

Background Notes

- Introduction** The statistics are a combination of Customs-based non-EU trade statistics and estimates from the Intrastat Survey of Irish traders involved in trade with other EU member states.
- Revisions** All figures are estimates. They are subject to revision on the incorporation of late Intrastat and VAT returns and corrections made by traders to Intrastat returns already submitted.
- When the results for a particular month are published, the results for the seventh preceding month are revised for the last time and may be considered final. However, further revisions are possible in very exceptional cases.
- Intrastat System** The Intrastat system has two components. Firstly, the Intrastat survey itself (conducted by the Revenue Commissioners), in which the larger traders make detailed monthly returns giving information on the quantity and value of all exports to or imports from EU countries.
- The total number of traders required to make a detailed import return is about 7,700 while about 1,900 must make a detailed export return. The response rate in terms of number of traders in June 2009 was 77%, covering an estimated 95% of the total value of intra-EU trade. For July 2009 the respective response rates being 68% and 87%.
- The second component of the Intrastat system is the regular VAT return, on which all traders are required to record the *total* value of goods imported from and exported to other EU member states. This information provides the basis for determining total EU trade for those traders below the Intrastat survey thresholds. It is also used to maintain the register of EU traders.
- Extrastat System** The statistics of trade with non-EU countries are compiled mainly from the documents supplied by importers and exporters to the Customs authorities. The document is the Single Administrative Document (SAD) used for Customs clearance purposes. The VIMA Office in Dundalk is the branch of Revenue responsible for editing and validation of the data supplied. The VIMA Office passes the edited data to the External Trade Statistics section of the Central Statistics Office (CSO).
- Estimation** The figures in this release include estimates for traders above the Intrastat thresholds who did not make detailed returns for the period and for traders below the thresholds who did not provide aggregate intra-EU trade figures on their VAT returns.
- Estimates for Intrastat non-respondents are apportioned to individual commodities and countries whenever previous Intrastat returns are available. Estimates for traders below the Intrastat thresholds are assigned to partner country where possible, but not to commodity.
- The estimate of imports incorporates an upward adjustment equivalent to about 1.75% of total imports, which is included in ‘Unclassified estimates’. This special adjustment arises from the difficulty of comprehensively covering all EU imports through the Intrastat survey system.
- The unclassified category also includes certain miscellaneous adjustments.
- Price and Volume Indices** The monthly price (unit value) index measures monthly price trends relative to the annual levels in the preceding year using value weights relating to that year’s trade (Laspeyres index).
- The annual index is compiled using value weights for both the current and previous year (Fisher index) to allow for change in the structure of external trade.
- The monthly index series should be regarded as interim measures suitable for month-to-month comparisons within a given year. However, when the annual price index is compiled, the monthly price indices are rescaled to make their average equal to the annual index.