

Tutorial: Symbols and abbreviations

Statistics Explained

Expressing values in euro

There are a number of rules to be followed in official Commission publications (see in particular the [OPOCE style guide](#)). The full term 'euro' is used when there is no direct reference to the amount, e.g. in table/graph footnotes (such as 'The euro became the new currency for 15 Member States'. In English and German, the term euro (German: Euro) is never written in plural. In French, a plural 's' is added (euros). In English and French, euro starts with a lower case letter, in German with an upper case letter. If there is a reference to an amount, the ISO 4217 code of euro 'EUR' is used (such as 'EUR 30').

EUR (or €) is the measuring unit. In English, 'EUR' (or the euro sign '€') is placed before the figure, separated by a (non-breaking) space, e.g. EUR 30. In French and German the order is reversed, e.g. 30 EUR. Note also that English uses the singular of terms such as million if they relate to a currency such as EUR 10 million. In French 10 Mio EUR and 10 Mrd EUR (without full stop) are used while German uses 10 Mio. EUR and 10 Mrd. EUR (with full stop). Try to avoid the term billion in all languages and replace it, if possible, by 1000 million, because the term means something different in (American) English (10⁹) compared to German and French (10¹²). If it cannot be avoided, 'bn' may be used as an abbreviation for billion, but 'mn' should be avoided for million, as it has another meaning in the ISO system.

Spelling and use of euro and EUR

	EN	FR	DE
Use of EUR with figures	EUR 30	30 EUR	30 EUR
Use of euro in text	the euro,	l'euro,	der Euro,
without figures	the euro (plural)	les euros (plural)	die Euro (plural)

Codes and meaning of EU and EA aggregates

In standard tables and graphs, only the newest aggregates (currently EU and EA-19) should be used. Previous aggregates are acceptable if data for the newest aggregates are still incomplete.

For more information please see Inter-institutional style guide, Annex A3: Abbreviations, symbols and contractions in common use at <http://publications.europa.eu/code/>.

Statistical symbols, abbreviations and units of measurement

It is good practice to not overload tables with too many flags, which make it difficult for readers to grasp the main data patterns within tables quickly. In any case this depends also on the readership of an article. In case of articles targeting statistical experts it might be important to include more flags than in articles targeting the

Code	Meaning
EU	European Union (if used as an aggregate it should comprise all Member States at the time to which the data refers) In French tables/graphs, the term 'Union Européenne' should also be abbreviated by 'EU'. In texts, the term may also be abbreviated by 'UE'. In German, the abbreviation is the same as in English and stands for 'Europäische Union'.
EU	the Member States of the European Union at 1.7.2013: EU-27 + Croatia (HR)
EU-27	the 27 Member States of the European Union at 1.1.2007 (BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, LV, LT, LU, HU, MT, NL, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK)
EU-25	the 25 Member States of the European Union from 1.5.2004 to 31.12.2006 (EU-27 minus Bulgaria and Romania)
EU-15	the 15 Member States of the European Union from 1995 until 30.4.2004 (BE, DK, DE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, AT, PT, FI, SE, UK)
EU-12	the 12 Member States of the European Union from 1986 until 1994 (BE, DK, DE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PT, UK).
EU-10	the 10 Member States of the European Union from 1981 until 1986 (BE, DK, DE, EL, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, UK) . However, and in contrast to the OPOCE style guide, sometimes 'EU-10' is used in other EU publications for the new ten Member States that joined in 2004. To avoid any misunderstanding it is recommended to not use this term with one or the other meaning. If usage cannot be avoided, a footnote should be added to explain the meaning.
EU-9	the 9 Member States of the European Union from 1973 until 1980 (BE, DK, DE, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, UK).
EU-6	the 6 Member States of the European Union from 1957 until 1973 (BE, DE, FR, IT, LU, NL).
euro area (EA)	If used as an aggregate, it should comprise the members of the euro area at the time to which the data refers. 'EA' is the abbreviation of 'euro area'. If enough space is available, the long name 'euro area' should be used. In case where it would be beneficial to save space 'EA' might be used. In French, euro area is called 'zone euro' and in German 'Euroraum'.
EA-11	the 11 countries of the Euro area before 2001 (BE, DE, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, AT,PT, FI).
EA-12	the 12 countries of the Euro area from 2001 until 2006 (BE, DE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, AT, PT, FI).
EA-13	the 13 countries of the Euro area from 1.1.2007 (BE, DE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, AT, PT, SI, FI).
EA-15	the 15 countries of the Euro area from 1.1.2008 (BE, DE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, CY, LU, MT, NL, AT, PT, SI, FI).
EA-16	the 16 countries of the Euro area from 1.1.2009 (BE, DE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, CY, LU, MT, NL, AT, PT, SI, SK, FI).
EA-17	the 17 countries of the Euro area from 1.1.2011 (BE, DE, EE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, CY, LU, MT, NL, AT, PT, SI, SK, FI).
EA-18	the 18 countries of the Euro area from 1.1.2014 (BE, DE, EE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, CY, LU, LV, MT, NL, AT, PT, SI, SK, FI).
EA-19	the 19 countries of the Euro area from 1.1.2015 (BE, DE, EE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, CY, LU, LT, LV, MT, NL, AT, PT, SI, SK, FI).

public. It is always possible to refer readers to the Eurostat website for more detailed information. Important flags that should not be omitted include breaks in series and forecasts. Obviously, empty table cells should be omitted. Therefore, flags for not available and confidential data should be always included. However, it is questionable whether estimates need always to be flagged. When a flag is present at country level, attention should be paid to consider if the same flag should be inserted at EU/EA aggregate level. For example, when a country value is estimated, the same flag should be shown for the EU/ EA aggregate.

In publications and in Statistics Explained, 'z' should be used instead of 'z' and 'b' instead of 'b'. Also,

Eurostat standard flags	
- (or z)	not applicable
:	not available (1)
0	real zero
0n	less than half of the final digit shown and greater than real zero
| or b	break in time series
c	confidential
d	definition differs, see metadata
e	estimated value
f	forecast
n	not significant
p	provisional value
u	low reliability (2)

Italics can be used in tables to mark estimated data (e) and provisional value (p) in both printed publications and Statistics Explained. For printed publications it is sufficient that the explanation of the italic is in the text. However for Statistics Explained it is preferable to add a footnote below the table explaining the italic, since the table needs to be "stand alone" in case someone links to the table and not to the whole article.

Coding conventions

0 = real zero

The flags 'c' and 'z' are meaningful only when combined with the special value ': = not available' ('c', 'z').

The flag 'n' is only meaningful when combined with the special value ': = not available' ('n') or with '0' ('0n = less than half the final digit shown and different from real zero').

The flags 'e', 'f' and 'p' are only meaningful when combined with a statistical value.

The flags 'b', 'd' and 'u' can be combined with a statistical value or with ': = not available'.

(1) Never use NA or ND, or other variations to indicate data not available.

(2) For obvious reasons this flag should be used with extreme care.

(1) Units do not have points after their symbols, are not closed up to figures and take no plural.

Units of measurement	(1)
mm	millimetre
cm	centimetre
m	metre (use m ² not sq. m)
km	kilometre (use km ² not sq. km)
mg	milligram
g	gram
kg	kilogram
t	tonne
grt	gross registered tonnage (shipping)
ml	millilitre
L, l	litre
hl	hectolitre
ha	hectare
s	second
kW	kilowatt

Standards for dates

The time axis in graphs should be labelled in a commonly understandable form. One of the following alternatives should be used:

- months: April 2009, Apr 2009 or 4/2009;
- quarters: 4th quarter 2009, 2009Q04

Selected world currencies

(1) This is the ISO code 4217. Note that the codes are listed in alphabetical order (except for the euro and the country groupings). The first two letters of this code correspond to the ISO country codes. pl. stands for plural. (2) The euro replaced the ecu (ISO code = ECU) on 1 January 1999 as well as 12 Community currencies on 1 January 2002. (3) The new Romanian leu (RON) entered into circulation on 1 July 2005. The former leu (ROL) will remain in circulation until 31 December 2006 (RON 1 = ROL 10 000). (4) The former Turkish

ISO currency code (1)	Currency name (6)	Country / area of use
EUR (2)	euro	Member States of the euro area
BGN	lev (pl. leva)	Bulgaria
CYP	Cyprus pound	Cyprus
CZK	Czech koruna (pl. koruny)	Czechia
DKK	Danish krone (pl. kroner)	Denmark
EEK	kroon (pl. kroonid)	Estonia
GBP	pound sterling	United Kingdom
HRK	Croatia kuna (inv.)	Croatia
HUF	forint (inv.)	Hungary
LTL	litas (pl. litai)	Lithuania
LVL (7)	lats (pl. lati)	Latvia
MTL	Maltese lira (pl. liri)	Malta
PLN	zloty (pl. zlotys)	Poland
RON (3)	new Romanian leu (pl. lei)	Romania
ROL	former Romanian leu (pl. lei)	
SEK	krona (pl. kronor)	Sweden
SIT	tolar (pl. tolars)	Slovenia
SKK	Slovak koruna (pl. koruny)	Slovakia
MKD	denar (pl. denars)	North Macedonia
TRY (4)	Turkish lira (inv.)	Turkey
CHF (5)	Swiss franc	Switzerland
ISK	króna (pl. krónur)	Iceland
NOK	Norwegian krone (pl. kroner)	Norway
CAD	Canadian dollar	Canada
JPY	Yen	Japan
USD	US dollar	USA

lira (TRL) remained in circulation until 31 December 2005. (5) The Swiss franc is also the official currency of Liechtenstein. (6) pl. = Plural. (7) The euro replaced the lats on 1 January 2014.

See also

- [Country codes](#)
- [Currency codes](#)
- [EU enlargements](#)
- [Euro area enlargements](#)

