Standard-documentation
Meta information
(Definitions, comments, methods, quality)
on
Foreign trade statistics

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Executive Summary

Monthly international trade in goods statistics (ITGS) covers imports and exports including electricity. Therefore, it constitutes essential economic base information on cross-border movement of commodities between the national statistical territory and foreign countries and is a key indicator for the assessment of the economic situation and economic development. The statistical territory for imports and exports conforms the customs area of application in accordance with paragraph 3 of the Customs implementation law, Federal Law Gazette (BGBl.) No. 659/1994. The Austrian foreign trade volume in 2016 amounted import-sided to 36.3% and export-sided to 36.5% in relation to the GDP (gross domestic product), and showed once again, that foreign trade is a major economic factor in the context of the Austrian economy (cf. Statistische Nachrichten 8/2017).

European legislation in the field of foreign trade statistics warrants the statistics to be based on precise legal texts directly applicable in the Member States as well as highly harmonised definitions and procedures. Austrian foreign trade statistics are legally regulated on two levels, the EU (European Union) level and the national level, which essentially refers to EU laws and simultaneously consider national specific situation.

Foreign trade statistics are based on the data collection systems INTRASTAT (cross-border movement of commodities within the EU) and EXTRASTAT (cross-border movement of commodities with third countries). The realisation of the internal market on 1 January 1993 disestablishing customs formalities, led to the introduction of the data collection system INTRASTAT as a basis for the statistics of intra-community trade. After Austria accessed the European Community on 1 January 1995, the INTRASTAT system entered into force in Austria. It is based on a close connection to the monthly VAT return system for the internal market. Trade in goods is collected according to the system of special trade. According to the primary statistical survey system INTRASTAT data on trade with EU Member States are collected directly from approx. 12 200 providers of statistical information (PSIs) which covers about 93% of all imports and 97% of all exports for reporting year 2016.

In principle, all kind of services are not subject of foreign trade statistics, except processing transactions in context with cross-border movements of goods. These are recorded and included in foreign trade statistics.

Data on trade with third countries (EXTRASTAT) are gathered completely from customs authorities based on customs declarations and are transmitted directly to Statistics Austria.

The collection of data from both survey sources are checked for validity and credibility. Mostly INTRASTAT and EXTRASTAT are validated in the same way. The monitoring of the content of the information is divided into a formal plausibility test (validity of variables), in a logical plausibility check (combined control) and in a quantity control (quantity-value ratio control). For testing the INTRASTAT records’ completeness further checks are relevant. Statistical offices of the Member States in accordance with EU legislation obtain information from other secondary data sources, such as from the monthly VAT return data (national monthly Value Added Tax returns, European VAT collection in intra-community-trade – VIES (VAT Information Exchange System)) respectively the aircraft or vessels register.

To ensure the quality of the data, numerous quality management actions in the framework of processing of the survey data are performed (such as electronic reporting tools, plausibility checks, personal economic operator care by competent officials in charge, completeness checks, on-going training of employees, use of automation-assisted checking programs). Non-response due to the application of a threshold system and due to missing consciousness of reporting in INTRASTAT can be compensated with the help of secondary data (national VAT return), a long term proven estimation system at the most detailed level and a consistent reminder system. The quality of the survey data in INTRASTAT is therefore also related to the quality of the tax data from the EU-wide VIES data and from the national monthly VAT returns, used for plausibility purposes as well as for estimation purposes. The survey data from EXTRASTAT is provided almost entirely from customs data survey and broadly depend, in terms of their quality, on the thoroughness and reliability of this secondary source.
Analysis and release of results of Austrian foreign trade statistics by Statistics Austria takes place from the Austrian perspective according to **national concept**. These results cannot be compared directly with the Austrian results published by Eurostat, which are analysed from European perspective according to community concept, although both concepts are based on the principle of special trade. There are two essential differences between community concept and national concept, in terms of the definition of partner country imports and the statistical treatment of indirect movement of goods.

Figure 1: Foreign trade statistics in Austria shows an overview of the concept of foreign trade statistics in Austria.
Figure 1: Foreign trade statistics in Austria

Framework

Cross border trade in goods with EU Member States and third countries
National concept/EU-concept

Data sources

INTRASTAT
Collected directly from economic operators above the assimilation threshold in internal trade
Estimation for trade below threshold

EXTRASTAT
Statistics based on secondary data.
Economic operators with cross-border movement of goods with third countries

Result

Foreign trade statistics...
... is monthly compiled and revised
... is a key indicator for evaluation of the economic situation and development
... is an essential base information for many statistics

Spatial:
Imports: country of origin/consignment;
Exports: country of destination

Products:
CN (Combined Nomenclature) bottom-up
SITC, CPA

Items:
statistical value,
net mass,
supplementary unit

Derived

... without additional burden for economic operators

Trade by Enterprise Characteristics
Foreign trade by federal states
### Foreign trade statistics – Main Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
<th>Austrian foreign trade statistics describes the cross-border movement of goods of the survey territory with foreign countries. A foreign country in foreign trade statistics means the area outside the survey territory. The statistical territory corresponds to the customs area of application.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>All VAT registered economic operators or customs declarants with cross-border movement of goods.</td>
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</table>
| Type of statistics | **INTRASTAT:** Primary statistical survey  
**EXTRASTAT:** Secondary statistics |
| Data sources / Survey techniques | **INTRASTAT:** Census with variable threshold values with mandatory representation criteria.  
**EXTRASTAT:** Census |
| Reference period | 2016 |
| Periodicity | Monthly |
| Survey participation (Primary statistics) | Mandatory (No INTRASTAT reporting obligation for economic operators below the assimilation threshold for each trade flow) |
| Main legal acts | **national:**  
- Trading Statistics Act  
  Gazette 173/1995 as amended  
- Regulation on the characteristics in the trade statistics application  
  Gazette Nr. 181/1995  
- Regulation on statistical thresholds for commercial application  
  Gazette II Nr. 306/2009 as amended  
**EU:**  
- Basic and implementing regulations for trade with EU Member States  
  RG (EC) No 638/2004 as amended  
- Basic and implementing regulations for trade with third countries  
  RG (EC) No 471/2009 |
| Most detailed regional breakdown | Structure by partner countries and groups of countries according to ISO alpha2-digit code and Geonomenclature (GEONOM). |
| Availability of results | Preliminary data: t + 70  
Final data: June of the following year |
| Other | The Austrian foreign trade statistics are compiled and published according to national concept. Application of passive confidentiality. |