

## Quarterly International Trade Statistics

### ■ Data source(s) used

OECD has extracted monthly trade data from the UN Monthly Comtrade database, and aggregates the quarterly and annual frequencies by summing up the months. This may create discrepancies with annual trade figures as presented in International Trade by Commodity Statistics (ITCS). UN Monthly Comtrade (beta version) contains detailed merchandise trade data provided by countries (or areas) to the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNSD/DESA).

- **UN Monthly Comtrade database**

### ■ Data Characteristics

#### ■ Other data characteristics

Values are expressed in United States dollars (USD) and refer to declared transaction values. All exports are valued f.o.b. (free on board) and imports are valued c.i.f. (including cost, insurance, freight), except the imports of Canada and Mexico which are valued f.o.b. Detailed country metadata (currency conversion rates, information in HS classifications and data publication dates) can be found from the metadata file at the UN Monthly Comtrade website under the heading Metadata.

- **UN Monthly Comtrade - Metadata**

#### ■ Periodicity

quarterly, annual

#### ■ Unit of measure used

US Dollar

### ■ Population & Scope

#### ■ Other coverage

Coverage of trade: The data cover all goods which add to, or subtract from, the resources of a country as a result of their movement into or out of the country. The following types of goods are therefore included or excluded: Goods to be included in the detailed international trade statistics: Non-monetary gold; banknotes and securities, and coins not in circulation; goods traded in accordance with barter agreements; goods traded on government account; food and other humanitarian aid; valuable goods acquired by all categories of travellers (shuttle trade); goods for military use; goods on consignment; goods used as carriers of information and software (CD-ROM, diskettes); goods for processing; goods which cross borders as a result of transactions between related parties; returned goods; electricity, gas and water; goods dispatched or received through postal or courier services; migrants' effects; goods transferred from or to a buffer stock organization goods under financial lease; ships, aircraft and other mobile equipment; goods delivered to or dispatched from offshore installations; sea products landed direct from the high seas; satellites and their launchers; goods in electronic commerce; gifts and donations; power lines, pipelines and undersea communications cables; used goods; waste and scrap; mobile equipment that changes ownership while outside the country of residence of its original owner; goods received or sent abroad by international organizations. Goods to be excluded in the detailed international trade statistics: Monetary gold, issued banknotes etc, direct transit trade, temporary imports and exports, non-financial assets, ownership of which has been transferred from residents to non-residents without crossing borders; goods treated as part of trade in services; goods under merchanting; goods under operating lease; goods lost or destroyed; satellites (and their launchers as applicable) moved to and launched from another country without change of ownership; goods functioning as means of transport; content delivered electronically; Note: Certain categories of goods that are recommended to be excluded from IMTS for conceptual and practical reasons are required to be included in the totals of international merchandise trade compiled under BPM6 and the 2008 SNA, it is in particular the case for goods for repair.

### ■ Concepts & Classifications

#### ■ Aggregation & consolidation

OECD has compiled quarterly and annual data as cumulative of monthly figures and counted area totals for G-7, G-20 and OECD.

#### ■ Classification(s) used

The geographical classification refers to areas of origin (or country of consignment) for imports and areas of consumption (last known destination) for exports. The statistical territory of these countries is defined in the OECD Geographical Nomenclature.

- **OECD Geographical Nomenclature**

#### ■ Key statistical concept

Concepts & Classifications: Following the UN recommendations defined in the International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010 (IMTS 2010), the international merchandise trade statistics record all goods which add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country by entering (imports) or leaving (exports) its economic territory. Goods simply being transported through a country (goods in transit) or temporarily admitted or withdrawn (except for goods for inward or outward processing) do not add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country and are not included in the international merchandise trade statistics. Customs records should be the main source of the data; and the additional sources could be used where customs sources are not available.

Goods should be included in statistics at the time when they enter or leave the economic territory of a country. In the case of customs-based data collection systems, the time of recording should be the date of lodgement of the customs declaration. Trade system: There are two trade systems in common use by which international merchandise trade statistics are compiled: general trade system and special trade system. The United Nations recommendations advise using the general trade system that provides a more comprehensive recording of external trade flows than does the special system. It also provides a better approximation of the change of ownership criterion used in the 2008 SNA and BPM6. General trade includes all goods that cross the national frontier including goods that are imported into and exported from custom-bonded warehouses and free zones. The general trade system is in use when the statistical territory of a country coincides with its economic territory so that imports include all goods entering the economic territory of a compiling country and exports include all goods leaving the economic territory of a compiling country. Special trade covers goods that cross the customs frontier plus goods that are imported into and exported from custom-bonded areas. The special trade system is in use when the statistical territory comprises only a particular part of the economic territory.

- **The International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010 (IMTS 2010)**

#### ■ Dissemination format(s)

Publications:

- **Quarterly International Trade Statistics**
- **International Trade by Commodity Statistics**
- **News releases: International trade statistics**

#### ■ Other Aspects

##### ■ Quality comments

The processing of UN Monthly Comtrade (beta version) data entails data standardisation in respect to trade flow and partner information, conversion to U.S. dollars, and basic validation. The edition of the Harmonized System is not identified, only net weight is processed (but not supplementary quantity) and no data conversion into other classification takes place.