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Theme 6
External trade
Series B
Short-term statistics

ISSN 1022-6524

Newsletter Edicom – INTRASTAT

2 □ 1995

INTRASTAT II SEMINAR MARCH 13 - 14, 1996

The objective of the INTRASTAT II Seminar which is organised by Eurostat is to carry out an analysis of the functioning of the current system and in particular to reopen the debate on trade-off between the needs of the users for statistics and the need for simplification expressed by the providers of statistical information.

Thus, four main themes will be dealt with on the 13th and 14th of March 1996.

PROGRAMME

Topic n°1
Analysis of current situation:

Analysis carried out by:
a) National producer administrations
b) Information suppliers
c) Information users

Topic n°2
Information needs for Administration and Research Institutes

Topics covered:
a) Administrations
b) Research intitutes
c) Intrastat for services?

Topic n°3
Information needs for the Enterprises

Topics covered:
a) Analysis by users and providers of inforamtion
b) Use of new technologies

Topic n°4
Different possible scenarios

Topics covered:
a) The definitive VAT system and Intrastat
b) Business statistics and Intrastat
c) Options for Intrastat

The INTRASTAT Seminar will take place in "Hémicycle européen", rue du Fort Thüngen, L-1499 Luxembourg Kirchberg. For more detailed information, please contact: Mme L. Eisen, DG IX/BOCC, room B2/71, JMO - Intrastat II Seminar - rue Alcide de Gasperi, L- 2920 Luxembourg. Phone: (352) 4301-33164/32776;Fax: (352) 4301 34851.

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OFICINA ESTADÍSTICA DE LAS COMUNIDADES EUROPEAS
DE EUROPÆISKE FÆLLESSKABERS STATISTISKE KONTOR
STATISTISCHES AMT DER EUROPÄISCHEN GEMEINSCHAFTEN
ΣΤΑΤΙΣΤΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΩΝ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΩΝ
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Printed in Luxembourg

INTRASTAT PROGRESS AND OUTLOOK

INTRODUCTION

THE primary aim of the INTRASTAT system was to ensure the continued collection of high-quality, reliable and up-to-date statistics on the trading of goods within the Community following completion of the internal market and abolition of customs formalities at frontiers between Member States of the Union.

The main characteristics of the system were:

- a system of direct collection from enterprises which sent on a monthly basis a summary declaration to the competent national department providing information on their trade in goods during the previous month.
- the establishment of a close link with the VAT declaration system for intra-Community trade. For the purpose of checking the completeness and quality of the statistical data, the tax authorities of the Member States were required to forward to the statistical services, at least once a quarter, the list of operators who had engaged in intra-Community trade and the total amount of the transactions, acquisitions or deliveries made. France and Italy had opted for a combined statistical and fiscal declaration.

The INTRASTAT system was also designed to lighten the declaration burden on enterprises as much as possible. This resulted in the introduction of a system of thresholds which had the effect either of exempting a proportion of 2/3 of operators from any statistical formalities or of reducing the quantity of data to be transmitted. In the same spirit, the implementation of the system was accompanied by efforts to modernise the collection, transmission and processing of data using a set of measures under the EDICOM (electronic data interchange on commerce) programme to develop the computerized exchange of information.

PROGRESS REPORT

AFTER some three years in operation, there are extenuating circumstances for Eurostat's record in that the INTRASTAT system can still not be considered to be fully operational in all the Member States, with results available too late at Union level and statistical results which are not sufficiently reliable. This generally negative record at Community level is not incompatible with the much more optimistic perception which may be held by the majority of Member States regarding the functioning of the system at national level, since the Community view per se reflects a cumulation of the failures and gaps identified at national level.

In contrast, Eurostat's assessment of efforts to lighten the burden for enterprises is more positive although the manifold and sometimes vehement reaction of enterprises or federations express a different view and clearly demonstrate that Eurostat must make further advances in this field and put forward other simplification proposals.

This divergent analysis is based partly on the fact that before completion of the internal market, statistics, as a by-product of the customs declaration and generally compiled by a customs agent, appeared to cost the enterprise nothing, whereas the current direct burden on the enterprise, however much lighter it may be compared to the old one, is perceived differently owing to its greater visibility.

The main weaknesses identified in the functioning of INTRASTAT are outlined below.

❑ Availability of data

Even if the considerable delays observed during the system's first year in operation have partly been resolved, in September 1995 only half the Member States had achieved acceptable delivery delays compared to those which prevailed pre-1993. The recent recorded improvements, the provisional timetable of data deliveries to Eurostat announced for the three most laggard Member States (Ireland, Greece and Belgium), presage a quasi-correct situation within 6 months for the 12 Member States that have been applying the system since its introduction; in contrast, the scope of the difficulties encountered by the new Member States, of a similar nature to those encountered in 1993, which while less serious for intra-Community statistics are aggravated by the impact of the changes to extra-Community statistics. This means that it is difficult to propose a date for the availability of statistical results for the European Union

❑ Quality of data

The judgment of the reliability and accuracy of the data is based on information sent by the Member States and the comparative analyses made by Eurostat. The main reason for our doubts regarding the quality of data arises from the size of the non-response rate on the part of the enterprises studied. Although this rate has declined in recent months, it remains high and at Community level represents more than 10% of total enterprises responsible for providing information or some 3 to 4% in value terms. The latest figures available to us and the recorded trends lead us to believe that this percentage is unfortunately a residual rate which is unlikely to decline significantly. The loss of information linked to the system of statistical thresholds, while comparatively minor should also be added.

This loss of quality linked to incomplete coverage, while acceptable at the level of global data, is much more disturbing for data at the more detailed level of the Combined Nomenclature.

This impact is further magnified by the fact that, in addition to such non-responses, the transmission of erroneous data arising mainly from the incorrect encoding of goods also significantly affects the results at this level of detail since classification errors among the 10 000 headings are very numerous. The combination of these two phenomena makes interpretation of data at this level risky, and the question is being asked as to the intellectual justification for requiring enterprises to collect data at such a level of detail when the quality of results at this level is not sufficient to allow them to be used effectively or even published.

In view of these difficulties, Member States have made adjustments and corrections, the scale of which (up to 10 to 15% for some countries) testify to the magnitude of the problems encountered. Such revisions provide only a partly satisfactory response to the extent that these adjustments relate solely to the global results or results at a high level of aggregation.

The INTRASTAT system collects movements of goods trade within the Community both in terms of arrivals and dispatches, while a study of the mirror flows of dispatches from A to B compared to the arrivals in B originating in A can measure the degree of consistency of the transmitted data. Some of the gaps observed arise directly from the concepts and methodological definitions used to compile statistics on trade. It is well known that exports and corresponding imports in international trade do not coincide exactly. However, in the case of intra-Community trade, the causes of distortion should be less significant (common methodology, closer CIF/FOB evaluation and smaller time lag owing to geographical proximity, etc) and consequently the scope of the divergence observed in the mirror statistics of INTRASTAT confirms the inadequate quality of the data and reveals a significant under-valuation of arrivals compared to dispatches.

This study has also highlighted the break in the series on intra-Community trade caused in 1993 by the introduction of INTRASTAT. Before this date, applying measures for simplification (in particular not taking account of goods from non-member countries introduced into and placed in free circulation in a Member State before being re-dispatched to another Member State), intra-Community imports of the Union were 2.7% higher than exports, compared with the current under-valuation of arrivals. Calculated on the basis of estimated and corrected results provided by Member States this amounts to 4% and now appears to have stabilised.

An initial analysis of mirror statistics, made at a more detailed level of goods, has led to more alarming results where in 3/4 of cases the differences recorded are higher than 30% at the level of the basic statistical results (combination Combined Nomenclature code and partner countries). Similar results in a study conducted using the pre-INTRASTAT 1992 annual data must lead us to question whether INTRASTAT and customs documents are truly in a position to furnish sufficiently reliable and usable results at this level of detail.

The evaluation of INTRASTAT would not be complete without making some mention of the heterogeneous nature of the situations prevailing in the various Member States and of the fact that in some of them, in particular those where there is a close link between taxation and fiscality, the record at national level is far more positive.

Comparison with the fiscal source, when the declarations are not combined as in the case of France and Italy, represents a means of checking the statistical declarations. This has revealed its limits, in particular owing to the differences between the fiscal and statistical systems in the coverage and accounting of certain trade in goods. For some Member States, the statistical values are higher than the "fiscal values" while for others they are lower, with the differences observed for 1993 being situated in a bracket of ± 5%, thereby ensuring the overall plausibility of the results.

MAIN MEASURES UNDERTAKEN BY ENTERPRISES

HOWEVER, this evaluation must be considered against the background of the numerous improvements which have been made, the fact that the system is widely accepted, the 30 month implementation period which, while too long, is not excessive for a system of this scale and, finally, the fact that an increasing number of government departments express relative satisfaction with results at national level.

Confronted with this situation, which nonetheless remains disquieting, all the Member States have made considerable efforts to assist with the implementation of INTRASTAT. These efforts have received Eurostat's backing and concerned both relations with enterprises (information campaigns, awareness-raising campaigns, training and other

standing of the burden which INTRASTAT represents for the enterprises but equally reveal the opinions of enterprises and users of how it functions as well as their expectations for the future.

1996 conference

It is planned to hold a conference for all the operators involved in statistics on the trading of goods in March 1996. The aim will be to evaluate the functioning of the current system and to consider the necessary adjustments in the light of the foreseeable developments in the economic and fiscal environment in which goods will be traded.

TELEMATIC INFRASTRUCTURE

These measures, known as EDICOM, aim to facilitate the various phases in the production chain, i.e. compiling the declaration, the enterprise-national government department transfer, data extraction within Eurostat and finally dissemination.

Depending on the nature of the EDICOM measures covering these different phases they have been developed either directly by the national administrations or in a centralised manner by Eurostat.

These measures have been backed up by promotion, awareness-raising and training activities, which were particularly important given the large number and heterogenous nature of the parties involved. The entire series of measures have been defined and steered by the EDICOM Task Force composed of 15 national administrations and Eurostat.

The main achievements have been:

- electronic questionnaires
- the EDIFACT messages
- the DISK/FAX systems
- telecommunications
- the COMEXT and CD-ROM data base
- the national measures

Electronic questionnaires

The IDEP/CN8 software, developed by Eurostat, allows enterprises to register the statistical data on their INTRASTAT exchanges and to compile their monthly declarations. The CN8 component of the software contains the entire product classification and the allows the searching for the appropriate coding of products using different routes.

Eurostat places IDEP/CN8 at the disposal of the national departments responsible for INTRASTAT which provide this software to the enterprises free of charge, with parameters defined at national level to take account of the specific characteristics of each country.

The IDEP software is currently distributed in 8 countries and the number of users, small in the first year of launching, has now grown significantly, from 3 500 at the end of 1994 to 10 000 at the end of 1995 and is likely to be 20 000 at the end of 1996.

The Netherlands and Germany use the software IRIS developed by CBS and progress in these two countries has also been very significant.

The EDIFACT messages

The declarations compiled using IDEP conform to the EDIFACT/INSTAT (Intrastat declaration) standard which is a sub-set of a more general EDIFACT message, in this case CUSDEC (customs declaration). The work carried out on these EDIFACT formats and on others constitute the second link in the EDICOM chain. The EXSTAT format for declarations covering trade with extra-Union countries is almost completed as is the INSRES format used to reply to INSTAT messages. Another project in this field is to study the security of the transmission of EDIFACT messages via networks.

DISK/FAX systems

Today a large share of the INTRASTAT declarations is still sent to the national government departments on diskettes or on tapes. Eurostat has developed a system which can read large quantities of diskettes and tapes and convert the data to a local format. This system, known as DISK/FAX, can also be used to send messages by fax to those enterprises whose declarations were not accepted owing, for example, to formatting errors.

DISK/FAX systems have been supplied to nine countries (Belgium. Luxembourg, Germany, Portugal, Ireland, United Kingdom, Greece, Spain and France). No modification is currently planned.

Telecommunications

This project aims to permit the transmission of EDIFACT messages (and of other formats) directly to the competent national services via the telematic networks. The replies and acknowledgments of receipt will be returned to the enterprises using the same procedure. The new version of the IDEP software includes such an interface, with several trials currently underway in various countries. This facility can be used outside of IDEP, the derivation of the message corresponding to the INTRASTAT declaration being transmitted directly from the enterprises' internal computer systems of the enterprises to the responsible national administrations.

The COMEXT 2 data base

THIS COMEXT 2 data base replaces the external trade statistics processing systems, the statistics on intra-Community trade and other related information such as the classifications, the conversion factors, the indices, etc. The aim of this large-scale operation is to create a single reference base, a portable and efficient system taking advantage of recent technological developments in equipment and networks.

A client-host approach has been pursued with the application being developed under UNIX/ORACLE; COMEXT 2 client functions under Windows and offers numerous possibilities for local handling and storing. This base is used mainly by the Commission departments. Dissemination outside the Commission is via publications but also and mainly via the CD-ROM Comext produced monthly, which includes not only the detailed intra and extra-Community data but also the user-friendly DOS and Windows software to access these data. Recourse to this medium is growing rapidly with some 200 subscriptions to date, while isolated copies are also available elsewhere.

Contacts are underway with the national administrations in order to study the portability potential of these two products, COMEXT 2 data base and CD-ROM, and the possibility of adjusting them to cover national needs.

National measures

THE measures undertaken at national level take a different form since they are a feature of the organisations chosen by the Member States. However, their main focus it to promote the use of telematic tools and develop them, to modernise the extraction, collection and processing centers, to computerise processing operations, to harmonise procedures and to make increased use of EDI techniques. In addition, the national government departments have made substantial efforts to install the various tools developed centrally, with Eurostat acting as coordinator.

These different "technical" projects and the measures adopted by the national administrations have made it possible to make considerable progress, to lighten the declaration burden for enterprises and have contributed to the acceptance of the INTRASTAT system by enterprises, this being a precondition for obtaining good statistics. These measures have also made it possible to rationalise and improve data handling by the national and Community authorities.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

SINCE its conception the INTRASTAT system has had to link up with the fiscal system as a transitional measure. This transitional period will end with the changeover to the system of VAT payment in the country of origin and by that time INTRASTAT 2 must by ready to meet the information needs on intra-Community trade.

The main focal points for discussion on the development of INTRASTAT are:

- the development of information needs on intra-Community trade;
- the maintenance of a link with an administrative system and the constraints imposed by the new fiscal system;
- cost/benefit analysis covering the functioning of the current collection system.

Development of information needs

CURRENT information needs appear to be very considerable to judge by the numerous requests received from enterprises, federations, Directorates-General of the Commission and administrations departments. These requests mainly relate to trade, broken down by Combined Nomenclature code. The survey among trade statistics' users will give us a clear appreciation of users' needs and expectations and their perception of our statistics.

Achieving high-quality and accurate results at this level of detail is problematical as various analyses have demonstrated, the difficulty and cost of providing such data are high for the providers of the information and classification errors are manifold, all of which begs the question of the advisability of promoting the use of this classification in the future. The benefit of maintaining the parallelism between intra- and extra-Community trade as well as the increased burden for the enterprise of using two different classifications have to date stood in the way of any proposal for a simplified collection classification, which would be more appropriate in terms of the reliability of the results arrived at. However, from the perspective of monetary union, the question does arise as to whether this strict intra/extra parallelism will always have a raison d'être when the very meaning of intra-Community trade has changed. The disappearance in the long term of national balances of payments, the growth in transborder transactions, the substantial share covered by sub-contracting transactions and intra-company trading at Union level, will all in the long term inevitably lead to a revision of the concepts and definitions used to measure intra-Community trade.

A change in statistics on intra-Community trade is inevitable in view of the fact that when measuring or recording flows loses its economic significance, alignment with accounting concepts or even integration in the system of enterprise statistics will open up new approaches to defining INTRASTAT 2 and possibilities for using other collection classifications.

In this spirit, as part of the work of the Working Party on revision of the methodology of international trade in general, comprising representatives of international organisations under the Chairmanship of the United Nations and in which Eurostat participates, it is indispensable to consider the specific features of economic and monetary unions and of the EU in particular, given the increased importance of intra-Union trade and the globalisation of economies within these Unions.

Potential solutions would be to use only those sub-headings which were important in terms of trade value while continuing to use the Harmonised System as a basis without breaking down the other sub-headings or to opt for the PRODCOM list. Another element to be considered is the inclusion of services and their incorporation in the INTRASTAT system. The periodicity of declarations should also be looked at and here a cost/benefit analysis should be able to give an answer regarding the usefulness of detailed data on a monthly basis or whether a combination based on the levels of detail of monthly and quarterly statistics might not satisfy most needs at a lower cost.

The responses to these questions are vital because it is possible that alternative sampling-type observation techniques, disregarded when INTRASTAT was being conceived owing mainly to the level of detail of the return and the periodicity, might be reconsidered.

Links with an administrative system

The benefit of maintaining an INTRASTAT 2 link with an administrative system is obvious, which is why the definitive choices for the VAT system will have major consequences for the extent of these links or even their existence. Two key questions must be considered, the identification of the intra-Community operators and the global volume of trade transactions. The level of autonomy of INTRASTAT 2, as well as its fragility, will depend on the replies. It is premature at this time to pronounce on the need for and usefulness of these two elements for fiscal purposes, while any questions of compensation can be solved on the basis of indicators other than intra-Community trade.

Cost benefit/analysis, functioning of the system

The experience gained, the difficulties encountered in the initial years of INTRASTAT's operation, the costly investments made by government departments and enterprises all call for a cautious and considered approach. The current system obviously leaves room for improvement, but a reform of the collection system for methodological motives or for reasons of simplification can only be undertaken if the anticipated advantage, its life span and general acceptance will offset the inevitable additional costs and nuisance inherent in any change.

The proposals of the study

In addition to studies of collection classifications and the periodicity of collections as a means to modify current recording techniques, a former proposal of Eurostat merits reexamination. This would require each Member State to record only one flow, the other being calculated on the basis of results obtained by the other Member States according the principle of mirror statistics. For example, the country only collects dispatches, its arrivals being by definition equal to the sum of the dispatches of its 14 partners.

This method is used by several countries, including the US/Canada, which for some years have based their returns only on imports.

Unless there were considerations linked to the fiscal system adopted which justified the use of arrivals rather than dispatches as the preferred flows for recording and comparing fiscal and statistical data, the arguments within the Union favour collection of dispatches only, in particular:

- the higher concentration of enterprises at the level of dispatches (hence the need to cover a smaller number of enterprises, a factor which would be particularly favourable to small and medium-sized enterprises which would then for the most part be excluded from the system);
- better knowledge of the product on the part of the dispatcher, who is generally the manufacturer of the product, than on the part of the purchaser with a corresponding greater probability of obtaining more reliable data, and also,
- a better coverage of dispatch flows under the current system and a higher response rate.

This system would make it possible to exempt some 350 000 enterprises from the obligation to declare their arrivals without causing any significant loss of information. The administrative collection and processing burden would also be considerably reduced.

Eurostat should organise and guarantee a rapid exchange of data between government departments so that these would be able to calculate their arrivals on the basis of results prepared by the other reporting countries. To guarantee the satisfactory functioning of the system a series of harmonisation measures would need to be adopted.

This proposal would permit substantial economies of scale and would provide a positive response to the requests of European federations and enterprises to lighten and harmonise their reporting and administrative burdens.

This proposal calls for the obligatory reciprocal exchange of results between all Member States which can only be the fruit of close cooperation and which alone can create the climate of confidence indispensable for the introduction of such a system.

It might to possible to consider that initially only interested Member States would apply this procedure and that its general introduction would take place gradually. Likewise, this proposal is not tied to the other proposals raised and could be envisaged independently of the classifications, periodicity and recording system used. Furthermore, despite its radical nature this change would only lead to minor adjustments in the organisational structure and infrastructures of both information suppliers and collectors.

CONCLUSIONS

With the important deadline of the March 1996 seminar approaching, the purpose of this document is to open and stimulate the debate on the future of Intrastat. Eurostat has no particular preferences as to which course to follow, and given the importance of statistics on costs and on the trading of goods for all the parties concerned, the pros and cons should be weighed up carefully before any decision is taken. This will only be achieved by increasing the number of contacts with data providers and users, those producing statistics and public authorities. These discussions should then make it possible to come up with an effective solution which is acceptable to all parties.

The first phase involves completing the operational diagnosis for the current system and supplementing the studies carried out with a more systematic analysis of the costs. The polls being carried out at the moment will allow progress to be made in this direction. By comparing and contrasting a wide range of views, the INTRASTAT 2 seminar should make it possible to settle upon concrete guidelines for future work.

The proposals to arise from this seminar will be submitted to the Statistical Programme Committee, the European Advisory Committee on Statistical Information in the Economic and Social Spheres (CEIES) and, should the need arise, to other competent European authorities.

Finally, a draft regulation will be drawn up by the Committee on statistics relating to the trading of goods and, on the basis of this work, the Commission will propose a draft regulation for adoption by the Council and the Parliament.

A thoroughgoing revision of the system can, however, only be envisaged if this is directly linked to the development of the tax system. Whilst it is not therefore possible to put forward an exact schedule at this point in time, stepping up the number of contacts and listening to a broad range of opinions will be a far cry from a "do-nothing" approach and should result in a carefully-considered decision which will have optimum effect.

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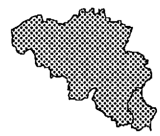
STRONG GROWTH IN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TRADE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU12) IN 1994 FIRST RESULTS FOR EU 15

FOLLOWING the downturn in 1993 (-8.3% for intra-EU imports and -4% for exports), trade within the twelve-EU Member States grew strongly in 1994 (+11%). This recovery, which was similar to the growth in the European Union's external trade (extra-EU), was particularly strong in Spain and Ireland, but most tentative in Greece and Germany (see Table 1).

For 1994, the impact of the accession of the three new Member States (Austria, Finland and Sweden) was reflected in an estimated 18% rise in intra-EU trade. The admittedly incomplete results for the first quarter of 1995 show significant growth in trade within the fifteen EU Member States (14% higher than in the first quarter of 1994), particularly in Finland, Portugal, the BLEU and the Netherlands (see Table 2). However, it should be borne in mind that for the new Member States the 1994 and 1995 figures are not entirely comparable owing to considerable methodological differences.

The majority of the Member States (except Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Austria and Finland) adjust the total figures for intra-EU trade with each partner country to allow for non-responses. These effect of thresholds, and these estimates cannot therefore be broken down to the most detailed level of the product classifications. Despite such adjustments, the discrepancy between arrivals and dispatches (-4.7% in 1994) indicates a greater under-estimation for arrivals, though the impact of this varies from country to country.

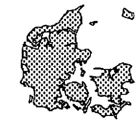


BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG

1994 was marked by a distinct improvement in the BLEU's trade balance, with intra-EU trade rising from ECU 7 billion to ECU 11.6 billion and the extra-EU deficit falling from ECU 2.7 billion to ECU 1 billion between 1993 and 1994. Germany remained the BLEU's principal trading partner, accounting for 28% of its arrivals from other EU countries and 29% of its dispatches.

The results for the first quarter of 1995 show that the growth rate of intra-EU trade (EU15) was nearly 19% higher than in the first quarter of 1994 for both trade flows.

The fact that intra-EU dispatches (+10.7%) grew faster than intra-EU arrivals (+5.2%) explains the increase in the 1994 intra-EUsurplus. The surplus on manufactured goods rose by ECU 3.5 billion amounting to a total of ECU 16.9 billion. The deficit on the item "fuel and power products" worsened by ECU 0.9 billion owing to a rise of nearly 21% in arrivals. The surplus on foodstuffs was stable at ECU 1.7 billion. The deficit in the item "adjustments" (and SITC 9) indicates that arrivals were subject to larger adjustments than dispatches.



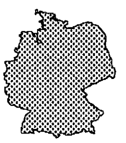
DENMARK

DENMARK'S traditional intra-EU trade surplus shrank in 1994 from ECU 3 billion to ECU 2.4 billion. This result is attributable to the steady growth in intra-EU imports (+15.6% in 1994), to the extent that intra-EU dispatches grew over the same period by only 9.4%. Germany was by far the country's biggest trading partner, accounting for over 40% of intra-EU trade in 1994.

The accession of the new Member States boosted the intra-EU share of Denmark's foreign trade from 54% to 70% for imports and 53% to 66% for exports. During the first quarter of 1995, the intra-EU surplus (EU15) fell by a further ECU 0.2 billion because arrivals continued to grow vigorously (+19.9%).

The drop in the intra-EU trade surplus in 1994 was caused by an increase in the deficit on manufactured goods from ECU 1.7 billion to ECU 2.9 billion, particularly in the machinery and transport equipment sector (deficit up by ECU 0.8 billion). For the latter sector, arrivals grew by 22.5%. The surplus on foodstuffs was almost stable at ECU 3.5 billion.

Despite the fact that extra-EU imports grew faster than exports (+16.7% and +13.4% respectively), Denmark ended 1994 with another extra-EU trade surplus of ECU 2.5 billion. The first quarter of 1995 was marked by a noticeable slow-down in imports (+5.4%) and an increase in the trade surplus.



GERMANY

Germany's intra-EU trade surplus grew only slightly in 1994 to a total of ECU 13 billion (compared with ECU 12 billion in 1993). However, in weighing up this result, allowances should be made for the underestimation of German arrivals, which were ECU 17 billion lower than the dispatches to Germany reported by the country's EU trading partners. Germany was one of the three countries (together with Greece and BLEU) that experienced the lowest growth in intra-EU trade in 1994, with an increase of only 7.6% for arrivals and 7.7% for dispatches. In the first quarter of 1995 (EU15), the pace of growth quickened somewhat to about 13% for each flour.

In 1994, the intra-EU trade surplus on manufactured goods rose from ECU 30.5 billion to ECU 32.7 billion thanks to a ECU 1.7 billion rise in the surplus on machinery and transport equipment and a ECU 1.3 billion increase on chemicals. The deficit in the item "fuel and power products" fell slightly from ECU 7.3 billion to ECU 6.5 billion, while the shortfall in foodstuffs grew by ECU 0.8 billion.

The German surplus on extra-EU trade rose by over ECU 5.5 billion to a total of ECU 25.6 billion owing to the faster growth of exports (+11.9%). The gap between the growth rates for exports and imports continued in the first quarter of 1995 (+16.8% and +7.7% respectively).

GREECE

Greece was the EU country with the lowest growth rate for arrivals in 1994: +3.2% for incoming trade and +6.2% for dispatches. The small gap between these rates meant that the country's trade deficit with the rest of the EU stayed at ECU 7.4 billion (ECU 0.1 billion higher than in 1993). Greece's two main trading partners, Germany (top trading partner for dispatches) and Italy (top trading parner for arrivals) accounted for nearly 65% of the country's dispatches to and 50% of its arrivals from other EU countries. In the first quarter of 1995, intra-EU dispatches (EU15) picked up considerably (+15.5%), while growth of arrivals remained modest (+6.9%).

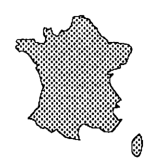
The product breakdown of Greek intra-EU trade remained fairly stable between 1993 and 1994. The trade deficit on manufactured goods rose from ECU 6.4 billion to ECU 6.5 billion; however, the balance of the item "other manufactured goods", which accounted for nearly 60% of the country's intra-EU trade, deteriorated from a deficit of ECU 1.4 billion to one of ECU 1.7 billion. The trade deficit on foodstuffs was slightly lower at ECU 1.2 billion.

Greece's extra-EU trade balance improved considerably in 1994 from a ECU 4.3 billion to a ECU 2.8 billion deficit owing to a drop in imports (-14.3%) and a sharp increase in exports (+14.0%).

SPAIN

After the considerable improvement in 1993, Spain's intra-EU trade deficit shrank further in 1994, falling from ECU 6.8 billion to ECU 5.7 billion. The sharp increase in dispatches (+22.1%) offset the growth of arrivals (+15.9%). A similar, though less pronounced, trend was observed for extra-EU trade, with exports rising by 10.4% and imports by 8.9%. In 1994, France remained Spain's main intra-EU trading partner and even increased its share of Spanish trade to nearly 30%.

The 1994 improvement in Spain's intra-EU trade balance was almost exclusively due to the reduction in the deficit on manufactured goods (from ECU 7.1 billion to ECU 6.3 billion). This reduction was particularly marked for machinery and transport equipment (from ECU 1.9 billion to ECU 0.9 billion). Other items remained fairly stable, though there was a slight rise of ECU 1 billion in the surplus on foodstuffs.



FRANCE

France's intra-EU trade expanded by 12% in 1994, though this was accompanied by a slight deterioration in the trade balance from a deficit of ECU 5.1 billion to one of ECU 5.6 billion. This trend continued in the first quarter of 1995: with arrivals and dispaches growing at similar rates (about 12%) and a slight worsening of the intra-EU balance. Despite a 3-point decrease in French dispatches, Germany remained France's principal trading partner in 1994.

For the third consecutive year, France generated an extra-EU trade surplus, which rose to ECU 10.8 billion owing to faster growth in exports compared to imports (+8.3% and +7.4% respectively). However, the trend appears to have reversed: in the first quarter of 1995, a slump in exports (-9.3%) combined with a slow-down in import growth (+3.6%) led to a trade deficit.

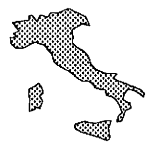
Between 1993 and 1994, the intra-EU trade deficit on manufactured goods remained practically stable at ECU 10.8 billion. This was the result of an ECU 0.8 billion improvement in the balance on machinery and transport equipment and an ECU 0.4 billion deterioration in the balance on chemicals. The surplus on foodstuffs shrank from ECU 5.9 billion to ECU 4.9 billion owing to a sharp increase in arrivals.

IRELAND

SINCE 1990, Ireland has experienced a steady increase in its intra-EU trade surplus. This trend continued in 1994 with the surplus rising from ECU 5.2 billion to ECU 6.5 billion. However, it should be pointed out that dispatches to Ireland reported by the other member States are ECU 1.7 billion higher than the corresponding arrivals reported by Ireland, which suggests that the trade surplus might be overestimated. The trade balance continued to improve in the first quarter of 1995 owing to the more vigorous growth of dispatches to other EU countries (+18.1%). While the United Kingdom is the country's dominant partner for arrivals (over 68% of intra-EU imports), there is a tendency towards diversification in its partners for dispatches, with the UK now accounting for "only" 40% of Irish dispatches. It should also be noted that intra-EU trade in 1994 accounted for only 64% of the country's imports, but 74% of its exports.

Between 1993 and 1994, the product breakdown of intra-EU trade was stable with the exception of manufactured goods, the surplus on which grew from ECU 2.7 billion to ECU 4.0 billion owing to chemicals (up by ECU 0.5 billion), machinery and transport equipment (up by ECU 0.4 billion) and "other manufactured goods" (up by ECU 0.4 billion).

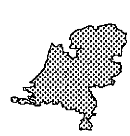
Despite the sharp growth in imports (+23%), Ireland's trade with non-EU countries remained in the black in 1994 (surplus of ECU 0.8 billion).



ITALY

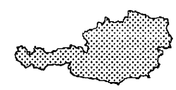
FOR the second year in a row, Italy generated in 1994 a trade surplus at the intra- countries (ECU 5.8 billion) as well as the extra-EU level (ECU 12.7 billion). The intra-EU surplus was lower than in 1993 because dispatches grew at a slower rate (+10.2%) compared to arrivals (+12.9%). This trend continued in the first quarter of 1995, during which period intra-EU dispatches rose by 7.8% and arrivals by 11.0%. Germany and France (in that order) were the Italy's principal trading partners, together accounting for about 60% of Italy's total intra-EU trade in 1994.

A look at trends in the product breakdown of intra-EU trade shows that increases in various deficits (up by ECU 0.8 billion on raw materials, ECU 0.2 billion on fuel and power products and ECU 0.9 billion on chemicals) were not fully offset by the growth in the surplus on "other manufactured goods" (up by ECU 0.4 billion).



NETHERLANDS

THE rise in the extra-EU trade deficit (ECU 22.0 billion) reduced the Dutch trade surplus despite the country's good performance on intra-EU trade (surplus of ECU 25.0 billion). The figures for the first quarter of 1995 appear to show a sharper rise in intra-EU trade, but recording errors distort analysis of the results. Significant adjustment to the 1993 and 1995 data are expected soon.



AUSTRIA

IN 1994, Austria generated a deficit of ECU 6.8 billion on trade with the other EU countries (EU 15) and one of ECU 1.8 billion on trade with the non-EU zone.

Even before it joined the European Union, Austria's intra-EU trade in 1994 was already above the Community average (66% for arrivals and 63% for dispatches). Austria and Greece are the only countries that have not yet published figures for the first quarter of 1995.

PORTUGAL

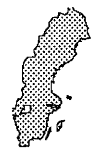
PORTUGAL's trade balance remained heavily in deficit in 1994 despite the fact that dispatches/exports (+15.1% and +13.8% res-pectively) grew faster than arrivals/imports from the same sources (+8.9% and +13%). As a result, the intra-EU balance improved by ECU 0.2 billion (deficit of ECU 4.7 billion), while the extra-EU balance worsened by ECU 0.3 billion (deficit of ECU 2.9 billion). The Portuguese economy is well integrated into the single market: in 1994, 75% of arrivals and 81% of dispatches was with other EU Member States (EU15).

The intra-EU deficit on manufactured goods remained stable in 1994 at ECU 3.8 billion. The deficit on foodstuffs increased slightly (ECU 0.2 billion), while the deficit on fuel and power products was eliminated.

FINLAND

Comparisons with past years are at present difficult to make owing to methodological differences between Finnish and EU (particularly for imports as regards the distinction between country of origin and country of consignment). Regardless of this, Finland generated a significant trade surplus in 1994 (ECU 5.4 billion). This was mainly due to owing to the positive balance on trade with the other Member States of Eu 15 which is provisionally estimated at ECU 3.5 billion.

In the first quarter of 1995, there was a surge in Finnish exports (+25.5% intra-EU and +23.5% extra-EU). As regards imports, the intra-EU and extra-EU breakdown has to be reviewed, and the current figures are therefore not very meaningful.



SWEDEN

Sweden's foreign trade, to an even greater extent than Finland's, has for many years generated a surplus. In 1994, the country's trade surplus with the EU and non-EU totalled ECU 3.3 billion ECU 4.8 billion. Respectively, in the first quarter of 1995, the surplus stood at ECU 3.2 billion which included ECU 1.2 billion for intra-EU trade.

UNITED KINGDOM

While the United Kingdom's trade deficit with the non-EU zone worsened in 1994 from ECU 18.4 billion to ECU 20.5 billion, its intra-EU deficit held at its 1993 level of ECU 6.7 billion. The growth rate of intra-EU trade, which was higher than that of extra-EU trade, appeared to slacken in 1995. While intra-EU dispatches and arrivals grew strongly in the first quarter of the year (+10.9% and +9.6% respectively), there was a significant slowdown in extra-EU (+3.2%) and especially imports (-5.5%).

In 1994, the United Kingdom's two main trading partners, Germany and France, together accounted for less than 50% of the country's intra-EU trade. It should be pointed out that intra-EU trade (at EU 15) represented only about 55% of the UK's imports and 58% of its exports.

Between 1993 and 1994, the United Kingdom's intra-EU deficit on manufactured goods increased by ECU 0.5 billion. Though the results were better for chemicals (surplus of ECU 0.6 billion) and "other manufactured goods", the deficit on machinery and transport equipment worsened from ECU 4.2 billion to ECU 5.6 billion. There were improvements in the balance of trade of fuel and power products (up ECU 0.5 billion) and foodstuffs (up ECU 0.2 billion).

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INTRA - EUROPEAN UNION TRADE

TABLE 1: EVOLUTION OF INTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 12)

ARRIVALS

	1990	1991		1992		1993		1994	
	Value	Value	Evolution	Value	Evolution	Value	Evolution	Value	Evolution
EUR12	**663 419**	**703 100**	**6.0%**	**716 852**	**2.0%**	**657 000**	**-8.3%**	**727 590**	**10.7%**
B.L.E.U.	69 713	72 289	3.7%	72 599	0.4%	71 909	-1.0%	75 676	5.2%
Denmark	13 691	14 467	5.7%	14 862	2.7%	14 097	-5.1%	16 302	15.6%
Germany	145 716	171 684	17.8%	172 731	0.6%	149 752	-13.3%	161 160	7.6%
Greece	9 987	10 490	5.0%	11 615	10.7%	11 289	-2.8%	11 647	3.2%
Spain	38 898	43 454	11.7%	45 124	3.8%	41 071	-9.0%	47 595	15.9%
France	124 340	128 402	3.3%	130 909	2.0%	118 421	-9.5%	132 925	12.2%
Ireland	11 530	11 633	0.9%	12 074	3.8%	11 764	-2.6%	13 629	15.9%
Italy	82 167	84 968	3.4%	85 693	0.9%	70 224	-18.1%	79 300	12.9%
Netherlands	63 997	65 387	2.2%	67 063	2.6%	65 264	-2.7%	74 315	13.9%
Portugal	13 678	15 347	12.2%	17 271	12.5%	14 852	-14.0%	16 171	8.9%
United Kingdom	89 702	84 979	-5.3%	86 911	2.3%	88 359	1.7%	98 869	11.9%

DISPATCHES

	1990	1991		1992		1993		1994	
	Value	Value	Evolution	Value	Evolution	Value	Evolution	Value	Evolution
EUR12	**665 561**	**703 679**	**5.7%**	**713 011**	**1.3%**	**684 456**	**-4.0%**	**761 826**	**11.3%**
B.L.E.U.	74 304	76 915	3.5%	76 875	-0.1%	78 881	2.6%	87 287	10.7%
Denmark	14 482	15 856	9.5%	17 023	7.4%	17 081	0.3%	18 687	9.4%
Germany	170 791	175 552	2.8%	180 487	2.8%	161 758	-10.4%	174 160	7.7%
Greece	4 063	4 454	9.6%	4 957	11.3%	4 035	-18.6%	4 286	6.2%
Spain	29 961	34 116	13.9%	35 163	3.1%	34 306	-2.4%	41 882	22.1%
France	109 464	117 458	7.3%	121 381	3.3%	113 334	-6.6%	127 345	12.4%
Ireland	13 937	14 527	4.2%	16 203	11.5%	16 946	4.6%	20 170	19.0%
Italy	77 906	80 642	3.5%	79 388	-1.6%	77 275	-2.7%	85 138	10.2%
Netherlands	85 488	91 447	7.0%	90 702	-0.8%	89 275	-1.6%	99 288	11.2%
Portugal	9 471	9 898	4.5%	10 623	7.3%	9 905	-6.8%	11 402	15.1%
United Kingdom	75 695	82 814	9.4%	80 209	-3.1%	81 661	1.8%	92 181	12.9%

Values in millions of ECU
Note: The values of the dispatches of B.L.E.U., Germany and the Netherlands have been adjusted for the years 1990, 1991 and 1992 (including the redispatches).
Sources: COMEXT and information transmitted by the Member States up to 30.10.1995.

TABLE 1: EVOLUTION OF INTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 12)

TRADE BALANCE

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
EUR12	**2 143**	**579**	**-3 840**	**27 455**	**34 236**
B.L.E.U.	4 591	4 626	4 276	6 972	11 611
Denmark	791	1 388	2 161	2 984	2 385
Germany	25 075	3 868	7 757	12 006	13 000
Greece	-5 923	-6 036	-6 658	-7 254	-7 361
Spain	-8 938	-9 338	-9 961	-6 765	-5 713
France	-14 876	-10 944	-9 528	-5 087	-5 580
Ireland	2 406	2 894	4 128	5 182	6 541
Italy	-4 261	-4 326	-6 304	7 051	5 838
Netherlands	21 492	26 060	23 639	24 010	24 973
Portugal	-4 207	-5 449	-6 648	-4 947	-4 769
United Kingdom	-14 007	-2 165	-6 702	-6 697	-6 688

Values in millions of ECU
Sources: COMEXT and information transmitted by the Member States up to 30.10.1995.

TABLE 2: INTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 15)

ARRIVALS

	1994				1995	1995
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q1.95 / Q1.94
EUR15	**204 460**	**218 377**	**201 405**	**236 263**	**223 392 ***	
B.L.E.U.	19 703	20 600	18 641	21 116	23 413	18.8%
Denmark	4 839	5 162	4 918	5 890	5 803	19.9%
Germany	43 300	47 967	44 264	51 585	49 154	13.5%
Greece	2 974	3 087	2 893	3 322	3 180	6.9%
Spain	11 593	13 138	11 397	13 776	13 179	13.7%
France	33 366	35 097	32 184	37 762	37 376	12.0%
Ireland	3 425	3 505	3 307	3 838	3 877	13.2%
Italy	20 373	21 613	18 870	24 191	22 613	11.0%
Netherlands	19 678	19 727	18 936	21 404	22 060	12.1%
Austria	7 223	7 745	7 326	8 239		
Portugal	3 876	4 125	3 846	4 869	4 645	19.8%
Finland	2 251	2 618	2 481	3 359	3 254	44.5%
Sweden	6 318	6 786	6 551	7 548	6 834	8.2%
United Kingdom	25 541	27 207	25 791	29 364	28 004	9.6%

DISPATCHES

	1994				1995	1995
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q1.95 / Q1.94
EUR15	**216 518**	**224 823**	**209 461**	**243 986**	**240 859 ***	
B.L.E.U.	22 025	23 555	21 020	23 926	26 133	18.7%
Denmark	5 582	5 647	5 541	6 233	6 319	13.2%
Germany	48 887	51 693	48 161	56 849	55 095	12.7%
Greece	1 105	1 077	1 130	1 203	1 277	15.5%
Spain	10 652	11 341	9 092	11 983	11 848	11.2%
France	32 292	33 811	30 741	35 799	36 188	12.1%
Ireland	5 048	5 194	4 998	5 927	5 963	18.1%
Italy	21 577	22 941	21 786	24 849	23 250	7.8%
Netherlands	25 642	25 521	24 813	27 728	31 908	24.4%
Austria	5 602	5 911	5 872	6 354		
Portugal	2 934	2 957	2 946	3 256	3 542	20.7%
Finland	3 239	3 552	3 301	4 094	4 064	25.5%
Sweden	7 392	7 628	7 203	8 282	8 053	8.9%
United Kingdom	24 543	23 995	22 856	27 502	27 219	10.9%

Values in millions of ECU
*: Sum of vailable data
Sources: COMEXT and information transmitted by the Member States up to 30.10.1995.

TABLE 3: STRUCTURE OF INTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 12) BY PRINCIPAL PRODUCT GROUPS
- Year 1994 -

ARRIVALS

REPORTING COUNTRIES	*Foods, beverages, tabacco SITC 0+1*		*Raw materials SITC 2+4*		*Fuel products SITC 3*		*Chemicals SITC 5*		*Machinery, transport equipment SITC 7*		*Other manufactured goods SITC 6+8*		*Other SITC9 + adjustments*	
	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93
B.L.E.U.	8 753	5.7%	3 104	19.8%	4 777	20.7%	10 842	8.2%	18 289	10.1%	22 000	4.1%	7 911	-15.2%
Denmark	1 756	5.7%	434	10.2%	149	-43.7%	2 203	16.2%	5 524	22.5%	4 632	15.3%	1 604	18.2%
Germany	20 111	5.7%	5 276	11.2%	8 291	-7.9%	17 786	14.4%	55 435	11.6%	43 844	8.2%	10 417	-7.5%
Greece	2 308	7.7%	250	12.3%	98	10.4%	1 731	12.8%	3 421	-9.5%	3 799	9.1%	38	2.8%
Spain	5 340	12.2%	1 874	31.3%	683	-4.5%	6 786	19.5%	20 051	13.0%	12 681	18.3%	180	517.7%
France	15 107	11.3%	3 438	22.1%	3 834	-4.0%	16 814	15.3%	54 370	13.7%	39 315	10.5%	47	-20.9%
Ireland	1 675	15.1%	271	9.1%	445	-9.7%	2 010	22.7%	3 872	20.8%	3 710	10.6%	1 646	20.2%
Italy	11 960	1.8%	4 957	23.3%	1 311	7.4%	12 804	16.6%	28 003	12.5%	19 143	17.5%	1 122	4.2%
Netherlands	9 453	20.8%	2 636	29.6%	2 319	15.8%	10 675	42.2%	21 153	22.8%	20 595	25.4%	7 484	-38.9%
Portugal	1 909	18.1%	443	15.4%	297	-34.3%	1 881	15.9%	6 210	4.9%	5 322	12.0%	109	5.5%
United Kingdom	11 585	8.3%	2 465	23.5%	1 606	-6.0%	12 879	13.9%	41 616	21.1%	25 415	17.4%	3 304	-50.3%

DISPATCHES

REPORTING COUNTRIES	*Foods, beverages, tabacco SITC 0+1*		*Raw materials SITC 2+4*		*Fuel products SITC 3*		*Chemicals SITC 5*		*Machinery, transport equipment SITC 7*		*Other manufactured goods SITC 6+8*		*Other SITC9 + adjustments*	
	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93	Value	Evolution 94/93
B.L.E.U.	10 468	6.3%	2 508	19.5%	2 423	-3.5%	14 552	17.5%	25 179	13.3%	28 253	6.6%	3 903	17.6%
Denmark	5 251	7.1%	879	25.5%	496	72.0%	1 304	6.9%	3 359	5.4%	4 766	9.8%	2 632	7.6%
Germany	11 227	2.7%	4 305	14.8%	1 784	1.1%	23 880	17.3%	79 707	10.4%	46 216	6.0%	7 040	-23.0%
Greece	1 120	1.1%	518	27.3%	111	113.6%	136	5.1%	191	-3.3%	2 138	1.9%	71	68.5%
Spain	6 334	16.5%	1 535	27.3%	653	14.7%	3 229	33.2%	19 193	21.0%	10 761	23.2%	177	143.8%
France	20 037	2.6%	4 313	18.4%	2 974	0.1%	16 463	12.9%	51 000	16.8%	32 192	12.5%	365	11.9%
Ireland	4 404	5.0%	505	14.0%	124	-5.8%	3 595	29.7%	5 592	23.8%	4 447	22.2%	1 502	20.4%
Italy	6 720	7.6%	1 030	12.5%	463	-15.8%	6 520	16.6%	29 748	11.8%	40 008	8.9%	648	4.1%
Netherlands	20 566	22.8%	6 656	36.1%	9 485	16.8%	15 900	40.7%	23 220	40.0%	22 838	27.2%	623	-95.4%
Portugal	722	15.8%	670	25.2%	339	24.9%	560	37.6%	2 645	18.1%	6 464	10.9%	1	149.6%
United Kingdom	7 461	16.3%	2 004	30.9%	6 500	7.0%	13 439	14.9%	36 046	19.7%	24 769	21.5%	1 961	-64.0%

Values in millions of ECU
Sources: COMEXT and information transmitted by the Member States up to 30.10.1995.

TABLE 4: STRUCTURE OF NTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 12) BY PARTNER COUNTRIES
- Year 1994 -

ARRIVALS

REPORTING COUNTRIES	PARTNER COUNTRIES											
	B.L.E.U.	*Denmark*	*Germany*	*Greece*	*Spain*	*France*	*Ireland*	*Italy*	*Netherlands*	*Portugal*	*United Kingdom*	*EUR12*
B.L.E.U.	-	0.9%	28.0%	0.2%	2.3%	22.5%	1.5%	6.0%	24.7%	0.7%	13.2%	100.0%
Denmark	7.0%	-	41.8%	0.3%	2.2%	10.3%	1.5%	8.1%	13.3%	2.5%	12.9%	100.0%
Germany	13.9%	3.7%	-	1.0%	5.4%	22.3%	2.2%	16.5%	20.8%	1.7%	12.4%	100.0%
Greece	5.9%	2.3%	25.4%	-	4.9%	12.5%	1.3%	25.9%	11.6%	0.5%	9.7%	100.0%
Spain	6.1%	1.3%	24.1%	0.4%	-	28.3%	1.4%	14.1%	7.1%	4.5%	12.7%	100.0%
France	15.9%	1.5%	31.3%	0.3%	9.3%	-	2.1%	15.3%	10.0%	1.6%	12.6%	100.0%
Ireland	2.5%	1.2%	11.6%	0.1%	1.5%	5.8%	-	3.3%	5.5%	0.4%	68.1%	100.0%
Italy	8.4%	1.8%	34.2%	1.4%	6.8%	24.1%	1.7%	-	10.1%	0.6%	10.9%	100.0%
Netherlands	19.6%	2.0%	38.3%	0.3%	3.0%	12.4%	2.0%	6.2%	-	0.9%	15.4%	100.0%
Portugal	4.8%	1.2%	19.5%	0.2%	28.0%	18.0%	1.0%	12.0%	6.1%	-	9.2%	100.0%
United Kingdom	9.4%	2.9%	29.3%	0.5%	4.9%	20.2%	7.8%	10.0%	13.4%	1.7%	-	100.0%

DISPATCHES

REPORTING COUNTRIES	PARTNER COUNTRIES											
	B.L.E.U.	*Denmark*	*Germany*	*Greece*	*Spain*	*France*	*Ireland*	*Italy*	*Netherlands*	*Portugal*	*United Kingdom*	*EUR12*
B.L.E.U.	-	1.3%	29.0%	0.8%	4.0%	26.8%	0.6%	7.1%	17.9%	1.1%	11.4%	100.0%
Denmark	3.7%	-	44.9%	1.5%	3.5%	11.0%	1.0%	7.8%	8.4%	1.1%	17.2%	100.0%
Germany	13.7%	3.8%	-	1.7%	6.5%	24.5%	0.9%	15.5%	15.4%	1.7%	16.3%	100.0%
Greece	3.0%	1.5%	39.0%	-	4.1%	9.9%	0.6%	25.6%	4.6%	0.7%	11.0%	100.0%
Spain	4.4%	0.9%	20.8%	1.4%	-	29.5%	0.6%	13.5%	5.7%	11.4%	11.8%	100.0%
France	14.0%	1.5%	29.1%	1.2%	11.4%	-	1.0%	16.1%	7.3%	2.4%	16.2%	100.0%
Ireland	5.7%	1.4%	20.6%	0.7%	3.4%	13.4%	-	5.7%	8.1%	0.6%	40.3%	100.0%
Italy	5.6%	1.6%	35.6%	3.4%	8.7%	24.5%	0.7%	-	5.4%	2.5%	12.2%	100.0%
Netherlands	18.8%	2.2%	38.3%	1.4%	3.3%	14.2%	0.8%	7.2%	-	1.0%	12.7%	100.0%
Portugal	4.8%	3.1%	25.1%	0.6%	19.2%	19.5%	0.7%	4.5%	7.1%	-	15.4%	100.0%
United Kingdom	10.4%	2.6%	24.5%	1.3%	7.1%	19.2%	10.2%	9.6%	13.3%	1.8%	-	100.0%

Sources: COMEXT and informations transmitted by the Member States up to 30.10.1995.

TABLE 5: INTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 12) BY PARTNER COUNTRIES - Year 1994 -

ARRIVALS

REPORTING COUNTRIES	PARTNER COUNTRIES										
	B.L.E.U.	*Denmark*	*Germany*	*Greece*	*Spain*	*France*	*Ireland*	*Italy*	*Netherlands*	*Portugal*	*United Kingdom*
B.L.E.U.	-	669	21 209	134	1 741	17 020	1 105	4 508	18 721	547	10 022
Denmark	1 059	-	6 300	51	336	1 558	223	1 215	2 006	373	1 946
Germany	22 470	5 922	-	1 616	8 751	35 938	3 622	26 550	33 525	2 732	20 035
Greece	690	262	2 963	-	568	1 461	155	3 012	1 348	64	1 124
Spain	2 903	614	11 466	190	-	13 492	675	6 704	3 397	2 120	6 034
France	21 167	2 032	41 621	443	12 325	-	2 740	20 305	13 353	2 186	16 753
Ireland	327	154	1 498	15	189	745	-	421	709	57	8 778
Italy	6 688	1 393	27 108	1 110	5 420	19 116	1 315	-	8 046	491	8 614
Netherlands	14 540	1 457	28 491	205	2 199	9 229	1 495	4 577	-	679	11 443
Portugal	773	195	3 161	27	4 522	2 916	154	1 948	982	-	1 492
United Kingdom	9 341	2 874	28 950	478	4 809	19 940	7 664	9 867	13 238	1 710	-

DISPATCHES

REPORTING COUNTRIES	PARTNER COUNTRIES										
	B.L.E.U.	*Denmark*	*Germany*	*Greece*	*Spain*	*France*	*Ireland*	*Italy*	*Netherlands*	*Portugal*	*United Kingdom*
B.L.E.U.	-	1 098	25 329	719	3 500	23 355	488	6 232	15 614	979	9 973
Denmark	634	-	7 727	251	603	1 892	166	1 346	1 447	184	2 950
Germany	23 846	6 553	-	2 965	11 260	42 693	1 627	26 973	26 747	3 031	28 465
Greece	129	66	1 671	-	175	426	25	1 095	198	31	470
Spain	1 839	390	8 712	570	-	12 351	267	5 667	2 369	4 788	4 929
France	17 789	1 868	37 024	1 489	14 462	-	1 227	20 501	9 344	3 030	20 610
Ireland	1 124	277	4 059	146	680	2 635	-	1 120	1 594	125	7 951
Italy	4 759	1 335	30 317	2 856	7 385	20 859	556	-	4 566	2 149	10 355
Netherlands	18 660	2 156	38 047	1 342	3 323	14 093	811	7 184	-	1 013	12 658
Portugal	550	348	2 858	67	2 187	2 223	75	507	813	-	1 753
United Kingdom	9 574	2 379	22 555	1 219	6 574	17 706	9.368	8 848	12 303	1 656	-

Values in millions of ECU
Sources: COMEXT and information transmitted by the Member States up to 30.10.1995.

EXTRA - EUROPEAN UNION TRADE

TABLE 6: EVOLUTION OF EXTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 12)

IMPORTS

	1990	*1991*		*1992*		*1993*		*1994*	
	Value	*Value*	*Evolution*	*Value*	*Evolution*	*Value*	*Evolution*	*Value*	*Evolution*
EUR12	**461 576**	**494 099**	**7.0%**	**487 134**	**-1.4%**	**487 197**	**0.0%**	**540 144**	**10.9%**
B.L.E.U.	28 731	30 073	4.7%	28 685	-4.6%	30 872	7.6%	34 192	10.8%
Denmark	11 744	12 205	3.9%	11 972	-1.9%	11 884	-0.7%	13 869	16.7%
Germany	122 492	142 937	16.7%	142 758	-0.1%	142 828	0.0%	156 671	9.7%
Greece	5 575	6 916	24.0%	6 715	-2.9%	7 510	11.8%	6 433	-14.3%
Spain	27 252	29 167	7.0%	29 531	1.2%	25 133	-14.9%	27 378	8.9%
France	66 943	71 098	6.2%	67 866	-4.5%	66 628	-1.8%	71 588	7.4%
Ireland	4 626	5 082	9.9%	4 614	-9.2%	6 320	37.0%	7 776	23.0%
Italy	60 385	61 644	2.1%	59 152	-4.0%	56 245	-4.9%	61 698	9.7%
Netherlands	42 709	45 603	6.8%	46 407	1.8%	42 567	-8.3%	55 458	30.3%
Portugal	6 133	5 975	-2.6%	6 117	2.4%	5 825	-4.8%	6 579	13.0%
United Kingdom	84 985	83 400	-1.9%	83 317	-0.1%	91 386	9.7%	98 501	7.8%

EXPORTS

	1990	*1991*		*1992*		*1993*		*1994*	
	Value	*Value*	*Evolution*	*Value*	*Evolution*	*Value*	*Evolution*	*Value*	*Evolution*
EUR12	**415 441**	**423 466**	**1.9%**	**436 090**	**3.0%**	**487 066**	**11.7%**	**538 987**	**10.7%**
B.L.E.U.	22 388	22 870	2.2%	23 372	2.2%	28 188	20.6%	33 196	17.8%
Denmark	13 314	13 416	0.8%	14 178	5.7%	14 472	2.1%	16 411	13.4%
Germany	142 248	149 085	4.8%	151 558	1.7%	162 833	7.4%	182 230	11.9%
Greece	2 233	2 506	12.2%	2 567	2.5%	3 174	23.6%	3 620	14.0%
Spain	15 696	16 670	6.2%	17 747	6.5%	20 863	17.6%	23 039	10.4%
France	64 993	67 221	3.4%	71 020	5.7%	76 006	7.0%	82 350	8.3%
Ireland	4 532	4 840	6.8%	5 473	13.1%	7 500	37.0%	8 583	14.4%
Italy	55 384	55 524	0.3%	57 718	4.0%	67 242	16.5%	74 365	10.6%
Netherlands	24 366	24 988	2.5%	26 020	4.1%	30 490	17.2%	33 428	9.6%
Portugal	3 286	3 146	-4.3%	3 418	8.7%	3 270	-4.3%	3 722	13.8%
United Kingdom	67 000	63 201	-5.7%	63 018	-0.3%	73 028	15.9%	78 045	6.9%

Values in millions of ECU
Sources: COMEXT and information transmitted by the Member States up to 30.10.1995.

TABLE 6: EVOLUTION OF EXTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 12)

TRADE BALANCE

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
EUR12	**-46 135**	**-70 633**	**-51 044**	**- 131**	**-1 157**
B.L.E.U.	-6 343	-7 203	-5 313	-2 684	- 996
Denmark	1 569	1 211	2 206	2 588	2 542
Germany	19 756	6 148	8 801	20 005	25 559
Greece	-3 342	-4 410	-4 147	-4 335	-2 814
Spain	-11 556	-12 497	-11 784	-4 270	-4 339
France	-1 951	-3 877	3 154	9 377	10 762
Ireland	- 94	- 242	859	1 179	806
Italy	-5 001	-6 120	-1 434	10 997	12 666
Netherlands	-18 343	-20 615	-20 387	-12 077	-22 030
Portugal	-2 847	-2 829	-2 699	-2 555	-2 857
United Kingdom	-17 984	-20 200	-20 300	-18 358	-20 456

Values in millions of ECU
Sources: COMEXT and information transmitted by the Member States up to 30.10.1995.

TABLE 7: EXTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 15)

IMPORTS

	1994				1995	1995
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q1.95 / Q1.94
EUR15	**128 118**	**127 148**	**124 681**	**136 290**	**130 694 ***	
B.L.E.U.	7 447	7 650	7 145	7 566	8 709	16.9%
Denmark	2 307	2 297	2 326	2 432	2 432	5.4%
Germany	32 066	30 946	32 533	35 171	34 527	7.7%
Greece	1 379	1 397	1 244	1 785	1 112	-19.4%
Spain	5 825	6 511	6 160	6 573	6 520	11.9%
France	16 966	16 234	15 693	17 213	17 577	3.6%
Ireland	1 953	1 688	1 687	2 001	2 185	11.9%
Italy	13 666	14 319	13 137	14 829	15 421	12.8%
Netherlands	12 551	12 594	12 552	12 331	12 923	3.0%
Austria	3 650	3 735	3 759	4 623		
Portugal	1 367	1 612	1 254	1 467	1 562	14.3%
Finland	1 742	2 147	2 178	2 783	1 707	-2.0%
Sweden	3 736	3 976	3 847	4 719	3 844	2.9%
United Kingdom	23 462	22 042	21 166	22 798	22 177	-5.5%

EXPORTS

	1994				1995	1995
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q1.95 / Q1.94
EUR15	**121 585**	**131 406**	**125 273**	**141 872**	**128 421 ***	
B.L.E.U.	7 569	7 605	6 995	7 789	8 383	10.7%
Denmark	2 747	2 973	3 062	3 313	3 094	12.6%
Germany	33 984	38 222	37 025	41 569	39 706	16.8%
Greece	666	754	686	1 283	748	12.3%
Spain	5 348	5 441	5 114	5 948	5 714	6.8%
France	18 093	19 133	18 362	21 464	16 406	-9.3%
Ireland	1 748	1 981	1 870	1 986	2 068	18.3%
Italy	15 896	17 679	16 351	18 423	17 574	10.6%
Netherlands	6 995	7 292	7 094	7 632	7 233	3.4%
Austria	3 146	3 416	3 503	3 932		
Portugal	689	659	710	801	847	22.9%
Finland	2 310	2 643	2 730	3 107	2 853	23.5%
Sweden	4 978	5 155	4 821	6 109	5 829	17.1%
United Kingdom	17 415	18 452	16 949	18 515	17 968	3.2%

Values in millions of ECU
*: Sum of available data
Sources: COMEXT and information transmitted by the Member States up to 30.10.1995.

Has there been any change in the quality of Intra-EU trade data with the introduction of the Intrastat system?

Intra-EU trade of individual Member States

Because of product confidentiality and estimates at chapter level or for total trade, it is not possible to cover all EU trade in a four-digit analysis. In 1993, for example, 85.4% of the United Kingdom's dispatches are accurate to four digits, whereas in 1992, 91% of the UK's intra-Community exports were covered at this level. Table 1 summarizes the percentage of total trade studied.

Moreover, when assessing the plausibility of the Intrastat data for 1993, it was possible to take account only of the (4-digit) product groups which had exhibited stable behaviour in the past and which permit relatively reliable forecasts to be made of future developments. In the case of the larger countries, however, it was still possible to cover at least 90% of trade which was accurate to four digits. The proportion was smaller in the case of countries with a lower level of intra-Community trade, partly because there is a clear correlation between the size of the values and the stability of the series.

The values reported for 1993 in the "stable" time series were examined to check whether they were of the order of magnitude expected (i.e. within the confidence interval), too high (above the interval) or too low (below the interval). The results of this study for each Member State/flow combination were summarized in tables, in which all the products exhibiting the same behaviour in all four quarters were grouped together. This makes it possible to say, for example, whether an above-average number of products exhibited unexpectedly low figures in all four quarters in certain countries.

Study of time series at HS4 level

Eurostat has investigated the 1993 Intrastat results for arrivals in and the dispatches from the twelve "old" Member States at HS4 level, using historical data. More particularly, 95% confidence intervals were forecast for 1993 on the basis of quarterly intra-Community trade data for the years 1988 to 1992. The Intrastat data for the year 1993 were then compared with these forecast intervals.

It emerged from an analysis of the total intra-Community trade of the individual Member States that a higher percentage of the trade of Italy, France and Spain lies within the confidence interval than is the case with other Member States. Whereas for Germany and the Netherlands quarterly data more often lie below the forecast interval than above it, the shares of quarterly trade figures for both the United Kingdom and Ireland which lie below or above the confidence interval are roughly the same.

Particularly in the case of the Netherlands and Germany, the arrivals figures for many product groups were unexpectedly low in all four quarters, i.e. 251 product groups in the case of Germany (accounting for 30.3% of the total value in 1992 and 26.8% in 1993) and 171 product groups in the case of the Netherlands (accounting for 25.5% and 20.4% respectively of the total value in 1992 and 1993). Spain's dispatches accounted for the largest share of total value, and the figure (47%) lay within the confidence interval in all four quarters (185 product groups). All the values for around 9% of trade were lower than expected. Table 2 shows the number and percentage of 4-digit items which fell within or below the confidence interval in all four quarters.

Trade between individual Member States

Since the main point of interest is to know exactly where changes occurred in the time series with the introduction of the Intrastat system, four intra-EU flows between individual Member States were studied in greater detail as examples. These were dispatches from Italy to Germany and France and arrivals in Germany and France from Italy. Between 33% and 39% of the time series were stable and it was possible to investigate the plausibility of the data for 1993. In terms of value, this accounts for at least 80% of trade at HS4 level.

The proportion of stable time series is smaller than for intra-Community trade by all Member States because of the lower values.

The time series data for dispatches from Italy to Germany and France more often lie within the confidence interval than in the case of arrivals in Germany and France from Italy. In the case of arrivals in Germany, in particular, many quarterly values are below the confidence interval. The value share of all product groups for which the figures lie below the confidence interval in all four quarters was 21% in 1992 in the case of arrivals in Germany from Italy, compared with 9.8% for dispatches from Italy to Germany.

In order to analyse individual cases more precisely, it is useful to compare the results of one country with those of the partner country. Series for which, for example, all the quarterly values are very low can be compared with the corresponding returns for the partner country. Examples include dispatches from Italy for product group 6211 "Track suits, ski suits and swimwear; other garments" to Germany (cf. Fig. 1): the values for 1993 were substantially lower than expected. A comparison with

Table 1: Summary of 1992 trade accurate to four digits and "the stable component"

				Stable 4 - digit figures	
		Total value in 1000 ECU	***of which, accurate to 4 digits***	***Value in % of all 4 - digit items***	***Number***
France	Dispatches	121 380	97.40%	94.20%	809
	Arrivals	130 908	99.90%	94.20%	940
BLEU	Dispatches	71 896	94.80%	94.30%	718
	Arrivals	72 599	92.20%	93.20%	859
Netherlands	Dispatches	82 593	95.00%	91.90%	721
	Arrivals	67 063	99.10%	92.70%	832
Germany	Dispatches	179 726	94.40%	93.80%	913
	Arrivals	172 858	94.60%	92.60%	918
Italy	Dispatches	79 787	98.80%	90.70%	643
	Arrivals	85 692	98.60%	91.80%	748
United Kingdom	Dispatches	80 209	91.00%	91.80%	688
	Arrivals	86 911	97.00%	91.30%	752
Ireland	Dispatches	16 202	97.50%	77.10%	256
	Arrivals	12 074	97.10%	84.10%	510
Denmark	Dispatches	17 022	90.60%	81.30%	361
	Arrivals	14 861	95.30%	88.30%	608
Greece	Dispatches	4 964	95.90%	28.60%	29
	Arrivals	11 614	99.30%	62.60%	342
Portugal	Dispatches	10 756	99.60%	81.00%	220
	Arrivals	17 271	99.90%	81.20%	541
Spain	Dispatches	35 228	99.00%	81.90%	457
	Arrivals	45 123	99.70%	87.60%	644

Source: COMEXT II (22 - 08 - 95)

arrivals in Germany, which lie within the confidence interval, shows that the two series for 1993 tally much better than before. A further example is arrivals in Germany of articles for product group 9403 "Other furniture and parts thereof" from Italy (cf. Fig. 2): the two series corresponded very closely up to 1992, but with the introduction of Intrastat, the figures for arrivals in Germany fell much more sharply than those for the corresponding dispatches from Italy.

OUTLOOK

THE goods flows between individual Member States will be studied for all the countries, and the results for important time series in terms of value where problems arose with the introduction of Intrastat will be made available to each Member State. The question should then be examined further with a view to improving data quality.

Eurostat will continue its assessment work at various levels of aggregation to obtain a comprehensive picture of the overall data quality.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Table 2: Number and percentage of 4-digit items falling within or below the confidence interval in all four quarters.

		Within confidence interval in all four quarters			*Below confidence interval in all four quarters*		
		Number of 4-digit items	*Percentage of all 4-digit items*		*Number of 4-digit items*	*Percentage of all 4-digit items*	
			1992	*1993*		*1992*	*1993*
France	Dispatches	334	42%	43%	52	9%	7%
	Arrivals	412	39%	41%	63	9%	7%
BLEU	Dispatches	224	27%	25%	34	4%	3%
	Arrivals	346	31%	31%	76	16%	10%
Netherlands	Dispatches	190	29%	29%	85	15%	13%
	Arrivals	169	18%	21%	171	26%	20%
Germany	Dispatches	325	23%	25%	98	10%	9%
	Arrivals	200	15%	17%	251	30%	27%
Italy	Dispatches	286	41%	41%	30	5%	3%
	Arrivals	308	34%	36%	51	21%	16%
United Kingdom	Dispatches	245	33%	35%	59	6%	4%
	Arrivals	327	30%	30%	55	5%	3%
Ireland	Dispatches	84	19%	19%	45	20%	12%
	Arrivals	166	20%	20%	61	18%	11%
Denmark	Dispatches	133	28%	31%	34	18%	16%
	Arrivals	226	31%	32%	41	10%	8%
Greece	Dispatches	7	6%	6%	1	1%	0%
	Arrivals	163	23%	24%	9	3%	2%
Portugal	Dispatches	89	32%	33%	20	8%	7%
	Arrivals	157	16%	17%	74	13%	12%
Spain	Dispatches	185	46%	47%	28	10%	8%
	Arrivals	223	37%	37%	63	8%	6%

Fig. 1: Product 6211
«Tracksuits, ski suits, swimwear; other garments»
Dispatches from Italy to Germany - Arrivals in Germany from Italy

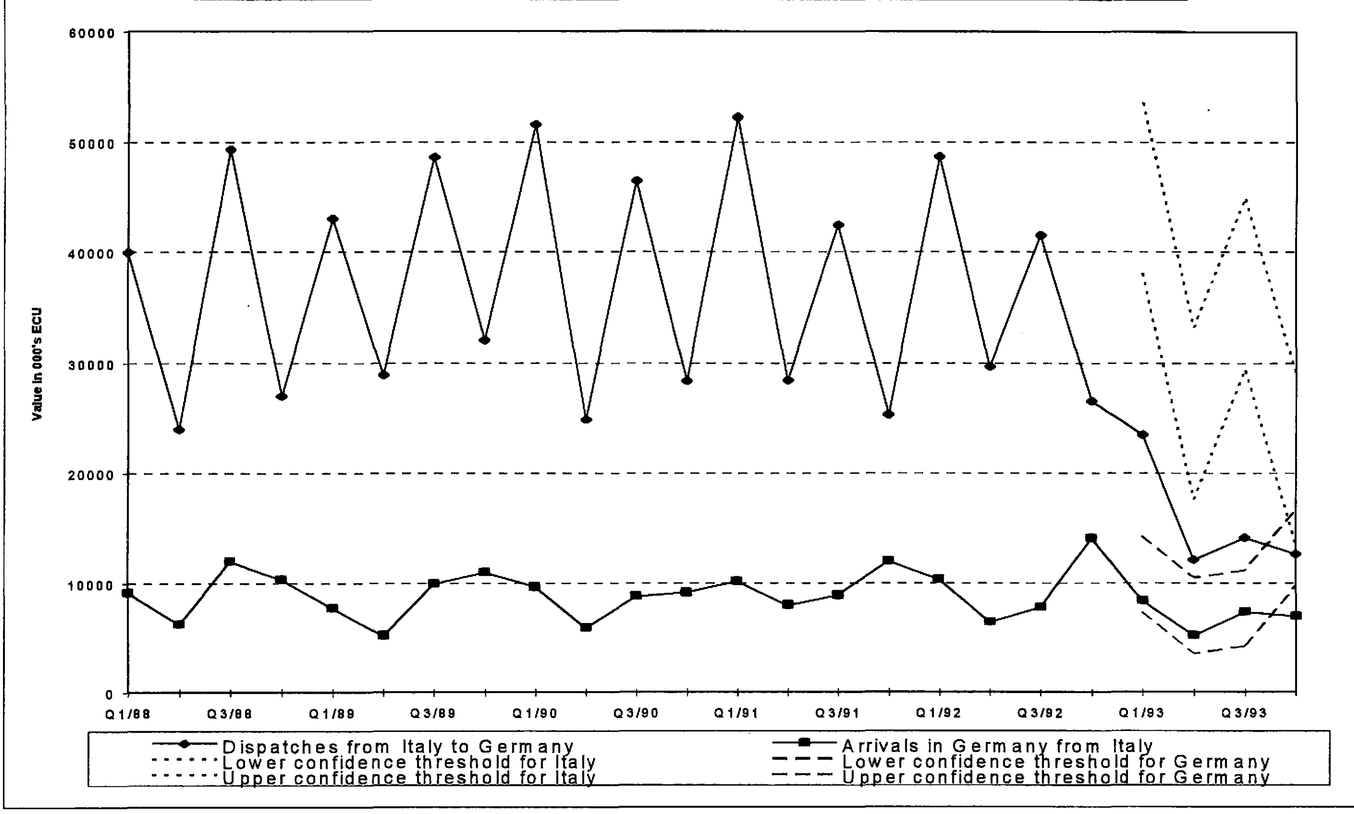
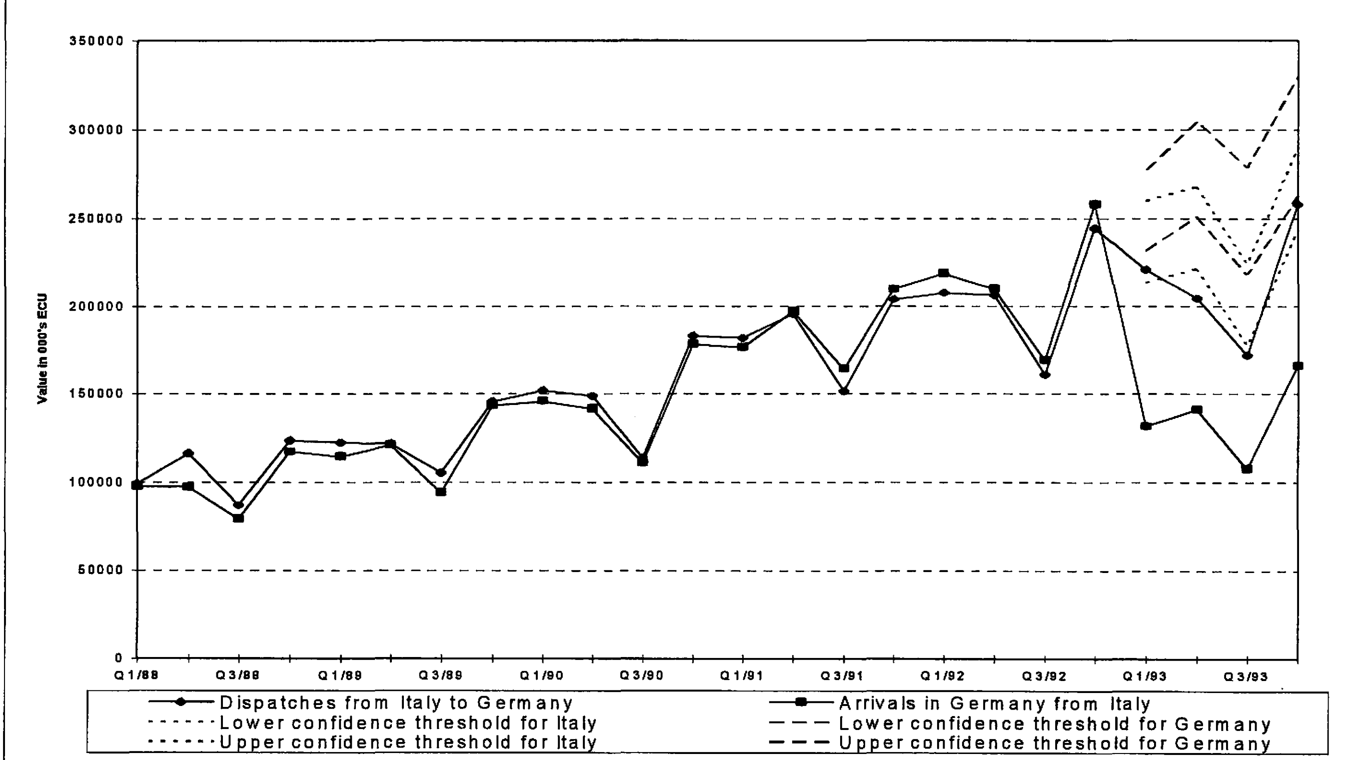


Fig. 2: Product 9403
«Other furniture and parts thereof»
Dispatches from Italy to Germany - Arrivals in Germany from Italy



GLOBALISATION

An 'External Trade' Task Force on Globalisation consisting of France, Greece and Italy with Eurostat providing support and coordination was set up in June 1995 to study in more detail the feasibility of integrating information on intra-firm trade and international sub-contracting into foreign trade statistics. Initial progress was made during the first meeting of the Task Force held on September 21 and 22, 1995 in Athens. The members of the Task Force agreed on a work programme and a timetable for its implementation and finalisation. The Task Force concluded that is should focus on three areas:

1. A study of needs for statistical data on intra-firm trade and international sub-contracting;
2. An analysis of the relationship between enterprises within a multinational group;
3. The potential for adaptation of existing collection systems to identify information on intra-firm trade and international sub-contracting in the framework of foreign trade statistics.

As a first stage, it was agreed that each Task Force member should contribute to preparatory documents on the first two topics. It was decided however to exclude the third topic from the first stage as the approach to be taken will depend on the results of the first two topics. Based on the conclusions of this first phase, specialisation by topic would be considered **for the second stage,** whereby each Member State would work individually on a topic. The **third phase** would be to arrive at common conclusions and recommendations on the feasibility of integrating information on intra-firm trade and international sub-contracting into foreign trade statistics.

TOPIC 1
NEEDS FOR STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON INTRA-FIRM TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL SUB-CONTRACTING

Eurostat has carried out a study on the needs for information on intra-firm trade and international sub-contracting within the Commission services and international organisations. The analysis revealed the need for detailed intra-firm trade and international sub-contracting data by partner country and by product. To complement this work, the Task Force members agreed to analyse the issue of needs at national level. This would be carried out by means of interviews within the relevant national services, professional and trade associations and enterprises. The purpose of this exercise is to determine:

❑ **Whether foreign trade statistics should contribute to the collection of information on intra-firm trade and international sub-contracting:**
If the interviews reveal that detailed information on intra-firm trade and international sub-contracting by partner country and by product is required, there would be a strong justification for the inclusion of such information in the framework of foreign trade statistics.

❑ **How data on intra-firm trade and international sub-contracting should be compiled:**
Should information on intra-firm trade be compiled on an aggregate basis or separately tabulated for the domestic parents of foreign affiliates and for the domestic affiliates of foreign multinational companies? Should information on intra-firm trade and international sub-contracting by partner country and by product be cross-tabulated?

❑ **What transactions should be covered in collecting data on international sub-contracting:**
The Eurostat information on international sub-contracting currently available is limited to "processing under contract", whereby a main contractor in one country sources materials to a sub-contractor in another country for processing. Is this type of information sufficient to satisfy user needs or should Eurostat information include more complicated transactions covering cases where main contractors do not directly supply materials to their international sub-contractors?

❑ **What percentage of share ownership as a basis for defining foreign affiliates would best meet user needs.**

TOPIC 2
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENTERPRISES WITHIN A MULTINATIONAL GROUP

The decision to study in more detail the relation between parent companies and foreign affiliates reflects the views of the Member States in their written comments to Eurostat on intra-firm trade that the declarant may not always know if companies involved in a transaction are related.

This exercise will be carried out through a separate Survey, specifically targeted to enterprises directly affected by the phenomenon of globalisation; in particular enterprises part of a multinational group. This would include heads of groups, foreign parent affiliates and foreign affiliates of groups.

The main objectives of such a Survey would be to assess:

- **To what extent enterprises can define ownership relationships within a multinational group. This would take into account both direct and indirect shareholding.**

- **Whether enterprises can identify international goods flows within a multinational group.**

TOPIC 3

POTENTIAL FOR ADAPTATION OF COLLECTION SYSTEMS TO IDENTIFY INFORMATION ON INTRA-FIRM TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL SUB-CONTRACTING IN THE FRAMEWORK OF FOREIGN TRADE STATISTICS

ALTHOUGH no concrete actions were decided on this issue, the conclusion was that a flexible approach needed to be adopted to the topic. In particular, it was seen as important not only to consider the adaptation of existing collection systems, but also whether special surveys to integrate this information might be more appropriate.

As a preparatory step in this topic, the Task Force will assess whether existing data on processing under contract is sufficient to meet user needs or whether Eurostat information should include more complicated transactions, covering the cases where main contractors do not directly supply materials to sub-contractors. Based on data provided by the Member States, the Task Force will also continue its analysis of the data on extra- and intra-Community processing under contract to assess the utility of this information.

TIMETABLE

THE Task Force aims to complete the work by Autumn 1996. In the meantime, the Task Force agreed to hold a series of meetings in order to review the progress of the work and discuss any problems encountered. The next meeting will be held on January 11 and 12 in Paris to review the progress of its work.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

THE work carried out by the External and intra-Community trade Division of Eurostat on Globalisation; in particular intra-firm trade and international sub-contracting reflects the increasingly important role of these relationships in international trade. Any comments of readers on any aspects of this issue would be welcomed.

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR APPRAISAL OF NATIONAL INTRASTAT SYSTEMS

In response to a need for detailed information on the functioning of Intrastat and the quality of data collected through this system, it was decided at the February 1995 meeting of the 'Committee of the statistics relating to trade in goods between Member States' to undertake an appraisal exercise as an extension of the Quality Assurance Programme.

It was agreed that a questionnaire should be devised and distributed to all Member States. However it was recognised that such a questionnaire would be most effective if completed in conjunction with face-to-face interviews. Such a strategy serves several purposes. Firstly, any ambiguities in the questionnaire can more easily be clarified in an interview situation. Secondly, a great deal of general information that effects the functionality of Intrastat, but is not directly covered by the questionnaire, can be discussed on-site. This facilitates a wider understanding of the situation in each Member State. Thirdly, it gives the Member States an excellent opportunity to ask Eurostat personnel technical questions specific to their system. Finally, the decision to include Member State representatives in the interviewing teams, means that each Member State has the opportunity to learn about the functioning of the Intrastat system in at least one other country than their own.

The Committee requested France, Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Germany to formulate a questionnaire in conjunction with Eurostat with the aim of eliciting detailed information about data quality and the functioning of Intrastat. Contributions from these Member States were collated and formed by Eurostat into the 'Questionnaire for Appraisal of National Intrastat Systems'. In August the English version of the questionnaire was sent to Member States, the French version in September.

The questionnaire consists of around 70 pages of questions covering subjects such as methodology, processing procedures, the registers of intra-community operators, data adjustment, the threshold system and control procedures. All Member States were requested to answer as many questions as possible before being visited.

Each visiting team consists of a total of four people; two Eurostat representatives and representatives from two other Member States. The Member States' representatives have been requested to take a proactive role in the interviews, with the Eurostat personnel available to clarify any ambiguities and to answer specific technical questions that may come to light in the course of answering the questionnaire.

A brief discussion of the progress of interviews took place in the meeting of the 'Committee on the Statistics relating to the Trading of Goods between Member States' in October. At that time France, Ireland, Spain and the UK had already been visited and overall, their response was favourable. They felt that in completing the questionnaire they had learnt more about their system, problem areas had been highlighted and the search for solutions could begin. Both the visiting teams and the representatives of the Member States interviewed found the opportunity to exchange information on differences and similarities between their particular national Intrastat systems a very valuable and interesting exercise.

Each visiting representative has been requested to write a report on the exercise, including a general overview of the visit as well as detailed information. Eurostat will collate these documents and provide a final report of the results in 1996.

Preliminary results of the questionnaire are to be presented at the Intrastat II Seminar in March 1996. It is hoped that the findings will encourage a greater harmonisation of national systems whereby discrepancies in data due to different national rules or control measures can be reduced.

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EDICOM MEETINGS IN ATHENS AND LUXEMBOURG

On the first of June the second EDICOM Task Force meeting of this year took place in Athens. Kind host for the meeting was the National Statistical Service Greece. The session was mainly dedicated to presentations and discussions about the new 1996 version of the IDEP/CN8 software. Other topics included the state of the National EDICOM actions in the Member States, the progress of the various EDICOM sub-projects executed centrally by Eurostat, and a presentation on the EDI agreement system adopted in France.

THE 1996 version 4 of the INTRASTAT data entry package **IDEP/CN8**, will include a significant number of enhancements, both on a technical and a functional level. After about 30 modifications in the package were careful consideration selected from an initial list of change requests submitted by the Member States and Eurostat of over 100 items long. A major technical improvement is the replacement of the two current IDEP/CN8 versions (one for small and/or older PC configurations and one for larger, more recent ones) by one version, capable of choosing its own "mode-to-run". Furthermore, the programs and nomenclatures will be fully separated. The big advantage of this is, that in case of an update of either the software or the nomenclature during the course of the year, the National Administration will only have to distribute the relevant diskettes to the traders.

On the functional level, enhancements include improvements of the telecommunications facilities, the printer support for draft and official paper output, the validation of identification numbers and formats, and the adaptation of the EDIFACT message produced by IDEP/CN8 to the character set used on the PC.

In most Member States, the "**National EDICOM Actions**" that were planned for 1994 are in a final stage, and being followed up by the 1995 action plans. In many cases, this means a continuation of the work and projects that started in the first year of the EDICOM decision. Most Member States aim at a reduction of the number of paper declarations in favour of diskettes and telecommunication. For the new Member States, this year's major action is the introduction of the measures and systems required for INTRASTAT. The Dutch declaration package IRIS, which is also used in Germany, will be available as a Windows application in 1996.

If a National Administration starts the promotion and introduction of returns by EDI, one of the important issues is the establishment of a clear and complete **EDI Agreement** between the message-exchanging partners. France presented the actions, measures and agreement models they have adopted to come to such an agreement with their traders.

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On 22 September, a technical meeting for representatives of Member States that already distribute - or plan to start distribution - of the IDEP/CN8 package, took place in Luxembourg. The overall idea of the meeting was to encourage the exchange of the delegates' experiences on organisational and technical matters concerning the introduction, distribution and support of the IDEP/CN8 package in their country.

FOR the first time, Eurostat organised a special meeting for representatives of the National Administrations who are involved in the preparation, distribution and support of the IDEP/CN8 package. Two major items on the Agenda were the Organisation around IDEP/CN8 in the Member States, and a Technical Questions & Answers session.

A summary of the most important items discussed in the Organisational part of the meeting is given below:

- IDEP/CN8 appears to be well-accepted by the traders, thanks to the improvements made in the package in the past year and the more stabilised development that resulted in an increased quality of the software. But also because of the improved local support by the National Administrations, usually provided in the form of a Help-Desk function. In general, the Administrations are not very positive about the quality of commercially produced packages used by some declarants. Measures for improvement are to be taken.
- The number of traders and agents

using IDEP/CN8 is fast growing and is expected to reach 10.000 at the end of 1995.

- The IDEP/CN8-using Member States promote the package in various ways: by organising demonstrations and seminars for groups of potential users, by producing promotional documentation for large scale distribution to selected groups of traders, or even through direct personal assistance.
- All Administrations are interested in the telecommunications solution offered by IDEP/CN8, and if not already started, they prepare to start in 1996.

During the Technical Question & Answer session many aspects of the current IDEP/CN8 version 3 and the new version 4, which was already tested by most Member States, were highlighted and delegates could benefit from their colleagues' experiences.

During the day, the delegates could try-out a preliminary version of the IRIS package running under Windows, and a CN8 Windows application. Furthermore, a telecommunications installation of IDEP/CN8 could be used to send declarations via a telephone link to a Return Handling System installed on another PC.

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The third EDICOM Task Force meeting in 1995 took place in Luxembourg on 6 November. The morning session was dedicated to various subjects dealing with the execution and continuation of current and future EDICOM actions. In the afternoon session, the COMEXT database system and the COMEXT CD-ROM were demonstrated by Eurostat. The results of a questionnaire concerning the usage of EDI in the Member States in the framework of INTRASTAT were presented, as well as a report on a fast-and-simple telecommunications implementation pilot for IDEP/CN8 in Luxembourg. A discussion on if (and how) commercial usage of the different parts of IDEP and CN8 should be supported concluded the meeting.

For an important part, the 1996 **National EDICOM Action Plans** of the Member States include the continuation of projects that already started in prior phases. The implementation of telecommunications in the INTRASTAT return system is high on the priority list of most Member States. Italy, Sweden and quite likely also Finland, will start the distribution of IDEP/CN8 next year.

Eurostat's Action Plans include the continuation of most of the on-going projects, such as support for current and new versions of IDEP/CN8, COMEXT enhancements and maintenance, support for enterprises, and studies and actions in the fields of methodology, globalisation, quality improvement. The development of a Windows version for IDEP/CN8 will start, as will a number of telecommunication pilots. The improvements made this year in the production of the nomenclatures will be extended and the quality of some of the texts will be improved. The awareness for the COMEXT CD-ROM will be raised by participation in various events. In the afternoon session, a demonstration of their latest developments was given by the **COMEXT** team. The **COMEXT CD-ROM** was presented in a second demonstration.

Some months ago, Eurostat sent out a questionnaire to all Member States about the usage of **EDI in the framework of INTRASTAT**. A preliminary version of the results of this questionnaire was presented, showing the number of returns on paper, by magnetic media and telecommunications for each Member State. By the end of the year, Eurostat will have produced a final version of the results.

Eurostat presented the first results of a **telecommunications project in Luxembourg**, where at the trader's side the IDEP/CN8 program together with a simple telecommunication script is used, and at the Administration's side a simple Return Handling System that is implemented on a PC. Communication takes place through modems + telephone connection. So far, the implementation appears to be very successful and Luxembourg is planning to make it available for all traders next year.

The final discussion of this meeting was on the **commercial usage of the IDEP/CN8** software and code tables. It was decided that the National Administrations are free to supply the IDEP/CN8 package, including code tables, to software houses for commercial use, on their own conditions. On demand, Eurostat will supply software houses (and others) with the code tables, at costs that yet have to be determined.

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS FOR THE INTRASTAT DATA COLLECTION SYSTEMS

In the previous edition of the EDICOM Newsletter, we started a series of articles about the usage of Telecommunications for INTRASTAT data collection. In this issue, we continue with the situation in Belgium and the United Kingdom.

BELGIAN NATIONAL BANK (BNB)

The Belgian National Bank (BNB) became the Competent National Administration for Intrastat in Belgium in January this year, taking over from the National Statistical Institute (NIS/INS). BNB is fully responsible for both data collection and processing of Intrastat returns. In Belgium, the number of Intrastat declarants is about 30,000.

In 1993, Belgium was one of the first Member States that distributed the IDEP/CN8 declaration software to a significant number of potential end users. After more than two years, the number of users has grown to about 700, including 60 third declarants. This figure represents some 70,000 declaration lines per month. Most PSI's produce their declarations on diskette (supply of free diskettes is under consideration), currently about 50 PSI's are reporting by telecommunications. BNB installed a 3-person help desk to assist the declarants and support telecommunications.

The telecommunications project for INTRASTAT declarations started in 1993. The scope of the project was very broad: to provide a multi-protocol collecting system, accepting EDI and ASCII files, open to various PSI systems (from PC to mainframe) with a high connectivity. It should be open to today's telecommunications standards and to Value Added Networks (VAN's) and offer Bulletin-Board-like facilities for two-way traffic.

A first pragmatic approach is to include the services of a VAN supplier who could offer solutions for the expected services and openness. A mailbox in the VAN was used to collect the INTRASTAT EDI files and retrieve them on a daily basis. The PSI's could either have a mailbox in the VAN or data could be sent through one of the available (X.400 and OFTP) gateways. A server system, including EDIFACT translation, was implemented on the CNA side. The extended use of IDEP/CN8, that offered support for telecommunications since mid 1994, was promoted as it ensured high data quality and EDIFACT conformity. A two-month pilot phase started in April 1994.

Three formulae were offered to PSI's:

❶ Limited services on the VAN, only a Send function to one EDI partner (the CNA), and supported by commercially available communications products,

❷ Limited services on the VAN, including Send and Retrieve functions to one EDI partner (the CNA), and supported by telecommunications modules developed by the CNA,

❸ Full EDI services on the VAN, including all EDI and E-mail functions and available protocols, many EDI partners.

The first option was only required until the necessary modules to be used with IDEP/CN8 version 3 had been developed; the third option was in practice never used, mainly due to the high costs involved for the PSI's.

The second option, "Formula Magic", appeared to be the most successful. After the pilot phase, it was hoped that around 1000 PSI's would be utilizing this option by the end of 1994 and 2000 by the end of 1995. In reality by the end of 1994, there were only 7 users and by the end of 1995 there will propably be still less than 100.

According to the telecommunications support team, technical problems when installing the necessary hardware and adapting the configuration on the PSI's systems are the most important reasons for these disappointing figures. It was decided that a simpler, more flexible and cheaper solution should be given to PSI's wanting to use telecommunications.

Currently, the strategy has been adapted accordingly:

- A Bulletin Board System will be put in place, lowering the costs for the PSI's: it will not be necessary to use the VAN or gateway system anymore. It will support various communication protocols.
- A special manual for IDEP/CN8 telecommunications users has been written and will be distributed to all users with the 1996 IDEP/CN8 version. Much emphasis was put on diagnostics, taking into account the experience built up in the past year. It is considered to be useful, to include a clear description of the interface between the IDEP/CN8 program and the telecommunications module, to make it possible for PSI's to use their "own" module instead of the one provided with IDEP/CN8.
- The possibility to send messages that were not produced by IDEP/CN8 will be supported.

HM CUSTOMS & EXCISE, TARIFF & STATISTICAL OFFICE (T&SO)

In the United Kingdom, the Tariff & Statistical office of Her Majesty's Customs & Excise (T&SO) are responsible for the Intrastat data collection and processing. The number of traders that are obliged to produce Intrastat declarations is about 32.000.

The first principle that has guided T&SO is that of market led development. They have worked to encourage commercial enterprises to direct the development of services in ways that can be of most benefit to the world of commerce as well as the central authority.

Secondly, T&SO have not developed centrally defined and approved packages to avoid distorting the market place and constraining the production of market-driven solutions.

Thirdly, T&SO have worked to develop EDI services that are as open as possible to all those who may wish to use them, without imposing their own view of how PSI's should organise their business.

UK commitment to International standards is well documented. Considerable resources were committed to the process of developing European and World-wide standards, and they have adopted the EDIFACT message standard as the basic format. Equally, there is a strong commitment to the introduction of Open System standards, and care was taken to ensure that their own systems are able to develop along those lines as they evolve.

For the interface with the traders supplying information, the UK adopted the approach of producing a Trade Specification, a set of guidelines on message structure and format. This allows individual system developers to design their own systems to produce data in the form of a message which can be transmitted to the CNA. T&SO's own development effort has been directed towards the reception and processing of these messages.

The first EDI service to be developed by UK Customs, the Period Entry system, was introduced in 1975. This is still in operation, but has now been supplemented and partially replaced by the Electronic Data Capture Service (EDCS) system which was developed to support the introduction of Intrastat in 1993. The Customs Handling Import Export Freight (CHIEF) system is fully integrated with commercial trade systems and allows Direct Trader Input of third country freight and statistical data. It does not handle Intrastat data.

The Period Entry System is aimed at a small number of traders with large, regular data submission requirements. Extensive testing and evaluation is required of traders' systems before they are approved for use. The data is supplied on tape and diskette and relates to multi purpose Customs Freight (import, export, and warehousing) declarations.

EDCS was introduced in time for the Single Market and was aimed at traders of every size from the smallest to the largest. It is designed to handle messages without prior approval, and although the use of testing facilities is encouraged, it is not compulsory. There are now approximately 1.400 traders per month submitting statistical data by EDI, and the system also receives EC Sales Listings and Customs freight data (via Period Entry).

The transmission media for EDCS are varied and include diskettes in PC format, traditional tape reel, and a variety of on-line transmissions from private network providers (Value Added Networks and Port Communities). There is no standard link with these private networks, but T&SO receive X.400 messages and file transfers over X.25 PSDN connections, and file transfers over direct analogue links. X.400 is the preferred standard.

Considerations for the future are:

To make the system even more accessible to all traders. This could be achieved by endorsing or accrediting conformant packages, or by developing new, more specific, message types. T&SO have contacted the trade and software houses about a simplified Trade Specification and about EDIFACT translation packages.

A second area of interest concerns the method of access to the services. Proposals exist to examine a wide range of potential access methods, including direct data lines, ISDN dial-up links, and public Internet E-Mail services. A X.400 solution is to be tested shortly. Improved speech recognition techniques could allow dictation of data over normal telephone lines, or transcription by operators could be offered.

It is also being considered whether other sorts of data could be received and processed via EDI services, a study on this subject has already started. This could include all the information that traders supply to T&SO and even to other Government Departments.

These three areas - economic benefits, technical opportunities and business facilitation - are considered as a whole and it is believed that this will drive the future direction of EDI in relation to statistical services.

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STATUS OF DATA SENT TO EUROSTAT ON 29 NOVEMBER 1995

■ Detailed data Intra + Extra

✶ Detailed data Extra and global data Intra

❑ Detailed data Extra

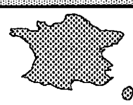
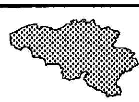
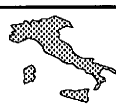
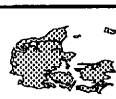
● Global data Intra

Detailed data: *breakdown by product (CN8) and partner country*

Global data: *breakdown by partner country*

PERIOD		Eur.15	UEBL	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I	NL	Ö	P	FIN	SW	UK
	January		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	●	■
	February		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	●	■
	March		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	●	■
	April		■	■	■	✶	■	■	■	■	■		■		●	■
1	May			■	■	✶	■	■	❑	■	■		■			■
9	June			■	■	✶	■	■	❑	■	■		■			■
9	July			■	■		■	■	❑	■	■		■			■
5	August			■	■		■	■	❑	■	■		✶			❑
	September			❑						❑			❑			❑
	October															❑
	November															
	December															

STATISTICAL THRESHOLDS FOR 1996 APPLICABLE FOR THE INTRASTAT DECLARATION

Member States	Currency	Thresholds			
		Assimilation		Simplification	
		Dispatch	*Arrival*	*Dispatch*	*Arrival*
France (FR) 	FF	250 000	250 000	1 400 000	700 000
Belgium (BE) 	BEC	4 200 000	4 200 000		
Luxembourg (LU) 	LUF	4 200 000	4 200 000	10 000 000	10 000 000
Netherlands (NL) 	HFL	400 000	400 000		
Germany (DE) 	DM	200 000	200 000		
Italy (IT) 	LIT	150 000 000	150 000 000		
United Kingdom (GB) 	UKL	160 000	160 000		
Ireland (IE) 	IRL	500 000	100 000		
Denmark (DK) 	DKR	800 000	500 000		800 000
Greece (GR) 	DRA	11 000 000	7 000 000	26 000 000	25 000 000
Portugal (PT) 	ESC	17 000 000	12 000 000		
Spain (ES) 	PTA	6 000 000	6 000 000	16 000 000	16 000 000
Austria (A) 	OS	1 500 000	1 500 000		
Finland (FIN) 	FMK	550 000	300 000		550 000
Sweden (SW) 	SKR	900 000	900 000		

IN BRIEF - IN BRIEF - IN BRIEF

INTRASTAT INFO [1]

How many European Union businesses submit Intrastat returns?

According to the data collected by the Member States in 1993, approximately 207 000 businesses submitted declarations for dispatches and 292 000 for arrivals. These data apply to EUR 12 only. Information for 1994 and the three new Member States (Austria, Finland and Sweden) will be published at a later date.

What is the difference between the "assimilation" threshold and the "simplification" threshold?

The Intrastat rules provide for a system of value thresholds which allow the declaration burden to be adapted according to the relative weight of enterprises in intra-Community trade. The values are expressed in annual amounts in terms of dispatches or arrivals.

The "assimilation" threshold is mandatory in all the Member States. Businesses below this threshold are exempt from submitting a statistical return, irrespective of any other fiscal obligations they may have. The "simplification" threshold, is that below which businesses are entitled to submit a simplified return.

In any case, businesses falling below a threshold of ECU 100 000 [2] are automatically either exempt from returns or entitled to submit a simplified return.

Are transactions on contract-work covered by Intrastat?

The total value of goods traded between Member States with a view to and following contract work must be declared in Intrastat returns.

What statistical purpose does the information "nature of the transaction" serve?

Information on the nature of the transaction is useful on several counts. It allows trade in goods to be classified statistically in terms of the type of transaction (purchase/sale, contract work, etc.) and enables checks to be made on the plausibility of other statistical information (verification of values, links with tax data, etc.) and a number of adjustments to be made for balance-of-payments purposes.

In which countries is the IDEP/NC 8 software currently available?

This software, which was developed by Eurostat and the Member States in order to facilitate the completion of Intrastat returns by businesses, is currently available in eight countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg and Spain).

When is the Intrastat system due to expire?

The Intrastat system in its current form should in theory have outlived its usefulness when the transition is made to a uniform system of taxation in the Member State of origin. However, this does not mean that changes cannot be made to the current system (additional simplifications such as a threshold by transaction have already been introduced), nor does it imply that statistics on the trade in goods between Member States are likely to be abandoned in the near future. Studies are currently being carried out - with the participation of information suppliers and users - with a view to identifying future requirements, defining necessary adjustements and establishing a cost/benefit ratio for the statistics.

1 The information given here is of a general nature and is not intended to replace the official statutory provisions in force at Community or national level.
2 This rule does not, however, hold in Member States accounting for less than 3% of intra-Community trade.

If you have any further questions on Intrastat or Edicom, fax them to us on(352) 4301-34339. As far as possible, we will reply either directly to you or in our next Newsletter.

CALENDAR OF 1996 MEETINGS WITH MEMBER STATES

❶ *Committee on statistics relating to the trading of goods with third countries / Committee on the statistics relating to the Trading of goods between Member States*
- from 26 to 28 March 1996
- from 24 to 26 June 1996
- from 5 to 7 November 1996

❷ *Customs Code Committee - Nomenclature (Luxembourg)*
- from 12 to 15 Februar 1996
- from 23 to 26 April 1996
- from 15 to 17 July 1996
- from 29 to 30 October 1996

❸ *T.F. EDICOM*
- 25 March 1996 (Lisbon) *
- 3 June 1996 (Paris) *
- 4 November 1996 (Luxembourg)

* venne still to be confirmed

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