU imports and as intra-EU export dispatches them from the Netherlands to those Member States, even though there is no impact on its economy. Quasi-transit is known to affect imports more, but exports are also affected. In exceptional cases, customs clearance occurs

not in the Member State of actual export but in the Member State from which the goods leave EU customs territory.

Context

Culture is one of Europe's greatest strengths: it is a source of values, identity and a sense of belonging. It also contributes to people's well-being, to social cohesion and inclusion. The cultural and creative sectors are a driver of economic growth, job creation and external trade.

That is why culture is becoming increasingly important at EU level. In accordance with article 167 of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU 'shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common heritage to the fore'.

The EU supports these objectives through the [Creative Europe](#) programme, as well as a number of policy actions set out in the [Work Plan for Culture \(2015–2018\)](#) and [Work Plan for Culture \(2019–2022\)](#). The latest Work Plan adopted by EU Culture Ministers in November 2018, sets out the following main priorities for European cooperation in cultural policy-making: sustainability in cultural heritage, cohesion and well-being, ecosystem supporting artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content, gender equality and international cultural relations. The production of reliable, comparable and up-to-date cultural statistics, which are the basis of sound cultural policy-making, is a cross-sectorial priority of this Work Plan.

Eurostat compiles culture statistics from several data collections conducted at EU level to provide policy-makers and other users with information on the main trends in employment, business, international trade, participation and consumption patterns in the field of culture

Statistics on international trade in cultural goods allow us to assess the value of cultural goods traded between EU Member States ([intra-EU trade](#)) and between Member States and non-EU countries ([extra-EU trade](#)), and the impact of such trade in overall international trade.

Source data for tables and graphs

- [International trade in cultural goods Excel file](#)

Notes

Other articles

- [Culture](#) (articles on culture)
- [International trade in goods](#)

Publications

- [Guide to Eurostat culture statistics — 2018 Edition](#)
- [Culture Statistics — 2016 Edition](#)
- [Cultural Statistics Pocketbook — 2011 edition](#)
- [Cultural Statistics Pocketbook — 2007 edition](#)

Database

- [Culture \(cult\)](#), see:

International trade in cultural goods (cult_trd)

Intra and extra-EU trade in cultural goods by product (cult_trd_prd)

Intra and extra-EU trade in cultural goods by product and partner (cult_trd_prt)

Dedicated section

- [International trade in cultural goods](#)

Methodology

- [Guide to Eurostat culture statistics — 2018 Edition](#)
- [European statistical system network on culture \(ESSnet-Culture final report \(2012\)\)](#)
- [User guide on European statistics on international trade in goods — 2016 edition](#)
- [International trade in cultural goods \(ESMS metadata file — cult_trd_go_esms\)](#)
- [International trade in goods \(ESMS metadata file — ext_go_agg_esms\)](#)

Legislation

- [European Council Work Plan for Culture \(2019–2022\)](#)
- [European Council Work Plan for Culture \(2015–2018\)](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe Programme \(2014–2020\)](#)
- [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalising world \(COM\(2007\) 242\)](#)
- [European legislation applicable to statistics relating to trade in goods](#)

External links

- [European Commission — Culture for growth and jobs](#)
- [Creative Europe](#)
- [UNESCO – The Globalisation of Cultural Trade: A Shift in Consumption. International flows of cultural goods and services 2004–2013](#)

View this article online at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Culture_statistics_-_international_trade_in_cultural_goods