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EDITORIAL

This latest issue of the EDICOM newsletter reviews the current situation with regard to the statistics on intra- and extra-Community trade.

The Intrastat data for 1997, the state of available data, the changes in data collection that will occur in 1998, the progress of work on the SLIM project: these are just some of the Intrastat topics covered.

The state of the EDICOM project or the latest developments in the COMEXT system will round off the picture.

A quick look at the reconciliation operations provides more information about data in Europe.

Statistics on intra- and extra-Community trade are at the heart of the European Statistical System.

Improving quality, enhancing collection methods and looking for better ways of responding to requirements of users are the ideas underlying the work performed by Eurostat and its national partners.

This newsletter reflects what is being done in the area of trade statistics; similar efforts cover other sectors of European statistics.

Eurostat's aim is to provide a European statistical service based on a concept of total quality.

Further details of these developments will be outlined in future issues.

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D. Byk

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STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

L-2920 Luxembourg — Tél. 4301-1 — Télex COMEUR LU 3423

B-1049 Bruxelles, rue de la Loi 200 — Tél. 299 11 11

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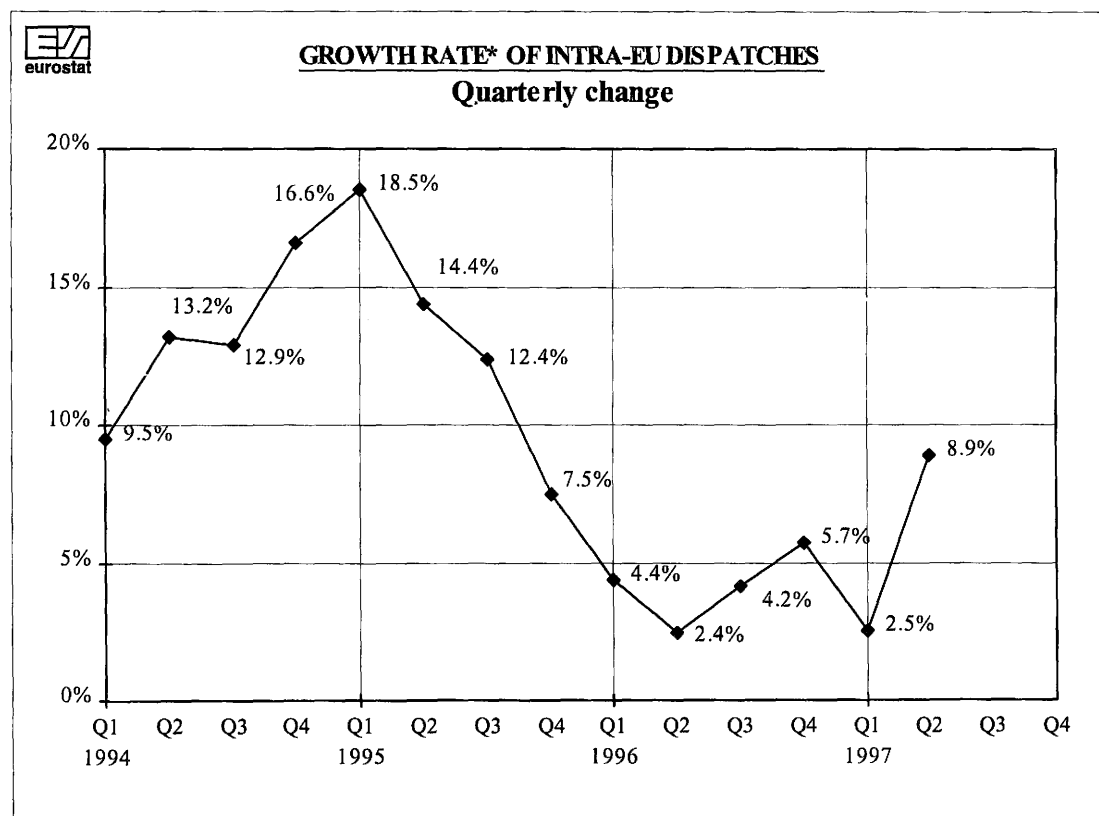
INTRASTAT

SLIGHT RECOVERY IN INTRA-EU TRADE IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1997

In the first half of 1997, intra-EU trade totalling ECU 565 billion continued to follow the slightly upward trend in evidence since the third quarter of 1996. Dispatches grew by 5.7% in the first six months of 1997 compared with 3.4% in the same prior-year period, but this increase still fell well short of the 16.4%

recorded in the first half of 1995. It has to be pointed out that the growth in intra-EU trade during the period under review mainly stemmed from the favourable situation observed in the second quarter of 1997, which showed a growth rate of 8.9%. First-quarter growth stood at only 2.5%.

These asymmetrical trends in the first two quarters of 1997 for the EU as a whole are reflected in the results posted by the majority of Member States. For example, the growth rates for second-quarter 1997 dispatches by countries such as Germany, Spain, France and Italy (which together account for more than



50% of intra-EU trade) stood at +8.3%, +15.3%, +10.4% and +5.6% respectively, whereas the corresponding figures recorded in the first quarter were +0.7%, +2.2%, +2.6% and -2.7% (i.e. Italy experienced a negative rate of change).

As regards arrivals, the trend observed between the first two quarters of 1997 was generally similar to that described for dispatches. Germany, Spain, France, Italy and the United Kingdom showed notable improvements in second-quarter arrivals growth rates.

Despite the absence of data for some Member States, it can be stated on the basis of the figures available that, during the first quarter of 1997, the breakdown of intra-EU trade by product group remained stable compared with previous periods. Manufactured products (SITC 5+8) continued to account for around 80% of total trade between the Member States, with machinery and transport equipment notable for a 37% share in that total. Among primary goods, the product group comprising food, beverages and tobacco (SITC 0+1) leads the field with approximately 10% of the total figure for intra-EU trade.

BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG



The Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU) recorded an intra-EU trade surplus of ECU 5.6 billion during the first half of 1997, remaining stable compared with the same period of 1996. This was due to the similar growth trends in both dispatches and arrivals during the first six months of 1997 (+3.5% and +3.8% respectively) which were below the overall EU growth rate for both flows.

With regard to its trading partners within the EU, special mention should be made

of the sharp rise in trade with the United Kingdom (19.8% for dispatches and 9.7% for arrivals) and the stagnation experienced in trade with its two main Community partners, Germany and France, which account respectively for around 25% and 22% of the BLEU's intra-EU trade. During the first half of 1997, dispatches to Germany declined by 1.9%, while arrivals from that country rose by only 0.6%. In the case of France, dispatches showed a slight increase of 1.1%, whereas arrivals followed a somewhat more dynamic trend (+3.7%) over the same period.

Analysis of the product breakdown underlying the trading structure shows that the greater part of intra-EU trade - approximately 80% - is based on manufactured products. Transactions falling under this category enabled Belgium and Luxembourg to offset the deficit incurred in energy products and raw materials and post an intra-EU trade surplus.

DENMARK



During the first half of 1997, rates of growth for both dispatches and arrivals showed a notably dynamic trend (+7.4% and +8.5% respectively) outperforming the first-half increase recorded by the EU as a whole. On account of the higher growth rate for arrivals, however, Denmark's intra-EU trade surplus was down on the first six months of 1996, reaching a total amount of ECU 0.5 billion.

The slight rise in trade with Germany (1.4% for dispatches and 2.1% for arrivals), which is Denmark's main trading partner accounting for some 30% of its intra-EU trade, was offset by the increase in trade with Sweden and the United Kingdom, which occurred both in dispatches (17% and 17.5% respectively) and in arrivals (10.3% and 7.4%).

In terms of product breakdown, Denmark's intra-EU trade surplus stemmed

from a surplus in the group comprising food, beverages and tobacco, which offset the deficit recorded for manufactured products.

GERMANY



In the first half of 1997, the growth in intra-EU trade recorded by Germany, which accounts for the biggest share (21%) of overall trade within the Community, was below that experienced by the EU as a whole. Germany's dispatches grew by 4.5% during the first six months of 1997, while arrivals managed an increase of just 2.3%. The results could have been even worse had trade not picked up during the second quarter of 1997 compared with the first three months of the year.

This modest rise recorded in the first half of 1997 reflected Germany's lacklustre trading performance vis-à-vis its main partners within the EU. Dispatches to France, the Netherlands and Italy rose by only 3.4%, 1.3% and 3.4% respectively, while the half-year figures for arrivals were +1%, +2.2% and -1.8% respectively. These low growth rates were partially offset by an increase in trade with another major trading partner, the United Kingdom (12.2% for dispatches, 9.2% for arrivals).

Germany's intra-EU trade balance showed a structural surplus in the amount of ECU 12.5 billion during the first six months of 1997, representing an improvement on the same period of the previous year. This surplus stems from Germany's positive balance of trade in manufactured products (ECU 25.3 billion), which represent approximately 80% of its total intra-EU trade. Trade in other products was in deficit, especially in the case of food, beverages and tobacco (ECU -4.5 billion) and energy products (ECU -3.8 billion).

GREECE



The data received to date show that Greece's total dispatches fell by 9.7% during the first half of 1997, which is partly explained by the decrease in dispatches to the country's main trading partners, Germany and Italy. Add to this a 5% rise in arrivals and the result is a deterioration in the Greek balance of trade to a deficit of ECU 4.4 billion.

SPAIN



The outstanding feature of Spanish intra-EU trade during the first six months of 1997 was a dynamic trend in dispatches, which rose by 8.8% (EU: 5.7%), accompanied by a moderate increase of 4.5% in arrivals (EU: 4.8%). As already mentioned, for the European Union as a whole, trade among the Member States showed a much more dynamic trend in the second quarter of 1997 than in the first. This was especially the case for Spain. While dispatches and arrivals showed rates of change of +2.2% and -2.2% respectively during the period January to March, the figures recorded for the second quarter stood at +15.3% and +11%.

As a result of dispatches achieving higher growth than arrivals, Spain's trade deficit decreased appreciably to ECU 2.3 billion. This figure mainly reflects the deficit in manufactured products, which was only partly offset by the surplus recorded for trade in food, beverages and tobacco. The slow-down which occurred in dispatches to France (-0.9%) and Germany (+1.3%), Spain's two main trading partners, was offset by the vigorous rise in dispatches to Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom (up 24.9%, 13.1% and

11.3% respectively). As regards arrivals among the above-mentioned countries, only those from Germany and the United Kingdom showed growth in excess of 6%.

FRANCE



France, which accounts for the second biggest share of trade between the Member States of the European Union, saw its intra-EU trade balance change from a deficit in the first half of 1996 to a slight surplus in the same period of 1997. This was due to growth in dispatches (6.4%) outstripping that in arrivals (1.6%), with the latter falling well short of the overall EU growth rate. As in the case of other Member States, France's trade was much more dynamic in the second quarter of 1997 than in the first three months of the year. While the changes recorded for dispatches and arrivals in the period January to March stood at +2.6% and -1.8% respectively, growth of +10.4% and +5.2% was achieved between April and June.

Growth in French intra-EU trade during the first half of 1997 was held back by a deterioration in trade with some of the country's main EU partners. On the dispatches side, the poor results obtained with Germany and the BLEU (+0.3% in each case) were only partly offset by Italy (+7%), Spain (+5.7%) and above all the United Kingdom (+21%). Similarly, the decrease in arrivals from Germany, Spain and the BLEU (-2.4%, -1.5% and -0.3% respectively) was only in part offset by the growth in arrivals from the United Kingdom (+15%).

Around 80% of France's intra-EU trade is focused on manufactured products. Within this group, a relatively dynamic trend is to be seen in dispatches of chemical products and of machinery and transport equipment (7% and 8.5% growth respectively). As far as arrivals are con-

cerned, all product groups except raw materials and energy products show very modest growth rates, extending to negative growth in food, beverages and tobacco (-1.9%). It is this last group of products which enables France to generate a major intra-EU trade surplus.

IRELAND



Alongside the United Kingdom, it was Ireland that delivered the best results for the first half of 1997. Growth in both dispatches (+10%) and arrivals (+14.8%) exceeded the Community average, and the surplus generated in the balance of trade (ECU 4.7 billion) remained virtually unchanged compared with the same period of the previous year. Ireland's dynamic intra-EU trade performance is essentially based on growth in transactions with its main Community partner, the United Kingdom (+25% for dispatches and +22.7% for arrivals).

ITALY



Italy's intra-EU trade balance deteriorated appreciably in the first half of 1997, with the recorded surplus (ECU 1.9 billion) more than 50% down on the same period of 1996. This was because growth in arrivals (+7.2%) was stronger than that in dispatches (+1.5%) in the period under review. These figures would have been lower had it not been for the recovery in trade flows that occurred in the second quarter of 1997.

Most of Italy's intra-EU trading is done with three partner countries - Germany, France and the United Kingdom, which account respectively for 30%, 22% and

11% of its total trade. The fall in dispatches to Germany (-1.8%) and France (-0.5%) largely explains the only slight increase in total dispatches. By contrast, it was the increase in arrivals from these two partners that enabled overall arrivals growth to outstrip that in dispatches. Approximately 80% of Italian intra-EU trade is in manufactured products, and the country's surplus stems well-nigh entirely from trade in the product group comprising other manufactured goods, which offset the high deficits incurred in food, raw materials and chemical products. It was this last group of products which generated the most dynamic trade growth among manufactured products during the first six months of 1997.

THE NETHERLANDS

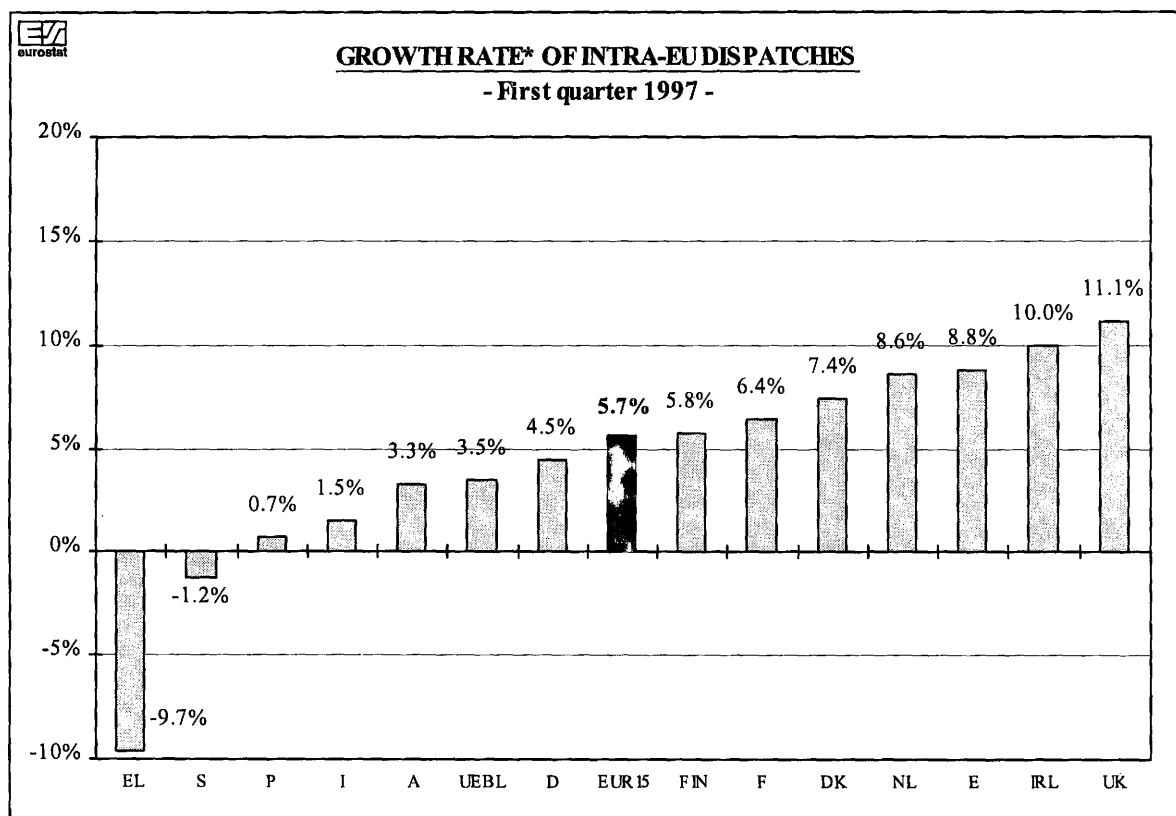


It has to be pointed out that the collection of Intrastat declarations in the Netherlands is hampered by a high non-response rate. It is also important to bear in mind that adjustments add up to a considerable amount.

According to the figures available, the Dutch trade surplus in the first quarter of 1997 stood at ECU 22 billion, representing an increase of ECU 3.6 billion compared with the same period of the

previous year. This appreciable improvement reflects a higher rate of growth in dispatches than in arrivals (8.6% and 4.3% respectively). However, this surplus must be interpreted in the light of the Dutch extra-EU trade deficit and the Netherlands' role as a transit country for EU trade.

The Netherlands' main trading partners are the BLEU and Germany, which together account for around 50% of its intra-EU trade. The rates of change in trade with these two countries for dispatches and arrivals were respectively +0.4% and +1.2% for the BLEU and +8.7% and -0.2% for Germany.



*: The growth rate is calculated in comparison with the same period of the previous year.

AUSTRIA



Austria's intra-EU trade in the first half of 1997 was characterised by sluggish development, as reflected in the low growth rates recorded for dispatches (+3.3%) and arrivals (+0.8%), both well below the Community average. As a result of these figures, Austria's trade deficit decreased compared with the same period of 1996 to ECU 4.8 billion.

These poor results obtained by Austria stem from the decline in trade with Ger-

many, the country's main partner accounting for approximately 60% of its intra-EU trade. Austrian dispatches to Germany fell by 0.1% while arrivals showed a 0.9% decrease.

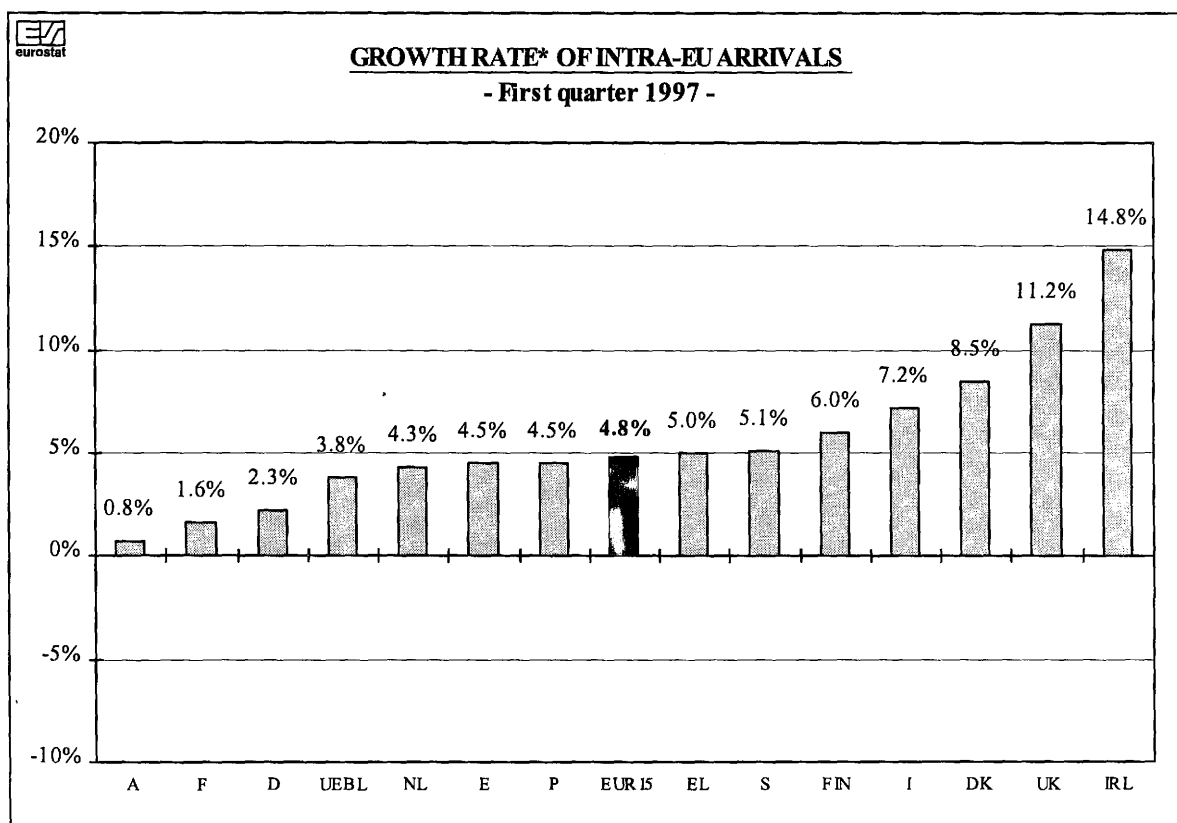
PORTUGAL



In the first six months of 1997, Portuguese intra-EU trade grew at a rate below the average of the European Union as a whole. Dispatches rose by just 0.7%, while arrivals

were up 4.5%. As a result, Portugal's trade balance with its Community partners deteriorated into a deficit of ECU 2.6 billion.

The weak growth in dispatches reflects the fall in dispatches to Portugal's main trading partners within the EU, with those bound for Germany, Spain and France decreasing by 4.9%, 2.7% and 2.5% respectively. This was only partly offset by the rise in dispatches to the United Kingdom (+19%). As regards arrivals, while the changes recorded were positive, the growth achieved was rather modest except in the case of the United Kingdom (+17.3%).



*: The growth rate is calculated in comparison with the same period of the previous year.

Regarding the product breakdown, Portuguese trade is focused primarily on manufactured products. Within this group, other manufactured goods alone show a trade surplus.

FINLAND



Finland's positive intra-EU trade balance (ECU 1.04 billion) remained virtually unchanged compared with the first half of 1996. This was due to the similar growth rates recorded for dispatches and arrivals in the first six months of 1997 (+5.8% and +6% respectively), which slightly exceeded the Community average.

Approximately 60% of Finnish intra-EU trade is done with Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom. On the dispatch side, the fall in respect of Germany (-6.6%) was offset by growth in respect of Sweden (+4.6%) and the United Kingdom (+6.3%). As regards arrivals, the rates of change recorded in respect of the three countries mentioned stood at +6.5%, +8.3% and -1.2% respectively.

In terms of product breakdown, the mainstays of the Finnish trading structure are machinery and transport equipment and other manufactured goods, with the latter group of products generating the greater part of the Finnish surplus.

SWEDEN



In the first half of 1997, Sweden's dispatches were 1.2% down on the same period of the previous year as a result of simultaneous falls in Swedish dispatches to Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom (-2.6%, -5.2% and -3% respectively). These countries are Sweden's main trading partners, receiving more than 45% of its total dispatches.

Arrivals grew by 5.1%. This positive growth, in conjunction with the fall in dispatches, meant that Sweden's trade surplus with its EU partners decreased by more than 50%.

While the product group comprising machinery and transport equipment accounts for the greater part of Swedish intra-EU trade, it was raw materials and other manufactured goods which enabled a positive trade balance to be recorded.

UNITED KINGDOM



As mentioned above,

the United King-

dom - alongside Ireland - turned in the most dynamic intra-EU trade performance in the first half of 1997. Both dispatches and arrivals grew by around 11%, well above the EU average. Special mention deserves to be made of the outstanding second-quarter growth rate of 14% for both flows, compared with a rise of approximately 8% in the first three months of 1997. Despite this upward trend, the United Kingdom saw its balance of trade deteriorate into a deficit of ECU 3.4 billion in the period January to June 1997. The three main trading partners, Germany, France and the Netherlands, account for more than 50% of UK trade within the EU. The development of Britain's dispatches to these three countries is particularly noteworthy, with growth rates of respectively +8.6%, +9.7% and +19% having been achieved.

On the arrivals side, a dynamic impetus emanated from the BLEU (+16.4%), France (+15%), Italy (+31.1%) and the Netherlands (+6.8%).

United Kingdom trade with EU partners mainly revolves around machinery and transport equipment, which accounts for 40% of total arrivals and dispatches. It was this group of products which generated the highest growth rates among manufactured products (+10.5% for dispatches and +8.2% for arrivals).



TABLE 1: EVOLUTION OF INTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 15)

DISPATCHES



| | 1993 | 1994 | | 1995 | | 1996 | | January-June 1997 | |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| | Value | Value | 94/93 | Value | 95/94 | Value | 96/95 | Value | 97/96 |
| EUR15 | 797 392 | 899 269 | 12.8% | 1016 813 | 13.1% | 1059 282 | 4.2% | 565 277 | 5.7% |
| B.L.E.U. | 81 804 | 90 525 | 10.7% | 101 998 | 12.7% | 106 404 | 4.3% | 56 373 | 3.5% |
| Denmark | 20 963 | 23 004 | 9.7% | 25 200 | 9.6% | 27 036 | 7.3% | 14 063 | 7.4% |
| Germany | 189 958 | 208 169 | 9.6% | 232 722 | 11.8% | 234 551 | 0.8% | 122 816 | 4.5% |
| Greece | 4 247 | 4 516 | 6.3% | 5 080 | 12.5% | 4 615 | -9.2% | 2 152 | -9.7% |
| Spain | 35 498 | 42 970 | 21.0% | 49 065 | 14.2% | 53 987 | 10.0% | 30 469 | 8.8% |
| France | 113 609 | 130 142 | 14.6% | 145 033 | 11.4% | 149 665 | 3.2% | 81 322 | 6.4% |
| Ireland | 17 922 | 20 994 | 17.1% | 25 274 | 20.4% | 26 791 | 6.0% | 15 013 | 10.0% |
| Italy | 82 566 | 92 528 | 12.1% | 102 384 | 10.7% | 109 238 | 6.7% | 55 674 | 1.5% |
| Netherlands | 93 052 | 105 838 | 13.7% | 124 167 | 17.3% | 129 287 | 4.1% | 69 808 | 8.6% |
| Austria | 22 473 | 24 563 | 9.3% | 29 036 | 18.2% | 29 405 | 1.3% | 15 343 | 3.3% |
| Portugal | 10 529 | 12 092 | 14.8% | 13 952 | 15.4% | 15 018 | 7.6% | 7 907 | 0.7% |
| Finland | 11 496 | 14 203 | 23.5% | 17 787 | 25.2% | 17 651 | -0.8% | 9 467 | 5.8% |
| Sweden | 25 102 | 30 501 | 21.5% | 36 629 | 20.1% | 38 108 | 4.0% | 19 529 | -1.2% |
| United Kingdom | 88 174 | 99 224 | 12.5% | 108 487 | 9.3% | 117 526 | 8.3% | 65 339 | 11.1% |

ARRIVALS



| | 1993 | 1994 | | 1995 | | 1996 | | January-June 1997 | |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|-------|---------|-------|----------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| | Value | Value | 94/93 | Value | 95/94 | Value | 96/95 | Value | 97/96 |
| EUR15 | 767 552 | 859,386 | 12.0% | 971 651 | 13.1% | 1012 785 | 4.2% | 533 736 | 4.8% |
| B.L.E.U. | 75 148 | 80 060 | 6.5% | 89 063 | 11.2% | 95 196 | 6.9% | 50 749 | 3.8% |
| Denmark | 17 877 | 20 809 | 16.4% | 23 961 | 15.1% | 25 155 | 5.0% | 13 539 | 8.5% |
| Germany | 172 679 | 189 960 | 10.0% | 214 119 | 12.7% | 215 555 | 0.7% | 110 260 | 2.3% |
| Greece | 11 843 | 12 276 | 3.7% | 13 879 | 13.1% | 13 331 | -3.9% | 6 607 | 5.0% |
| Spain | 43 061 | 49 611 | 15.2% | 57 061 | 15.0% | 60 921 | 6.8% | 32 782 | 4.5% |
| France | 117 743 | 134 545 | 14.3% | 151 471 | 12.6% | 156 651 | 3.4% | 81 171 | 1.6% |
| Ireland | 12 129 | 14 202 | 17.1% | 15 978 | 12.5% | 17 957 | 12.4% | 10 316 | 14.8% |
| Italy | 75 317 | 86 263 | 14.5% | 95 845 | 11.1% | 99 251 | 3.6% | 53 813 | 7.2% |
| Netherlands | 69 330 | 77 878 | 12.3% | 89 495 | 14.9% | 91 976 | 2.8% | 47 883 | 4.3% |
| Austria | 28 742 | 31 781 | 10.6% | 38 439 | 20.9% | 40 129 | 4.4% | 20 179 | 0.8% |
| Portugal | 15 406 | 16 716 | 8.5% | 18 436 | 10.3% | 20 346 | 10.4% | 10 543 | 4.5% |
| Finland | 8 767 | 10 746 | 22.6% | 14 647 | 36.3% | 16 150 | 10.3% | 8 429 | 6.0% |
| Sweden | 22 759 | 27 226 | 19.6% | 34 125 | 25.3% | 36 053 | 5.6% | 18 758 | 5.1% |
| United Kingdom | 96 752 | 107 315 | 10.9% | 115 132 | 7.3% | 124 115 | 7.8% | 68 708 | 11.2% |

Value in millions of ECU

Sources: Eurostat - COMEXT and information transmitted by the Member States up to 29.10.1997

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

DISPATCHES



| | Q1 96 | Q2 96 | | Q3 96 | | Q4 96 | | Q1 97 | | Q2 97 | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | Value | Value | 96/95 | Value | 96/95 | Value | 96/95 | Value | 97/96 | Value | 97/96 |
| EUR15 | 269 381 | 265 514 | 2.4% | 247 157 | 4.2% | 277 230 | 5.7% | 276 108 | 2.5% | 289 169 | 8.9% |
| <i>B.L.E.U.</i> | 27 241 | 27 220 | 2.4% | 25 118 | 8.5% | 26 825 | 6.4% | 27 620 | 1.4% | 28 753 | 5.6% |
| <i>Denmark</i> | 6 548 | 6 543 | 3.9% | 6 655 | 11.1% | 7 291 | 11.7% | 6 885 | 5.1% | 7 178 | 9.7% |
| <i>Germany</i> | 59 356 | 58 202 | -3.4% | 55 457 | 0.2% | 61 536 | 4.9% | 59 758 | 0.7% | 63 058 | 8.3% |
| <i>Greece</i> | 1 260 | 1 122 | -8.8% | 1 102 | -8.9% | 1 130 | -17.5% | 1 053 | -16.4% | 1 099 | -2.0% |
| <i>Spain</i> | 13 994 | 14 021 | 10.5% | 11 354 | 8.0% | 14 618 | 9.5% | 14 297 | 2.2% | 16 173 | 15.3% |
| <i>France</i> | 38 935 | 37 478 | 0.3% | 34 474 | 4.2% | 38 778 | 3.1% | 39 957 | 2.6% | 41 365 | 10.4% |
| <i>Ireland</i> | 6 908 | 6 745 | 10.2% | 5 969 | -2.2% | 7 169 | 1.3% | 7 386 | 6.9% | 7 627 | 13.1% |
| <i>Italy</i> | 26 847 | 28 005 | 7.9% | 25 659 | 7.0% | 28 726 | 6.3% | 26 113 | -2.7% | 29 561 | 5.6% |
| <i>Netherlands</i> | 32 530 | 31 729 | -0.3% | 30 936 | 5.4% | 34 092 | 8.0% | 34 715 | 6.7% | 35 093 | 10.6% |
| <i>Austria</i> | 7 514 | 7 343 | 0.6% | 7 189 | 2.3% | 7 359 | -0.4% | 7 648 | 1.8% | 7 695 | 4.8% |
| <i>Portugal</i> | 3 953 | 3 895 | 12.1% | 3 506 | 7.1% | 3 664 | 3.3% | 3 962 | 0.2% | 3 945 | 1.3% |
| <i>Finland</i> | 4 268 | 4 683 | 0.4% | 4 082 | -3.0% | 4 618 | 0.5% | 4 535 | 6.3% | 4 932 | 5.3% |
| <i>Sweden</i> | 9 853 | 9 913 | 8.4% | 8 537 | 2.2% | 9 805 | 0.2% | 9 514 | -3.4% | 10 015 | 1.0% |
| <i>United Kingdom</i> | 30 173 | 28 615 | 8.8% | 27 119 | 5.7% | 31 619 | 11.0% | 32 664 | 8.3% | 32 674 | 14.2% |

ARRIVALS



| | Q1 96 | Q2 96 | | Q3 96 | | Q4 96 | | Q1 97 | | Q2 97 | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | Value | Value | 96/95 | Value | 96/95 | Value | 96/95 | Value | 97/96 | Value | 97/96 |
| EUR15 | 256 267 | 253 245 | 2.1% | 235 186 | 3.7% | 268 088 | 5.8% | 258 743 | 1.0% | 274 993 | 8.6% |
| <i>B.L.E.U.</i> | 24 871 | 24 004 | 3.9% | 22 152 | 9.5% | 24 170 | 8.2% | 24 991 | 0.5% | 25 757 | 7.3% |
| <i>Denmark</i> | 6 283 | 6 201 | 3.1% | 5 942 | 6.6% | 6 729 | 6.8% | 6 555 | 4.3% | 6 984 | 12.6% |
| <i>Germany</i> | 54 549 | 53 266 | -3.5% | 50 253 | -1.3% | 57 487 | 5.6% | 53 732 | -1.5% | 56 528 | 6.1% |
| <i>Greece</i> | 2 907 | 3 388 | 2.7% | 3 338 | 1.5% | 3 699 | -10.1% | 3 211 | 10.5% | 3 397 | 0.3% |
| <i>Spain</i> | 15 544 | 15 828 | 6.6% | 13 316 | 3.5% | 16 232 | 6.0% | 15 205 | -2.2% | 17 576 | 11.0% |
| <i>France</i> | 40 538 | 39 329 | 1.5% | 36 292 | 4.3% | 40 492 | 3.0% | 39 809 | -1.8% | 41 361 | 5.2% |
| <i>Ireland</i> | 4 483 | 4 501 | 14.9% | 4 068 | 3.1% | 4 904 | 14.2% | 5 253 | 17.2% | 5 063 | 12.5% |
| <i>Italy</i> | 25 150 | 25 063 | 4.5% | 21 583 | 1.2% | 27 455 | 2.2% | 24 701 | -1.8% | 29 112 | 16.2% |
| <i>Netherlands</i> | 23 239 | 22 685 | -1.7% | 21 969 | 6.6% | 24 083 | 3.7% | 23 538 | 1.3% | 24 345 | 7.3% |
| <i>Austria</i> | 10 037 | 9 988 | 2.2% | 9 990 | 7.0% | 10 115 | 4.1% | 9 913 | -1.2% | 10 265 | 2.8% |
| <i>Portugal</i> | 4 956 | 5 130 | 3.5% | 4 654 | 14.2% | 5 606 | 19.5% | 5 217 | 5.3% | 5 325 | 3.8% |
| <i>Finland</i> | 3 970 | 3 986 | 10.2% | 3 743 | 7.2% | 4 451 | 10.0% | 4 071 | 2.6% | 4 358 | 9.3% |
| <i>Sweden</i> | 8 818 | 9 032 | 10.2% | 8 238 | 2.9% | 9 966 | 4.1% | 9 184 | 4.2% | 9 575 | 6.0% |
| <i>United Kingdom</i> | 30 923 | 30 845 | 4.9% | 29 649 | 4.5% | 32 699 | 12.4% | 33 362 | 7.9% | 35 346 | 14.6% |

Value in millions of ECU

Sources: Eurostat - COMEXT and information transmitted by the Member States up to 29.10.1997

**TABLE 3: STRUCTURE OF INTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 15)
BY PRINCIPAL PRODUCT GROUPS - JANUARY-JUNE 1997 -**

DISPATCHES



| REPORTING COUNTRIES | Foods, beverages, tobacco 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 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 |
| <i>B.L.E.U.</i> | 6 196 | -3.5% | 1 834 | 11.4% | 1 523 | 6.6% | 10 479 | 6.9% | 16 993 | 1.4% | 18 001 | 1.4% | 1 348 | 105.9% |
| <i>Denmark</i> | 3 250 | 8.5% | 723 | 10.6% | 855 | 43.6% | 1 320 | 8.0% | 3 472 | 15.3% | 4 275 | 16.6% | 168 | -82.3% |
| <i>Germany</i> | 6 532 | 6.6% | 2 801 | 7.8% | 1 664 | 40.0% | 15 668 | 2.9% | 56 116 | 6.4% | 30 072 | 1.6% | 9 962 | -1.2% |
| <i>Greece</i> | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : |
| <i>Spain</i> | 5 168 | 14.8% | 1 174 | 38.1% | 559 | 41.5% | 2 439 | 20.1% | 13 301 | 4.6% | 7 739 | 6.8% | 89 | -68.1% |
| <i>France</i> | 11 155 | 3.2% | 2 449 | 3.1% | 1 922 | 11.0% | 11 472 | 7.0% | 33 752 | 8.5% | 20 418 | 4.7% | 154 | 0.9% |
| <i>Ireland</i> | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : |
| <i>Italy</i> | 3 903 | 0.0% | 768 | -2.4% | 332 | 22.1% | 4 916 | 12.7% | 20 619 | -0.6% | 24 696 | 1.4% | 440 | 3.1% |
| <i>Netherlands</i> | 7 742 | -27.4% | 3 306 | -10.6% | 4 641 | -24.1% | 7 978 | -14.6% | 14 208 | -10.3% | 11 604 | -9.5% | 20 330 | 251.3% |
| <i>Austria</i> | 658 | -0.6% | 660 | -6.1% | 121 | -2.8% | 1 356 | 8.4% | 6 078 | 1.4% | 6 394 | 5.8% | 77 | -1.9% |
| <i>Portugal</i> | 413 | -5.9% | 387 | 13.3% | 90 | -25.1% | 328 | -5.5% | 2 729 | -0.3% | 3 958 | 2.5% | 1 | 31.2% |
| <i>Finland</i> | 167 | 7.0% | 987 | 15.1% | 258 | -1.5% | 573 | 9.6% | 2 903 | 1.6% | 4 454 | 6.5% | 126 | 9.5% |
| <i>Sweden</i> | 492 | 4.3% | 1 853 | 11.8% | 511 | -22.6% | 1 743 | -3.5% | 7 537 | -2.5% | 6 616 | -2.6% | 777 | 20.0% |
| <i>United Kingdom</i> | 3 993 | 3.3% | 1 112 | -0.2% | 5 458 | 38.8% | 8 589 | 6.3% | 27 074 | 10.5% | 15 610 | 0.8% | 3 503 | 93.2% |

ARRIVALS



| REPORTING COUNTRIES | Foods, beverages, tobacco 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 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 | Value | Evolution 97/96 |
| <i>B.L.E.U.</i> | 4 721 | -2.2% | 1 994 | 2.2% | 3 637 | 11.9% | 7 748 | 4.0% | 15 922 | 10.6% | 13 847 | 0.1% | 2 879 | -9.2% |
| <i>Denmark</i> | 1 371 | 21.4% | 581 | 17.2% | 257 | 29.1% | 1 729 | 13.3% | 4 874 | 12.5% | 4 537 | 25.8% | 190 | -84.1% |
| <i>Germany</i> | 11 082 | -3.4% | 3 923 | 7.4% | 5 479 | 6.5% | 11 376 | 5.9% | 37 677 | 4.5% | 27 532 | 0.0% | 13 191 | -0.2% |
| <i>Greece</i> | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : |
| <i>Spain</i> | 2 942 | 5.7% | 1 157 | -9.5% | 380 | -14.5% | 4 592 | 4.4% | 14 807 | 5.9% | 8 755 | 7.2% | 148 | -53.7% |
| <i>France</i> | 8 122 | -1.9% | 2 387 | 5.8% | 2 528 | 14.6% | 10 689 | 1.7% | 32 777 | 0.8% | 24 606 | 2.5% | 62 | -25.0% |
| <i>Ireland</i> | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : |
| <i>Italy</i> | 6 267 | 2.5% | 3 268 | 3.9% | 691 | -5.9% | 8 837 | 9.2% | 20 547 | 9.3% | 13 507 | 6.5% | 696 | 7.6% |
| <i>Netherlands</i> | 3 592 | -25.7% | 1 239 | -21.0% | 1 446 | 9.0% | 4 456 | -24.5% | 12 221 | -13.7% | 9 310 | -22.9% | 15 619 | 158.3% |
| <i>Austria</i> | 1 375 | 10.5% | 721 | 6.9% | 275 | 1.7% | 2 327 | 2.7% | 8 078 | -0.2% | 7 299 | -0.3% | 103 | -31.5% |
| <i>Portugal</i> | 1 006 | -6.3% | 294 | 0.9% | 241 | 44.0% | 1 298 | 6.0% | 4 188 | 5.8% | 3 480 | 4.9% | 36 | -34.9% |
| <i>Finland</i> | 576 | 6.4% | 336 | 8.6% | 308 | -27.6% | 1 258 | 14.0% | 3 503 | 5.0% | 2 245 | 10.1% | 204 | 2.1% |
| <i>Sweden</i> | 1 184 | 3.1% | 520 | 13.5% | 907 | 15.2% | 2 232 | 3.3% | 7 861 | 4.6% | 4 954 | 2.2% | 1 101 | 17.9% |
| <i>United Kingdom</i> | 6 537 | 5.8% | 1 847 | 4.7% | 916 | -7.7% | 8 305 | 5.9% | 28 393 | 8.2% | 16 851 | 4.5% | 5 860 | 121.7% |

Values in millions of ECU

« : »: unavailable data

Source: Eurostat - COMEXT on 29.10.1997

**TABLE 4: STRUCTURE OF INTRA-EUROPEAN UNION TRADE (EUR 15)
BY PARTNER COUNTRIES - JANUARY-JUNE 1997 -**

DISPATCHES



| REPORTING COUNTRIES | PARTNER COUNTRIES | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|--------|-------|--------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|----------|---------|--------|----------------|--------|
| | B.L.E.U. | Denmark | Germany | Greece | Spain | France | Ireland | Italy | Netherlands | Austria | Portugal | Finland | Sweden | United Kingdom | TOTAL |
| B.L.E.U. | - | 1.2% | 26.2% | 0.8% | 4.3% | 23.9% | 0.6% | 7.5% | 16.8% | 1.5% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 2.0% | 13.3% | 100.0% |
| Denmark | 3.3% | - | 32.4% | 1.1% | 2.9% | 8.5% | 1.0% | 5.5% | 6.6% | 1.5% | 0.8% | 4.1% | 18.0% | 14.2% | 100.0% |
| Germany | 10.8% | 3.1% | - | 1.2% | 6.8% | 19.4% | 0.8% | 13.4% | 12.5% | 9.2% | 1.9% | 1.7% | 4.1% | 15.0% | 100.0% |
| Greece | 2.4% | 1.4% | 34.5% | - | 3.7% | 9.4% | 0.6% | 26.0% | 4.8% | 2.2% | 1.0% | 0.8% | 2.1% | 11.1% | 100.0% |
| Spain | 4.1% | 1.0% | 19.4% | 1.4% | - | 26.6% | 0.6% | 14.5% | 5.4% | 1.2% | 12.1% | 0.5% | 1.4% | 11.8% | 100.0% |
| France | 12.5% | 1.4% | 25.8% | 1.3% | 12.4% | - | 0.9% | 15.2% | 7.3% | 1.7% | 2.2% | 0.7% | 2.2% | 16.3% | 100.0% |
| Ireland | 7.4% | 1.7% | 17.7% | 0.6% | 3.5% | 11.4% | - | 5.3% | 11.0% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 2.3% | 37.2% | 100.0% |
| Italy | 5.0% | 1.5% | 30.4% | 3.4% | 9.3% | 22.2% | 0.7% | - | 5.3% | 4.2% | 2.5% | 0.9% | 1.8% | 12.7% | 100.0% |
| Netherlands | 16.0% | 2.0% | 35.7% | 1.1% | 3.8% | 13.5% | 1.0% | 7.6% | - | 1.9% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 2.8% | 12.4% | 100.0% |
| Austria | 2.8% | 1.3% | 56.1% | 0.7% | 3.8% | 6.4% | 0.4% | 13.8% | 4.6% | - | 0.7% | 0.9% | 2.0% | 6.4% | 100.0% |
| Portugal | 5.6% | 2.3% | 25.8% | 0.5% | 16.9% | 17.6% | 0.5% | 4.8% | 6.1% | 1.4% | - | 1.2% | 2.5% | 15.0% | 100.0% |
| Finland | 4.3% | 5.9% | 20.1% | 1.0% | 4.1% | 8.2% | 1.4% | 6.0% | 7.9% | 1.8% | 0.9% | - | 19.5% | 18.9% | 100.0% |
| Sweden | 7.7% | 11.2% | 20.4% | 0.9% | 4.0% | 8.8% | 1.1% | 6.1% | 10.7% | 1.8% | 0.9% | 9.6% | - | 16.8% | 100.0% |
| United Kingdom | 9.3% | 2.1% | 21.2% | 1.1% | 7.1% | 17.3% | 9.2% | 8.6% | 14.8% | 1.2% | 1.7% | 1.7% | 4.6% | - | 100.0% |

ARRIVALS



| REPORTING COUNTRIES | PARTNER COUNTRIES | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|--------|-------|--------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|----------|---------|--------|----------------|--------|
| | B.L.E.U. | Denmark | Germany | Greece | Spain | France | Ireland | Italy | Netherlands | Austria | Portugal | Finland | Sweden | United Kingdom | TOTAL |
| B.L.E.U. | - | 0.8% | 25.6% | 0.2% | 2.6% | 20.1% | 2.2% | 5.3% | 24.2% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 3.6% | 13.1% | 100.0% |
| Denmark | 5.8% | - | 30.5% | 0.3% | 1.8% | 7.8% | 1.8% | 6.5% | 10.8% | 1.3% | 1.5% | 3.9% | 17.7% | 10.5% | 100.0% |
| Germany | 12.6% | 3.0% | - | 0.7% | 6.0% | 19.2% | 2.0% | 13.2% | 18.8% | 6.4% | 1.9% | 1.4% | 3.2% | 11.5% | 100.0% |
| Greece | 5.6% | 2.2% | 22.1% | - | 5.1% | 12.6% | 1.5% | 25.9% | 9.2% | 1.6% | 0.6% | 1.1% | 2.0% | 10.4% | 100.0% |
| Spain | 5.8% | 1.1% | 22.9% | 0.3% | - | 26.8% | 1.5% | 13.5% | 7.3% | 1.5% | 3.9% | 1.1% | 2.1% | 12.0% | 100.0% |
| France | 14.6% | 1.4% | 27.7% | 0.3% | 10.0% | - | 1.9% | 14.8% | 10.0% | 1.1% | 1.7% | 0.9% | 2.0% | 13.7% | 100.0% |
| Ireland | 2.2% | 1.3% | 10.8% | 0.1% | 1.9% | 8.6% | - | 2.7% | 6.7% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.8% | 1.6% | 62.6% | 100.0% |
| Italy | 7.9% | 1.3% | 29.7% | 1.1% | 7.7% | 22.1% | 1.7% | - | 10.0% | 3.7% | 0.7% | 1.0% | 2.3% | 10.7% | 100.0% |
| Netherlands | 17.0% | 1.8% | 33.6% | 0.3% | 4.0% | 11.3% | 1.9% | 5.8% | - | 1.2% | 1.0% | 1.5% | 4.2% | 16.3% | 100.0% |
| Austria | 3.8% | 0.9% | 61.6% | 0.3% | 1.7% | 7.1% | 0.5% | 11.2% | 6.3% | - | 0.4% | 0.9% | 1.7% | 3.6% | 100.0% |
| Portugal | 4.3% | 0.9% | 20.8% | 0.2% | 29.4% | 14.7% | 0.8% | 10.8% | 5.8% | 0.8% | - | 0.8% | 1.5% | 9.3% | 100.0% |
| Finland | 4.7% | 7.9% | 23.4% | 0.4% | 1.9% | 6.5% | 1.1% | 5.9% | 9.0% | 1.5% | 1.0% | - | 24.0% | 12.4% | 100.0% |
| Sweden | 5.7% | 11.2% | 27.8% | 0.3% | 1.9% | 9.0% | 1.9% | 4.7% | 10.8% | 1.8% | 1.0% | 8.5% | - | 15.3% | 100.0% |
| United Kingdom | 9.1% | 2.3% | 26.0% | 0.4% | 5.2% | 18.6% | 7.0% | 9.4% | 12.0% | 1.0% | 1.7% | 2.6% | 4.7% | - | 100.0% |

DATA AVAILABILITY



Status of data sent to Eurostat on 26 November 1997

① Intra + Extra:

- ✓ Detailed data (CN8 data)

② Intra / Extra:

- Detailed data (CN8 data)
- Global data with breakdown by partner country

| PERIOD | Eur.15 | BLEU | DK | D | EL | E | F | IRL | I | NL | A | P | FIN | S | UK |
|-----------|--------|------|-----|-----|-----|---|---|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|
| January | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| February | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| March | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| April | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ●/■ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 1 May | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ●/■ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9 June | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ●/- | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9 July | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ●/■ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 7 August | | ✓ | ✓ | ●/- | | ✓ | ✓ | -/■ | ●/■ | | -/■ | -/■ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| September | | -/■ | -/■ | | | | | | -/■ | | | -/■ | -/■ | | -/■ |
| October | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| November | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| December | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |



STATISTICAL THRESHOLDS FOR 1998 APPLICABLE FOR THE INTRASTAT DECLARATION

A system of statistical thresholds was introduced in 1993 in conjunction with the launch of the Intrastat collection system¹, the aim being to eliminate all or part of the administrative burden borne by firms in connection with their intra-Community activities.

Firms *below the "assimilation threshold"* are exempt from submitting Intrastat declarations.

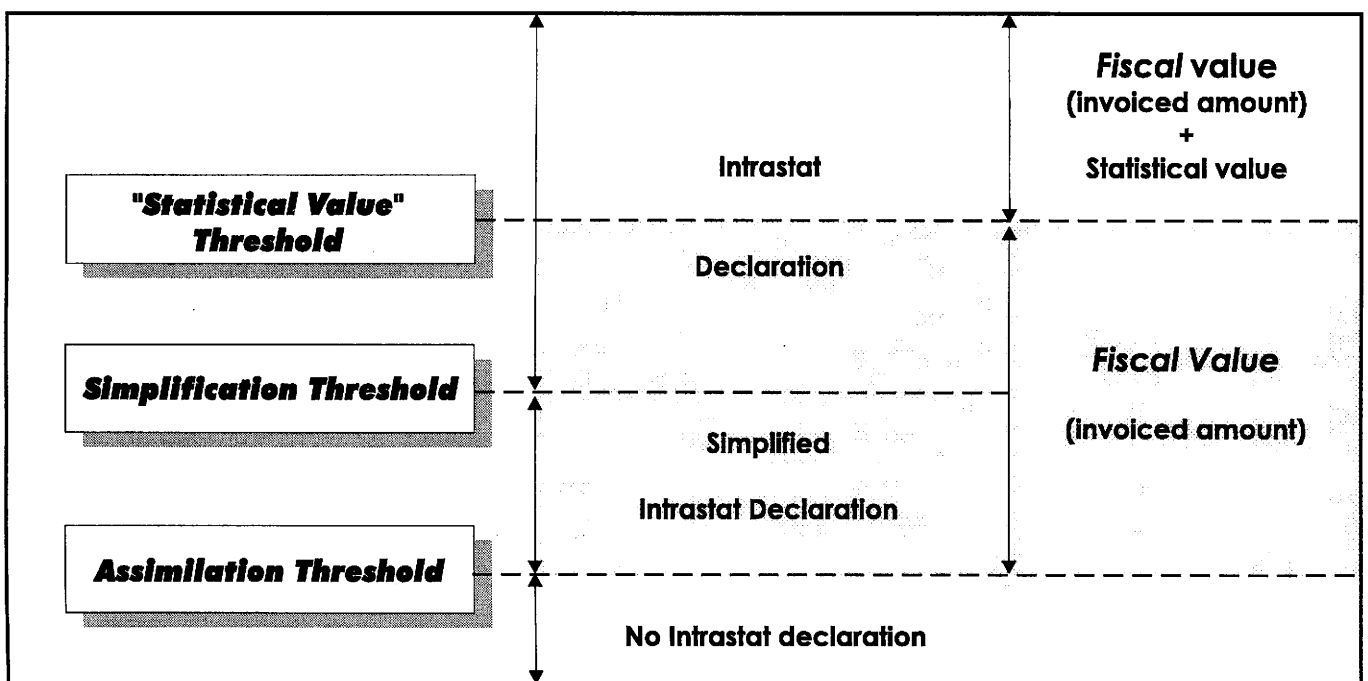
Firms that fall *between the "assimilation" and "simplification" thresholds*

are required to provide statistical information but need to complete only a *simplified Intrastat declaration*.

All firms that are *above the "simplification threshold"* have to submit *Intrastat declarations*.

From January 1998, as a result of the SLIM project (Simpler Legislation on the Internal Market), a new threshold² will apply with regard to statistical value. Firms that are below this threshold (but above the "assimilation threshold") will
















generally have to report only fiscal value, while those above the threshold will have to supply the statistical value as well as the fiscal value. However, the Member States have the option of exempting all firms from the requirement to report the statistical value.


















¹ Council Regulation (EEC) No 3330/91, Article 28.

² Commission Regulation (EEC) No 860/97.

Threshold values in national currency

| Member States | Currency | ASSIMILATION THRESHOLD | | SIMPLIFICATION THRESHOLD | | "STATISTICAL VALUE" THRESHOLD | |
|---|----------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| | | Dispatch | Arrival | Dispatch | Arrival | Dispatch | Arrival |
| Belgium (B)  | BEF | 10 000 000 | 10 000 000 | --- | --- | All PSI exempted | All PSI exempted |
| Denmark (DK)  | DKK | 2 500 000 | 1 500 000 | --- | --- | All PSI exempted | All PSI exempted |
| Germany (D)  | DEM | 200 000 | 200 000 | --- | --- | 20 000 000 | 15 000 000 |
| Greece (EL)  | GRD | 13 000 000 | 8 000 000 | 29 000 000 | 29 000 000 | 700 000 000 | 200 000 000 |
| Spain (ES)  | ESP | 9 000 000 | 9 000 000 | 16 000 000 | 16 000 000 | 1 000 000 000 | 1 000 000 000 |
| France (F)  | FRF | 250 000 | 250 000 | 3 000 000 | 1 500 000 | 15 000 000 | 15 000 000 |
| Ireland (IRL)  | IEP | 500 000 | 100 000 | --- | --- | 30 000 000 | 4 000 000 |
| Italy (I)  | ITL | 300 000 000 | 200 000 000 | --- | --- | 7 000 000 000 | 3 500 000 000 |
| Luxembourg (L)  | LUF | 4 200 000 | 4 200 000 | 15 000 000 | 15 000 000 | 180 000 000 | 100 000 000 |
| Netherlands (NL)  | NLG | 500 000 | 500 000 | --- | --- | All PSI exempted | All PSI exempted |
| Austria (A)  | ATS | 1 500 000 | 1 500 000 | --- | --- | 50 000 000 | 50 000 000 |
| Portugal (P)  | PTE | 17 000 000 | 12 000 000 | --- | --- | 940 000 000 | 610 000 000 |
| Finland (FIN)  | FIM | 550 000 | 550 000 | --- | --- | 100 000 000 | 40 000 000 |
| Sweden (S)  | SEK | 1 500 000 | 1 500 000 | --- | --- | 100 000 000 | 60 000 000 |
| United Kingdom (UK)  | GBP | 225 000 | 225 000 | --- | --- | All PSI exempted | All PSI exempted |

Threshold values in ECU

| Member States | ASSIMILATION THRESHOLD | | SIMPLIFICATION THRESHOLD | | "STATISTICAL VALUE" THRESHOLD | |
|---|------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| | Dispatch | Arrival | Dispatch | Arrival | Dispatch | Arrival |
| Belgium (B)  | 247 500 | 247 500 | --- | --- | All PSI exempted | All PSI exempted |
| Denmark (DK)  | 335 000 | 201 000 | --- | --- | All PSI exempted | All PSI exempted |
| Germany (D)  | 102 000 | 102 000 | --- | --- | 10 211 000 | 7 658 000 |
| Greece (EL)  | 42 000 | 26 000 | 94 000 | 94 000 | 2 266 000 | 647 000 |
| Spain (ES)  | 54 500 | 54 500 | 96 500 | 96 500 | 6 045 000 | 6 045 000 |
| France (F)  | 38 000 | 38 000 | 454 000 | 227 000 | 2 270 000 | 2 270 000 |
| Ireland (IRL)  | 672 500 | 134 500 | --- | --- | 40 357 000 | 5 380 000 |
| Italy (I)  | 155 500 | 103 500 | --- | --- | 3 627 000 | 1 813 000 |
| Luxembourg (L)  | 104 000 | 104 000 | 371 000 | 371 000 | 4 454 000 | 2 474 000 |
| Netherlands (NL)  | 227 000 | 227 000 | --- | --- | All PSI exempted | All PSI exempted |
| Austria (A)  | 109 000 | 109 000 | --- | --- | 3 627 000 | 3 627 000 |
| Portugal (P)  | 86 500 | 61 000 | --- | --- | 4 772 000 | 3 096 000 |
| Finland (FIN)  | 94 000 | 94 000 | --- | --- | 17 091 000 | 6 836 000 |
| Sweden (S)  | 172 000 | 172 000 | --- | --- | 11 464 000 | 6 878 000 |
| United Kingdom (UK)  | 320 000 | 320 000 | --- | --- | All PSI exempted | All PSI exempted |

IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATISTICS RELATING TO THE EXCHANGE GOODS: THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK

Eurostat and the Member States have set up three working groups responsible in various domains for improving the operation of the Intrastat system and enhancing the quality of the statistics (cf. Newsletter 2/1996, page 13 and Newsletter 1/97, page 14). The progress of work is described below.

WORKING GROUP II

CONTROL AND CORRECTION PROCEDURES

The group held its 4th meeting in Heerlen, 16-17 October 1997.

The group has now finalized the structure of its report, and the participating Member states (DE, FR, IT, NL, UK) will in the coming 3-5 months concentrate their activities on providing indicators for the control and correction procedures. These indicators cover a broad range, e.g. number of validation checks and errors by type, number of credibility checks and errors by type, number of accuracy checks, number of staff engaged in the control and correction processes etc.

A number of indicators are readily available, and already used by the national administrations.

However, it seems that other indicators are difficult to provide right away partly because they have not received the same kind of attention. They have to be provided through special calculations or retrievals from the running INTRASTAT systems.

An ex post analysis might conclude that the large problems that most Member states have experienced - and at least those in the group - have drawn the attention and therefore also the resources to securing a smooth running of the INTRASTAT systems and a regular production of statistics. Indicators of how the systems are de facto performing have not been developed systematically with the aim of pinpointing weaknesses or problems, and strengths of the systems. However, although this seems to be the ruling situation, it should not be interpreted as bad will or lack of interest from the Member states, but rather as a deliberate and necessary choice, when setting priorities for the tasks and by taking into account the limited and often reduced staff available.

Including also the complexity of calculating or by other means providing the indicators, this explains why the report of the group cannot be expected till June 1998.

WORKING GROUP III

ESTIMATION OF THE STATISTICAL VALUE

The working group III 'Adjustment and Data Quality' discussed approaches to estimate the statistical value. The discussions took place during the meetings which were held on the 15 and 16 of May 1997 in Stockholm and 23 and 24 of September in Luxembourg. This article describes the new situation brought about by the regulation which will come into effect in January 1998, it discusses the possibilities available to and problems faced by Member States, and it presents the approaches chosen and the work hitherto carried out on the subject by the working group members. Finally, it outlines possibilities for the other Member States. This article is structured as follows:

- I. Situation
- II. Possibilities and problems
- III. Approaches of some Member States
- IV. Recommendations of the working group

I. Situation

As of January 1998, all providers of statistical information (PSIs) will be required to declare invoice values. The statistical value will only be able to be collected from the top 5% (or 10%) of PSIs in value terms. Member States may

exempt all PSIs from the declaration of the statistical value. However, for the part of trade for which only invoice values will be declared, statistical values will have to be estimated.

II. Possibilities and problems

For the estimation of the statistical value, invoice values (at the most detailed level) have to be multiplied by a factor. Questions are: (a) How to obtain the factor(s)?, (b) Do factors differ at different breakdowns? and (c) How stable are the factors?

A. How to obtain the factor(s)?

Several approaches are possible:

- Calculation of factors based on existing Intrastat information - historical information or information from the top 5% of PSIs.
- Calculation of factors using information from special surveys.
- Estimation of factors using information from other sources (e.g. trans-

port statistics, extra-EU-trade statistics).

Different methods can be considered, although not the same possibilities are available to all Member States.. This is for two main reasons: historical information differs and the data items that will be collected in the future will vary. The following table gives an overview on the information currently collected by the Member States:

(see table)

It is clear that terms of delivery is a useful information for estimating the statistical value. This data item, which is collected by five Member States only, may however not be available in the future.

If no delivery terms are available, the historical relation between invoice and statistical value could be applied. The four Member States that do not currently collect invoice values, could use fiscal data as invoice value at PSI level.

Those Member States that do not currently collect invoice values and are re-

luctant to use fiscal data will be able to calculate factors between invoice and statistical value based on the 1998 declarations from the top 5% of PSIs.

B. Do factors differ at different breakdowns?

Breakdown available

The following data elements are collected for each type of good (according to the Intrastat nomenclature):

- Member State of consignment for arrivals and Member State of destination for dispatches
- Quantity of goods: net mass (not for all goods in the future) and/or supplementary units
- Nature of transaction
- Value of goods - (the value collected will be the invoice value in most cases, but the statistical value has to be transmitted to the European Commission)
- Mode of transport (may be dropped in the future)

| | Statistical value | Invoice value | | Delivery terms |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | | at PSI level | at commodity level | |
| Belgium | x | x | | |
| Denmark | x | (■) | | |
| Germany | x | x | x | |
| Greece | x | x | | |
| Spain | x | x | x | x |
| France | x | x | x | x |
| Ireland | x | x | x | x |
| Italy | x | x | x | |
| Luxembourg | x | x | | |
| Netherlands | x | x | | |
| Austria | x | | x | |
| Portugal | x | x | | x |
| Finland | x | (■) | | |
| Sweden | x | (■) | | |
| UK | | x | x | x |

(■) Info should be available from fiscal sources

- Delivery terms (may be dropped in the future)
- Country of origin for arrivals (optional but may be dropped in the future)

□ *Possibilities*

The breakdown at which factors can be calculated, is linked to the availability of data elements. In case data elements such as delivery terms or mode of transport are dropped, their use in the future will be limited. Member States that have information on the sector of a company - i.e. if the ID of the company contains this information - could use this. Another variable which could be used is the type of goods or groups of goods (e.g. chapters of the CN, NST/R groupings).

For the estimation of factors, data from other sources can be used. If, for example, transport cost for certain commodities are known from transport statistics, this information can be used to set up factors for these commodities.

□ *Result of studies*

During the start of the SLIM initiative, studies carried out by Spain and France showed that the relation between invoice and statistical value differs by partner country and by chapter. These studies only analysed one period (month or year) and no examination of stability over time was carried out.

The UK started to estimate statistical values in 1993. Based on studies, they agreed to apply different factors by partner countries and delivery terms.

□ *Further studies*

Several Member States undertake studies on the statistical value. These studies examine the level of detail for which different factors are necessary.

C. How stable are the factors?

Germany will study the stability of factors over time.

III. Approaches of some Member States

Some Member States have announced their plans concerning the estimation of the statistical value. A summary of each is given in the following.

A. UK experience in estimating the statistical value and further plans

Statistical value has been estimated in the UK since 1993. Therefore, an ancillary cost survey was set up and factors for converting invoice values into statistical values are calculated by partner country and by terms of delivery. The statistical value is calculated for each transaction taking into account net mass and number of consignments. Furthermore an inflation factor is used in the calculation. The legal basis for the ancillary cost survey is Commission Regulation 3046/92.

Using a stratified random sample, about 170 traders are selected monthly separately for arrivals and dispatches. Selected traders are requested to supply 6 lines of trade. The larger traders are requested to supply extra lines due to larger volume of trade.

This survey will have to be adapted by January 1998 for several reasons:

- a) The simplification beginning in 1998 has led to the decision that traders need no longer supply information for the Survey. It might be continued on a voluntary basis.
- b) The estimation depends on net mass which will not be available for all product codes. Net mass might be estimated for these goods.

In order to be prepared for the abolition of delivery terms, the UK is carrying out a study on whether factors at a breakdown by partner country are sufficient to obtain reliable results.

B. French approach

France plans to conduct a small-scale survey of foreign trade operators to determine the costs of transport and insurance in relation to international trade. This survey was originally - before the SLIM initiative - planned to provide a coefficient used to calculate the balance of trade, the balance of payments and for national accounts.

As the survey was designed before the SLIM initiative and because it is based on mode of transport and delivery terms as stratification variables, it may have to be reworked if these data items are dropped.

The estimation method remains to be developed.

C. Approaches exclusively based on results from the Intrastat system

Germany intends to calculate factors based on 1995 and 1996 data to use in the estimation of the statistical value. A study will examine for which breakdown factors are to be calculated. The stability of the quotients over time will also be investigated. Provisional results show that in Germany factors are about 1 at global level by mode of transport. However, the application of the estimated factors is only possible for purchases and sales but not for the other codes in the nature of transaction.

The Netherlands examine the relation between invoice and statistical value by commodity groups and partner country. Provisional results show that factors vary from 0.9 to 1.1 by commodity (8000 codes). An analysis by partner country is yet to be carried out.

Italy intends to study the relation between invoice and statistical value by type of goods, partner country, nature of transaction and mode of transport. The top 5% of traders will be used for the calculation. Estimation will be simulated for 1997 data.

Eurostat's provisional analysis on data made available by Ireland for April-June 1996 show that even at the global level (total dispatches and arrivals) factors differ from 1. For arrivals invoice values are about 1% lower and for dispatches they are about 0.5% higher than statistical values.

IV. Recommendations of the working group

A. Ancillary survey or other sources

The two ancillary surveys that exist (UK) or are planned (France) both need the information on delivery terms during the estimation process. The working group viewed that it was very difficult to use surveys without delivery terms being available. Nevertheless, the UK will ex-

amine whether partner country breakdown is sufficient to obtain reliable results.

Other statistics or data sources which provide relevant information could also be used.

B. Member States currently collecting invoice value and statistical value

The Member States which are currently collecting invoice value and statistical value are able to (a) set up an ancillary survey or use other sources, (b) calculate factors based on historical information for future application, or (c) estimate statistical values based on the top 5% of PSIs. These Member States may evaluate the reliability of options (b) and (c) for preceding periods. Option (a) is likely to need more preparation than the other options.

C. Member States currently collecting statistical value only

The Member States which do not currently collect invoice values could use fiscal data as invoice value at PSI level. In this case, the same methods as described under B could be applied.

Alternatively, they may wait for the first 1998 data in order to calculate factors. In this case early availability of the declarations of the top 5% of PSIs is vital. Studies carried out by other Member States may be helpful to agree on the level of breakdown for which factors have to be established.



SLIM THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK

◆ SLIM/INTRASTAT - simplification of legislation

1. NET MASS AND STATISTICAL VALUE

As already mentioned in the 1996/1 issue of the Newsletter two Commission regulations are now in force regarding simplified declaration of the net mass and the statistical value. A revised list of the commodities for which net mass is not required was proposed in the meeting of the Trade Committee in November 1997, and enlarges the list of exemptions by several hundred commodity codes.

2. REDUCED DATA ELEMENTS AND SIMPLIFIED NOMENCLATURE

The Economic Questions group of the Council had its first meeting 15 July, 1997, on the EP/Council regulations regarding reduction of the data elements collected and a simplified nomenclature. Both proposals met strong opposition, and even a compromise proposal from the Presidency on nomenclature was rejected by the Member states.

The second meeting of the Economic Questions group was held 1 October, 1997.

Reduced data elements

A compromise from the Presidency regarding the data elements was positively received, although a final agreement was not reached. The basic idea of the compromise is to operate 3 lists of data elements.

One list containing the mandatory (and EU common) data comprising product code, partner country, nature of transaction, value, net mass, supplementary unit.

Another list containing those data elements which are optional for the Member states, and for which a threshold shall be applied. This implies that if a Member state decides to collect these data, they can only be collected from enterprises above a certain threshold. In other words SMEs are exempted from supplying these data. The data elements concerned are: the delivery terms and the mode of transport.

A third list contains the remaining data elements which are also considered optional for the Member states, however, no threshold applies. This list comprises: in the Member state of arrival the country of origin; in the Member state of dispatch, the region of origin, and in the Member state of arrival, the region of destination; the statistical procedure; in the Member state of dispatch the port of loading, and in the Member state of arrival the port of unloading.

Compared to the initial proposal the simplifying impact seems now reduced. Therefore the Commission has expressed its reservation.

The next meeting of the Council group will await the report of the European Parliament.

Simplified nomenclature

Regarding the proposal on a simplified nomenclature the Presidency took note of the opposition to the initial proposal and the compromise presented at the July meeting. The Member states expressed strong support of taking into account the results and conclusions of the report presented by the SLIM/CN team (SLIM phase II). This SLIM team has explored the possibilities of simplifying the Combined Nomenclature, which presently is used for trade statistics in intra and extra trade.

The Commission has reserved its position, as the results of the CN team are not yet known, and furthermore such a solution is far from the initial and ambitious goal to provide a substantial reduction in the number of subheadings and to introduce the simplified nomenclature from 1 January 1998 (SLIM phase I).

A light in the dark may be the Internal Market Ministers' meeting end November, where the Ministers will take stock of the situation, i.e. the progress made and problems encountered in SLIM phase 1 and the recommendations from SLIM phase 2, and their decisions may provide a political orientation, useful for attempts to get out of the deadlock.

◆ Continuation of SLIM work: Studies with the Member States

INTRODUCTION

Since it was introduced in 1993, the Intrastat system has lightened the workload of businesses considerably, but there are still numerous aspects of where the system which are open to criticism. Small and medium-sized businesses, in particular, still find Intrastat expensive. The problems are linked to the cost of the statistics and their quality (the reliability of the data at aggregate and detailed levels, non-responses and delays with making the results available).

The SLIM initiative, launched by the Commission in 1996 to simplify Community legislation, with Intrastat selected as one of four pilot projects, provided the opportunity to investigate the problem areas in more detail using a broadly based analysis program and to propose improvements.

Based on a series of proposals for studies worked out by Eurostat in cooperation with the Member States, some 40 contracts relating to a total of 70 individual studies are to be signed shortly.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDIES

The studies are based on the following technical areas of intra-Community trade statistics:

- ① Methodology of the statistical survey (52 studies);
- ② Adjustment procedures and data quality (10 studies);

- ③ Survey characteristics and regional breakdown of the results (8 studies).

Ad 1:

The majority of the studies (some 75%) refer to the survey method. These include studies on:

- the sampling procedure:
 - cut-off procedure used at present with value thresholds on the arrivals and dispatches sides;
 - random sampling procedures;
- survey periodicity:
 - two-stage system with monthly and quarterly results;
- the one-flow system:
 - coverage of a single flow of goods (dispatches).

If periodicity aspects are investigated, the question of the underlying selection procedure arises, and vice-versa, and the same applies to studies on the suitability of a one-flow system. Similarly, there are questions relating to the characteristics (e.g. the delimitation of monthly and quarterly statistics) and the size of the survey (e.g. size required with a one-flow system). Since the content of the various questions is interlinked, many of the investigations concentrate on combinations of the above points.

Ad 2:

Around 15% of the studies concern quality aspects of intra-Community trade statistics. These deal with:

- adjustment procedures, in particular to compensate for non-response and for that share of the value which lies below the threshold, but also for estimates of individual characteristics (statistical value):

- deficits and possible improvements in the methods currently used in the Member States;
- alternative procedures;
- the quality of results:
 - reliability of the results at aggregate and detailed levels;
 - timing of data availability, steps to be taken when there are delays.

Ad 3:

For special variables covered in intra-Community trade statistics (nature of the transaction and country of origin), cost-benefit analyses are necessary. In some Member States, the results of intra-Community trade statistics are broken down by region, and in this respect the possibility of using other, existing characteristics which might be helpful in compiling these data should be investigated, with a view to simplification.

TIMETABLE

The contracts are organised so that all the studies should be completed by the end of 1998, to enable the results to be evaluated in good time and recommendations made.

The final reports on around half the studies are expected in mid-1998 and on most of the remaining studies (there are a few exceptions) in September 1998.



PUBLICATION

THE LEGISLATION ON STATISTICS RELATING TO TRADE IN GOODS

The legislation on statistics relating to trade in goods has been compiled in a structured manner in a publication entitled "Community legislation applicable to the statistics relating to the trading of goods between Member States and statistics relating to the trading of goods with third countries".

A new edition (August 1997) has just been published in three languages (English, French and German) and is available from the secretariat of Eurostat's Unit C.4 at the following address:

Mme Nicole Barbarini, Office C3/28A
Bâtiment JMO, rue Alcide de Gasperi
Luxembourg - Kirchberg
L - 2920 Luxembourg
Fax: (352) 43 01 34 339

The contents of the publication are as follows:

- A. **STATISTICS RELATING TO THE TRADING OF GOODS BETWEEN MEMBER STATES**
 - A.1. **STATISTICS ON TRADE BETWEEN MEMBER STATES**
 - A.1.1. **Methodology**
 - A.1.1.1. *Basic regulation*
 - A.1.1.2. *Implementing regulations*
 - A.1.2. **Nomenclatures**
 - A.1.2.1. *Goods nomenclature*
 - A.1.2.2. *Country nomenclature*
 - A.2. **EDICOM**
 - A.2.1. **Council decision**
 - A.2.2. **Action plans**
- B. **STATISTICS RELATING TO THE TRADING OF GOODS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES**
 - B.1. **TRADE STATISTICS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES**
 - B.1.1. **Methodology**
 - B.1.1.1. *Basic regulation*
 - B.1.1.2. *Implementing regulations*
 - B.1.2. **Nomenclatures**
 - B.1.2.1. *Goods nomenclature*
 - B.1.2.1. *Country nomenclature*
- C. **GENERAL DISPOSITIONS**
 - C.1. **STATISTICAL LAW**
 - C.2. **STATISTICAL CONFIDENTIALITY**

GLOBALISATION

In June 1995, an 'External Trade' Task Force on Globalisation comprising France, Germany, Italy and Greece was set up to study *the feasibility of integrating statistical information on intra-firm trade and international subcontracting into foreign trade statistics.*

As part of the work programme agreed by the Task Force, the four Member States participating in this Task Force are preparing a *feasibility study on the links between enterprises within a trans-national group.* The objective of this study is to evaluate the extent to which enterprises can define ownership relationships within a trans-national group and distinguish international trade with enterprises within the trans-national group from trade with enterprises not part of the trans-national group. The study is based on a questionnaire, specifically targeted to enterprises part of trans-national groups (i.e. heads and subsidiaries). The results will enable Eurostat to

better judge the possibility of integrating information on intra-firm trade into external trade statistics.

Before launching the main Survey, the four Member States are to carry out a 'pilot phase', covering a selected number of heads and subsidiaries of trans-national groups. The purpose of the Pilot Phase is to enhance the quality of the questionnaire to be used in the main Survey, to uncover any possible errors before starting the Survey field work and to test the cooperation of enterprises in completing the questionnaire.

The main Survey should provide results on:

- the criteria used by enterprises for defining their respective trans-national group;
- whether information on ownership links between enterprises within the trans-national group is centrally recorded by the group head and distributed to subsidiaries;

- the availability of information on subsidiaries at group head level (e.g. knowledge of their number and geographical distribution, percentage share ownership held etc);
- the availability of information on the group head and intermediate holding enterprises at subsidiary level (e.g. name and residence of the enterprises in question, level of share ownership held etc) ;
- the availability of information on intra-firm trade.

The 'pilot phase' should be completed by the end of 1997. The Survey field work should cover the first few months of 1998 and be completed by Spring 1998. Finally, a presentation of the Survey results, together with recommendations on whether information on intra-firm trade should be incorporated in external trade statistics is planned for the Committee on intra-Community and external trade statistics in the second half of 1998.

CHINA

A study of the sources of discrepancies in statistics on trade between the EU and China has just been completed. The main findings are set out below.

The final outcome of this study, which the International Trade Centre (ITC) was commissioned to carry out, was a reconciliation between European and Chinese statistics. Eurostat, China's General Customs Administration (CGA) and, for the final stage, DGI were involved. The terms and findings of the study were endorsed by all the bodies concerned. Agreement on these statistics can now be considered to exist.

The study defined a method for readjusting export and import data. Applied to 1995, it reduces the discrepancy between China's exports and the EU's corresponding imports from 45% to 2%, and the discrepancy between EU exports and China's imports from 10% to 1%. In both cases, re-exports from Hong Kong (or rather most of the re-exports) play the main role. In the first case, these accounted for 80% of the total. As other factors (other than cif/fob) play a negligible role (comparable to that found in other reconciliations), the value of imports declared by the two partners changes only slightly. It should, how-

ever, be borne in mind that these figures do not replace the official (published) data.

This is a very encouraging result and should stimulate dialogue between China and Europe in the field of trade. It also provides a point of departure for the more comprehensive programme to be launched in early 1998, which is designed to identify the residual causes of divergence, extend and apply the method to the detailed levels of the classification and introduce an automatic tool for making statistical adjustments.

This study also made it possible to identify and quantify the economic factor of "reexport margin" (and not the divergence factor). This is defined as the in-

crease in value acquired in Hong Kong as part of the value of reexport. This is around 26%, corresponding in turn to a price mark-up of 35% (increase in value

over import into Hong Kong, including costs for storage, minor processing, marketing, re-sale, etc.).

THE COMBINED NOMENCLATURE

The Combined Nomenclature (CN) which will come into effect from 1 January 1998 was finalised at a meeting of the Tariff and Statistical Nomenclature Section of the Customs Code Committee in Brussels on 14 October 1997 and will be published in the Official Journal on 30 October 1997. However, there is likely to be a delay in its distribution by the Publications Office.

The production of the Nomenclature was influenced by work done under the SLIM initiative (Simpler Legislation for the Internal Market). This initiative was proposed by the Internal Market Council and is intended to simplify Community legislation in several areas, including the Combined Nomenclature.

Eurostat has been working on the initiative since the last quarter of 1996, in close cooperation with the representatives of the Member States and the European Federations (FEBIs), culminating in a draft Regulation to simplify the use of the Combined Nomenclature for intra-Community trade. At the time of writing this document, the draft is being examined by the Council and Parliament under the co-decision procedure.

The desire for simplification has resulted in a reduction in the number of requests from the Member States and the FEBIs for the creation of codes, a thorough examination of the dossiers by the Tariff and Statistical Nomenclature Section of the Customs Code Committee, which endeavoured to limit the creation of codes to those which were indispensable, and, lastly, the approval of proposals to remove some CN codes that were considered to have no statistical value.

This year, the desire for simplification more than offset the relatively significant number of new codes introduced as a result of tariff requirements relating to the elimination of duties on information technology products and on certain spirituous beverages (Commission Regulation (EC) No 1153/97 of 24 June 1997, OJ No L 168, p. 35). 310 new codes were created and 329 eliminated, resulting in an overall reduction of 19 CN codes.

Although this is not a very sizeable reduction, it should be pointed out that this is the first time since the setting up of the CN that there has been a fall in the total number of codes, now standing at 10 587. This result confirms the reduc-

tion in the number of codes, which had shown a tendency to increase until 1995.

The number of new CN codes since 1988, broken down by type, is as follows:

- Statistical codes 301
- Tariff codes 689
- Mixed codes 91
- Total number of new codes 1 081

In addition, under the SLIM proposals for simplification, Commission Regulation (EC) No 2385/96 of 16 December 1996, published in Official Journal L 326 of 17 December 1996, sets out the CN codes for which specification of net mass becomes optional for the parties responsible for providing statistical information on intra-Community trade. Given the importance of this list for users of the Nomenclature, it has been included in the INTRASTAT publication of the CN which, as is customary, will be available in all languages in paper and electronic format.



EDICOM - COMEXT

CBS-IRIS INTELLIGENT DATA-ENTRY

V.H.M. SMEETS¹

CBS-IRIS was developed as a free software tool and distributed among trading enterprises in conjunction with the introduction of the Intrastat system. With this software, in essence a DOS-based data-entry tool, enterprises can put together their statistical reports. The program uses the Blaise-tools². During the data entry process, validity and consistency checks are performed, for instance the validity of the CN8 product-codes is checked.

This article³ describes the experiences of Statistics Netherlands in introducing an EDC tool on a broad scale.

1. CBS-IRIS: AN INTELLIGENT DATA ENTRY TOOL

CBS-IRIS was originally developed as a data entry program. But its main goal, to reduce reporting burden for the enterprises, can only be reached if an enterprise can download most of the data needed, for the INTRASTAT returns,

from its own automated administrative systems. An obvious handicap here is that an important part of the data elements required for INTRASTAT are not

usually part of the system of the enterprises. Where data elements are available in systems, in some cases (i.e. the commodity code) a translation has to be made from the codes used by the enterprise to the prescribed codes for INTRASTAT.

In CBS-IRIS a number of features were built in, to facilitate the compilation of the INTRASTAT returns :

- a module was built in, to download required data from the ASCII listings that many administrative programs can produce. The enterprise only has to add, by way of data entry, the extra data elements;
- many enterprises proved to have trade with constant characteristics. Always the same values for i.e. "Sta-

¹ V.H.M. Smeets was project manager EDICOM for Statistics Netherlands until March 1997. The views in this article are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect the views of Statistics Netherlands.

² Statistics Netherlands, 1994: Blaise - a survey processing system, Statistics Netherlands, Voorburg, the Netherlands, 1994.

³ This article is an excerpt from an article on CBS-IRIS in Netherlands Official Statistics autumn 1997. This edition of Netherlands Official Statistics is dedicated entirely to the use of EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) and EDC (Electronic Data Capture) in the statistical process.

tistical procedure", "Nature of transaction", sometimes even for "Member State of destination" and "Member State of consignment" had to be entered. In CBS-IRIS the possibility to define a number of default sets of values was built in. The use of these default sets, facilitates the compilation of the INTRASTAT returns;

- a translation module was built into CBS-IRIS where enterprises can put together a conversion table from their own product codes to the matching commodity code from the Combined Nomenclature. Using this feature, within CBS-IRIS the enterprises' own codes are automatically translated into the defined commodity code;
- one of the most difficult data elements for enterprises proved to be the "statistical value". For enterprises that have the same kind of shipments to declare regularly, the possibility is built into CBS-IRIS to calculate statistical value from the invoice value, by making use of user defined algorithms. For different kinds of shipments, different algorithms can be defined.

All these features were developed to "translate" enterprise data to statistical data. The translation rules are prepared by the reporting enterprise.

2. INTRODUCTION AND RECEPTION

The introduction of CBS-IRIS coincided with the introduction of the INTRASTAT obligation. For many enterprises, the obligation to report their trade directly to Statistics Netherlands, was a completely new concept. An extensive instruction campaign for trading enterprises was organized. Many of these training sessions were held in co-

operation with the Chambers of Commerce. Besides giving information on INTRASTAT, at every session the CBS-IRIS tool was also demonstrated.

At the end of 1992, beginning of 1993 some 12,000 CBS-IRIS packages were handed out or sent to trading enterprises and administrative offices. The response was overwhelming.

Problems

Not only did the trading enterprises have many questions about INTRASTAT, the documentation of the CBS-IRIS-package proved insufficient. These were two reasons for enterprises to seek contact with Statistics Netherlands in search of further explanations. Beside these two reasons there were some other aspects that did not facilitate the introduction of CBS-IRIS. The diversity of computer equipment used by the enterprises was much greater than expected. Equipment and operating systems, that were believed to be obsolete, still proved to be operational in some companies. And, this should also be stated, the first CBS-IRIS release was not free of bugs, some of them being serious.

All these problems gave rise to very heavy telephone traffic between enterprises and Statistics Netherlands, sometimes to such an extent that the telephone lines became overloaded and telephone communication broke down.

Solutions

All the problems that were met in conjunction with introduction of the new INTRASTAT system and the equally new CBS-IRIS program, called for specific measures.

Obviously one of the first measures was to have the telephone company expand the number of available telephone lines. A help-desk was installed. In the first few months of 1993 this help-desk was manned by up to 25 people.

Field workers with the department of International Trade started an intensive campaign, visiting enterprises and assisting with the installation of the CBS-IRIS package, and giving more specific information on INTRASTAT. The capacity of the group of field workers was enlarged considerably.

A comprehensive manual for CBS-IRIS was compiled. This manual also contained detailed information on the data elements required, thus also answering many INTRASTAT related questions. Also the use of the extra features in CBS-IRIS, was explained in detail.

It is obvious that the introduction of CBS-IRIS in conjunction with the introduction of INTRASTAT, required additional effort from Statistics Netherlands. However, a few months after the introduction, the situation slowly stabilized. Enterprises adapted to the INTRASTAT system, and to the CBS-IRIS software.

The help-desk was reduced to ten people. The help-desk remained essential with the support of CBS-IRIS and thus with the acceptance of CBS-IRIS as a standard tool for the INTRASTAT returns. At the start of the year 1994 Statistics Netherlands, had about 9,000 CBS-IRIS users, including the third party providers, sending in INTRASTAT returns for up to 14,000 trading enterprises.

Release policy

After the initial period, where some bug releases were made, Statistics Netherlands followed a strict release policy. The CBS-IRIS program is updated once a year. The new release is sent to all users in the last week of December and the first week of January. In the new releases, improvements as a result of user suggestions, are implemented. Also an important aspect of the yearly new release, is the replacement of code lists such as the Combined Nomenclature and the Country Nomenclature. Both nomenclatures are revised practically every year.

3. DATA COMMUNICATION

Enterprises have been calling the help-desk, not only to ask questions, but also to make suggestions to improve, or add new functionality to the program. One of the suggestions that came forth from CBS-IRIS-users, was the request for a data communication option, besides the possibility to export data to diskette.

Statistics Netherlands developed a data communication module and for implementation it in the CBS-IRIS program. Before this option could be made operational, security precautions had to be taken.

First of all, the data sent by the enterprises should be protected against unauthorised access.

Furthermore Statistics Netherlands had to be protected against infected files on its Wide Area Network. Both facts should be guaranteed without making data communication excessively complicated. The following solutions were chosen.

The data files that were sent by CBS-IRIS were encrypted and compressed.

The upload server at Statistics Netherlands is a stand alone computer. A mail lock exists between the upload server and the Wide Area Network. This mail lock, is a computer that connects to the upload server for retrieval of uploaded files and disconnection from the upload server. The uploaded files are decompressed and decrypted, checked for viruses and for recognizable format. When

files are suspect or not in a recognised format they are rejected and deleted. The mail lock then connects to the Wide Area Network and the approved files are imported there. This way, the data communication is essentially one way. The sender only receives an acknowledgment of the receipt.

Up to now, this concept has not confronted Statistics Netherlands with any serious security problems.

The data communication option was introduced in CBS-IRIS at the end of 1993. At first, only a limited number of users were allowed to use the option. After the first positive experiences the communication module was built into the next CBS-IRIS release. The data communication option was only advertised very quietly. But the number of enterprises using the data communication option increased steadily from 200 users in the spring of 1994 to over 2,000 users at the start of 1997.

4. EVALUATION

With hindsight, the question is whether the introduction of CBS-IRIS on such a large scale was a wise thing to start with. The fact is that Statistics Netherlands met considerable problems through the simultaneous introduction of INTRASTAT and sending out 12,000 copies of CBS-IRIS. Looking back it took an extra effort, but in the end most problems could be solved, in a way acceptable to all parties involved. The positive effect in introducing CBS-IRIS

in this manner was that it was generally accepted as a fitting tool to handle INTRASTAT returns by most enterprises. As such, the answer to the question on the introduction of CBS-IRIS should be affirmative.

Although the assimilation threshold was raised twice in recent years, this did not lead to a great reduction of CBS-IRIS users. Every year between 850 and 1,000 enterprises requested evaluation copies of CBS-IRIS. Most of these companies became CBS-IRIS users. Even with the assimilation threshold raised twice, the number of enterprises and administrative offices that are CBS-IRIS users remained fairly constant at about 9,000.

Reactions of enterprises are mostly positive, although with the evolution in operating systems for personal computers the requests for a Windows © version of the software become stronger. In 1997, Statistics Netherlands is introducing a version for Windows 3.11 ©.

In the long run, it is seen as a disadvantage that the data required for the intra trade statistics, connect poorly to the data available in the enterprises' own administrative systems. When a better connection between these two data sets can be obtained, a more advanced method of EDI would be possible. This would reduce the administrative burden for the reporting enterprises even more.

CBS-IRIS was one of the first EDC-projects for Statistics Netherlands. Its success, has certainly made Statistics Netherlands more aware of the possibilities of EDI and EDC, and as such CBS-IRIS has played a significant role in the introduction of EDC/EDI in data collection.



EDICOM REFLECTION GROUP MEETINGS

At the EDICOM Task Force meeting on the 3rd - 5th of March, 1997, it was decided to set up a number of EDICOM Reflection Groups to look at different EDI related aspects of the Intrastat system.

While the first Reflection Group, meeting on the 21st - 22nd of May, 1997, dealt with more administrative tasks — the topic was a recommendation for the EDICOM budget distribution in 1998 and 1999, with participants coming from Germany (StBA), France (DGDDI), Ireland (VIMA), the Netherlands (CBS), the United Kingdom (HM Customs & Excise) and Eurostat (units A-2 and C-4) — the later meetings concentrated more on strategic issues.

tabase must be available to extract the data required for feedback, the data of the provider must be combined with National and European data.

- To reduce the costs required in establishing a feedback system, it should whenever possible, be combined with other actions and projects in related areas.

CO-OPERATION WITH SOFTWARE SUPPLIERS

FEEDBACK TO THE PROVIDERS

On the 11th - 12th of June, 1997, delegates from Belgium (BNB), the Netherlands (CBS), Finland (Board of Customs), the United Kingdom (HM Customs & Excise) and Eurostat discussed the SLIM/Intrastat proposal "Feedback to the Providers". Technical solutions were examined, as well as possible impacts on the quality of Intrastat data.

The SLIM/Intrastat proposal states: "It is proposed that feedback to providers is sent in order to stimulate the interest for providing solid data and using the trade statistics." It indicates the need for improvement at both the input level (response to erroneous declarations) and the output level (feedback of statistical data to the provider). "One way of doing this, is to return to the trader a statistical report about the commodities he has dispatched to, or received from, other EU countries".

As an example, the Belgian National Bank (BNB) is currently sending Intrastat feed-

back to its providers. Every quarter, the traders receive a survey of their 10 main products, compared with the total trade of these products. This is seen as an acknowledgment to the provider, as an incentive for better reporting, and also as a measure of quality control.

Feedback is rated as an important factor in the improvement of communications between an administration and its providers of statistical data. As the circumstances in all Member States are very different, a general solution to set-up a feedback procedure cannot be given.

Some common recommendations by the Reflection Group are:

- The first stage should be kept relatively simple. The Belgian example demonstrates what it could look like.
- When a solution is selected on how to return the information to the provider, the costs on both sides should be taken into consideration, and the costs for the provider should be as low as possible.
- A technical pre-requisite for the administration is, that an integrated da-

The EDICOM Reflection Group met for the third time on the 17th - 18th of September, 1997. Participants came from Belgium (BNB), Germany (StBA), France (DGDDI), the United Kingdom (HM Customs & Excise) and Eurostat. Under the heading "Co-operation with Software Suppliers", the group tried to find new ways to support the introduction and promotion of automation and EDI for the collection of Intrastat data.

The main results of the meeting were:

- Suppliers of accounting and business software packages have to be contacted to find out what their requirements are, in order to include statistical modules in their products.
- Strategies have to be set up to provide software suppliers with the current metadata (code lists, legal rules, etc.).
- Experiences with existing products (e.g. IDEP/CN8) should be used to stimulate the development of commercial solutions for the collection of statistical data.

- Special attention should be given to the new technologies (Internet).

Eurostat will carry out a detailed study on this topic in 1998.

FUTURE TELECOMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

On the 15th - 16th of October, 1997, the EDICOM Reflection Group examined future telecommunication strategies for Intrastat. Participants from Belgium (BNB), Denmark (Statistics), Germany (StBA), France (DGDDI), the Netherlands (CBS), Sweden (Tulldata), the United Kingdom (HM Customs & Excise) and Eurostat took a closer look at the current situation in the Member States, and at emerging technology to see how it can be used, for the collection of Intrastat data with enterprises.

Currently, there are some Member States where no EDI technology at all is used for

Intrastat data collection (e.g. D, I, P), while other countries are quite advanced (e.g. FIN, S).

Eurostat's IDEP/CN8 software package for enterprises is equipped for EDI, offering a modem connection to the competent national administration over the public telephone network. The same holds for the Dutch CBS-IRIS package. Internet pilot tests with IDEP/CN8 have been conducted successfully and will be continued on a larger scale in 1998.

IDEP/CN8 is currently used in 11 Member States (all except D, NL, UK; Portugal is preparing the introduction of IDEP/CN8) with about 25,000 enterprises. In 5 of these Member States, IDEP's EDI option is applied (B, EL, F, L, A). Ireland is preparing the introduction of EDI with IDEP/CN8, in the near future.

CBS-IRIS, used in Germany and the Netherlands by more than 20,000 enterprises, is also equipped with an EDI module, connecting to the CBS via the telephone network. This option was introduced in the Netherlands with big success (see article on CBS-IRIS).

The Reflection Group recommends to focus efforts in the coming years on data collection via Internet. Special attention should be paid to security and confidentiality. Eurostat will carry out a detailed study on future telecommunications strategies for Intrastat in 1998.

CONCLUSION

The EDICOM Reflection Groups are appreciated by all participants as a means to set-up common strategies for the automation of Intrastat data collection. The series of Reflection Group meetings will be continued.

Possible new topics include:

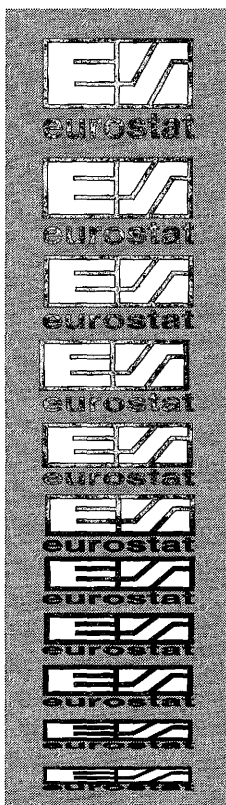
- Electronic forms.
- Future EDICOM strategy.
- Possible continuation of EDICOM after 1999.
- Cost / benefit analysis.
- Progress indicators.

20 1997

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MORE INFORMATION?

IDEP/CN8 is part of the **EDICOM** project the main objective being to increase the use of automatic data processing and electronic data transmission in the area of intra-Community trade statistics.

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further details:

Uwe Kunzler

Tel: (352) 4301-32344

Fax: (352) 4301-32999

X.400: C=BE;A=RTT;P=CEC;O=EUROSTAT;
S=KUNZLER;G=UWE

Internet: uwe.kunzler@eurostat.cec.be

Eurostat

**Directorate A: Statistical information system;
research and data analysis; technical cooperation
with Phare and Tacis countries**

L-2920 Luxembourg

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IDEP/CN8

**The solution for Intra-Community
Trade Declarations**

**Eurostat
Luxembourg**

November 1997

(* *IDEP/CN8 not used*)

What is IDEP/CN8?

IDEP/CN8 is a PC program that helps large numbers of traders in the European Union to prepare their intra-community trade statistics (INTRASTAT) declarations. IDEP stands for Intrastat Data Entry Package, while CN8 stands for Combined Nomenclature at the eight digit level, the standard European goods classification.

IDEP/CN8 was developed by EUROSTAT, the Statistical Office of the European Communities. Today, EUROSTAT controls the maintenance and further development of the package. EUROSTAT guarantees that IDEP/CN8 contains the latest information (tables, rules) at the European level.

How does IDEP/CN8 help traders?

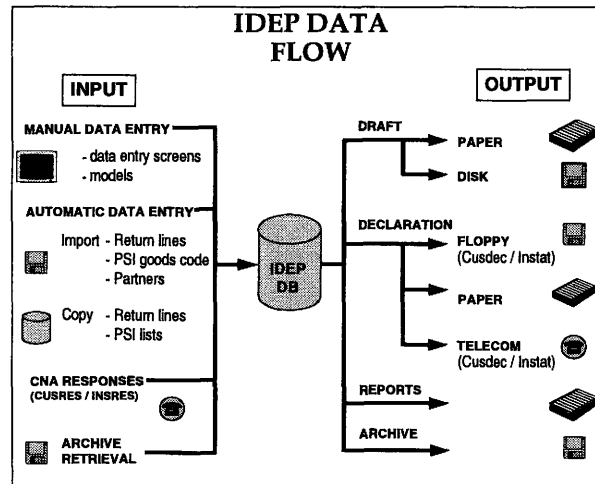
IDEP/CN8 is more than a simple data entry package. In addition to the European regulations, it also includes the national rules and tables of the Member States where it is used, all presented in the national language(s) of the user. The data entered by the user is validated against these rules, resulting in an error-free declaration. Users may define their own tables of goods, clients, frequently used declaration lines, formulas to calculate statistical values, exchange rates, etc. A unique feature of IDEP/CN8 is the option to import the data for a statistical declaration from administrative or financial systems. IDEP/CN8 automatically performs required conversions, validates the data, and produces an INTRASTAT declaration.

Declaration formats

Declarations are produced on paper in one of the official formats, on diskette in standard EDIFACT format (CUSDEC/INSTAT message), or in the form of an EDIFACT message, suitable for telecommunications transmission. The last option has been introduced very successfully in a number of Member States over the past few years, and its usage is growing rapidly. IDEP/CN8 accepts and interprets response messages, also in EDIFACT format (CUSRES/INSRES and CONTRL messages), which can be sent to the traders by the Competent National Administrations.

Support for "third party" declarants

Many traders make use of specialised agents or accountants to produce their statistical declarations. In IDEP/CN8, these third party declarants can define an unlimited number of traders which all have their own set of trader dependent data. The package allows third party declarants to produce declarations for all of their traders in a single command.



How to find a goods code?

One of the most time-consuming aspects of producing statistical declarations, is to find the right codes covering the goods that were imported or exported. For this purpose, the CN8 part of IDEP/CN8 was developed. It contains the Official Classifications, as published annually, and a special version of these texts called the Self-Explanatory texts. Here the hierarchy of the Official texts has disappeared, and each product has its own full description. Three search methods are included in CN8: on keywords, on index, on hierarchy. Using one of these methods, any eight digit goods code can be found in seconds.

Data safety, correctness, and integrity

IDEP/CN8 includes the basic functions to allow the user to make back-ups and, to save space and increase performance, to archive declarations that are not needed on-line anymore. The validity of all official data is secured by the guaranteed correctness of the tables supplied by EUROSTAT and the Competent National Administrations in the Member States, and where applicable, the data entered by the user is validated against these tables. To assure the correctness of numerical values entered, the user can produce draft declarations to compare the data entered in IDEP/CN8 with his administrative data. Further more, the user can produce a variety of reports showing data over a certain period of time. When the program is started, IDEP/CN8 performs a number of integrity checks to assure the correctness of the database and the data it holds. These procedures are repeated when declarations are produced.

Technical requirements

IDEP/CN8 runs under MSDOS (from version 3.1 onwards) or on an emulated DOS system, such as a DOS-box in Windows or OS/2.

It runs in real mode on any PC with at least 500 kilobytes of free base memory, or in protected mode on PCs with at least 2 megabytes of free extended memory that have a memory manager (such as EMM386, HIMEM) installed.

It requires about 10 megabytes of disk space for an installation, plus additional disk space for each installed CN8 chapter (a full installation will take about 20 megabytes).

To use the telecommunications option, a simple (fax)modem is sufficient.

How to obtain a copy of IDEP/CN8?

The annual preparation and distribution of IDEP/CN8 is done by the Competent National Administrations: the statistical institutions or the customs authorities in the Member States (see overleaf). To obtain more information or a copy of the package, interested traders should send a request to these authorities. With the exception of some Member States, where distribution is by commercial organisations, IDEP/CN8 is free of charge.





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