

Quality description: Monthly publication on foreign trade of goods 2007-2008

1. Relevance of statistics

1.1 Content and use of statistics

Foreign Trade Statistics describes the commodity trade between Finland and other Member States of the European Union (EU) and between Finland and third countries, i.e. the internal and external trade. Foreign Trade Statistics is the official information source on the importation, exportation and balance of trade of Finland. Foreign Trade Statistics is an instrument of primary importance for decision makers, planners and researchers in the public and private sectors, both on a national level and in the activities of the EU and many international organisations.

Apart from trade statistics, the following statistical material is also regularly published in the monthly bulletin:

Finnish Customs Revenue: The material is produced at the National Board of Customs.

Foreign Trade Transports: The material is obtained from declarations on internal trade and foreign trade customs clearances. The statistics are produced at the Statistics Unit at the National Board of Customs.

Unit value and volume indexes for imports and exports: The Statistics Unit at the National Board of Customs calculates and publishes the indexes each month. The quality report and publishing timetable of the index survey can be found on the Finnish Customs website (www.tulli.fi), under Foreign Trade Statistics.

1.2 Central concepts and classifications

Foreign Trade Statistics registers value and quantity data on export and import of merchandise by commodity code, country and land territory. Importation is registered according to both country of origin and country of consignment. Exportation is registered according to the country of destination.

As a general rule, all goods exported from and imported into Finland appear in the statistics on the internal and external commodity trade. The compilation of statistics requires that the merchandise arrives in or departs from the country physically. It is not important from the viewpoint of the compilation of statistics, however, whether any payments take place in connection with importation or exportation of the merchandise.

The statistical value of import goods is the price actually payable for them. This value includes the cost of transport and insurance of the goods to the first border crossing point at the Finnish border. The statistical value of export goods is their tax-free selling price. This value includes the cost of transport and insurance to the place of exportation at the Finnish border.

The country concepts used are country of origin and country of consignment in import statistics, and country of destination in export statistics. The country in which the goods have been produced or manufactured is regarded as their country of origin. If goods have undergone manufacturing or processing in at least two countries, the country of origin is the country where the last significant and economically motivated manufacturing or processing was performed. The country of consignment is the country from where the goods have originally been sent to be exported to Finland. The country of destination is the last known country, at the time of export, to which the goods are to be dispatched from Finland, either directly or via another country.

The following standards of statistical classification are used in the Monthly publication:

- Standard International Trade Classification (SITC, rev.4, ex 2007)
- Classification of Products by Activities (CPA)
- Exports and Imports by Industries (TOL) 2002
- Main Industrial Groupings (MIG), according to the main use of goods. This product classification is not official.

The country classification is based on Commission Regulation (EC) No 1833/2006 on the nomenclature of countries and territories for the external trade statistics of the Community and statistics of trade between Member States. The country codes comply with those of the ISO/DIS 3166 standard of the International Organization for Standardization. The country groups are defined according to country codes after the quality description in the Monthly publication. More information about country classification can be found, for instance, on the Finnish Customs website (www.tulli.fi).

The following abbreviations and statistical symbols are used in the Monthly publication:

Units of quantity:			
kg	kilogram	kpl	number of items
l	litre	MWh	megawatt-hour
m ³	cubic metre (solid)		

Statistical symbols used:	
Magnitude zero	-
Magnitude less than half of unit employed	0(0,0)
Data subject to secrecy	...
Data not available or too uncertain for presentation..	..

Change percentage is marked x, if the data of the previous year is 0 or not available.

1.3 Acts and Decrees

Foreign Trade Statistics is based on the legislation of the European Community and on the national Statistics Act (280/04) and Customs Act (1466/94) of Finland.

The legislative basis of the EU is divided into two parts; one on the compilation of internal trade statistics and one on the compilation of foreign trade statistics. Furthermore, the general EU statistics regulation (Euratom, EEC) 1588/1990 is applied. The commodity nomenclature, which is applied both in internal and foreign trade statistics compilation, is based on Council Regulation (EEC) No 2658/1987 on the tariff and statistical nomenclature and on the Common Customs Tariff. The country classification, which is common for both systems, is based on the aforementioned Commission Regulation (EC 1833/2006).

The Council's basic Regulation (EC) 638/2004 on internal trade statistics provides a methodological base for internal trade statistics; there are regulations on the implementation in Commission Regulation (EC) No 1982/2004.

The Council's basic Regulation (EC) No 1172/1995 contains regulations on statistics regarding foreign trade, i.e. the trade in goods between the Community and its Member Countries with third countries. Commission Regulation (EC) No 1917/2000 provides regulations on the implementation of the basic Regulation on foreign trade statistics. The basic Regulation on foreign trade statistics has been amended through Council Regulations (EC) No 476/1997 and (EC) No 374/1998.

When possible, the legislation of the European Community takes the recommendations for statistics on international goods trade by the United Nations Statistics Office (International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, United Nations 1998) into account.

2. Method description

The information on the trade carried on by Finland with the other EU Member States is summarized from the required statistical declarations provided monthly by importers and exporters through the Intrastat system for the internal trade. The information on the trade of goods between Finland and third countries is obtained from customs declarations, which must be submitted for each import and export consignment. The information on both internal and external trade is combined upon compilation of Finnish Foreign Trade Statistics. For statistical declarants for which the submission of statistical values is voluntary, the data on the statistical value are estimated by using commodity code-specific coefficients, which are calculated based on data, in which both the statistical value and the invoice value are known. Information on the obligation to provide information is available in the National Board of Customs Intrastat Guide and in the Manual on foreign trade statistical principles, which is published in the annual publication Foreign trade of goods and on the Finnish Customs website.

3. Correctness and accuracy of information

The monthly statistics are preliminary and contain estimates. Thus the figures are changing along with the completion and elaboration of the basic material. The monthly figures are e.g. supplemented by estimations on missing statistics declarations and those on companies with figures remaining below the threshold values. Each EU Member State defines its threshold i.e. minimum value of inclusion in statistics for the calendar year, based on the annual value of importation and exportation by companies.

As a rule, all goods exported from and imported in Finland are recorded in statistics. The prerequisite of inclusion in statistics is that the goods arrive in or depart from the country physically. As an exception, water and air craft are entered in statistics upon a change in ownership. Among other things, transit transports are left outside statistics, as well as economic acts having no significant commercial value. Also minor companies are released from the obligation to declare statistics on internal trade. The foreign trade in services is also not included in these statistics.

4. Up-to-dateness and timeliness of published data

The Monthly Publication is published about 13 weeks after the end of the month in question. The tables are in Excel format and are also available on the Internet. The seasonally adjusted total values of export and import are published in connection with the preliminary data on the foreign trade. More information on statistics is obtainable from the National Board of Customs. Contact information is available on the back page of the publication and on the Finnish Customs website.

The statistics are specified in connection with the production of the following monthly statistics. The information on each calendar year is confirmed by the end of April the following year.

5. Availability and transparency / clarity of data

The most important monthly statistical data is published on the Finnish Customs website on dates announced in advance.

Further information on monthly statistics and all other foreign trade statistics are available on the Finnish Customs website in the section Foreign Trade Statistics. The site also comprises e.g. the principles on compiling statistics on foreign trade as well as all the reviews on Finland's foreign trade published by the National Board of Customs. Detailed statistical information is also available from the Uljas database (free of charge).

Further information is also available from the Statistics Service at:

- telephone: +358 9 6141 (exchange) or +358 20 690 603 (Statistics Service direct)
- e-mail: statistics[at]tulli.fi (replace [at] in the address with @)
- Internet: www.tulli.fi
- Statistical database Uljas: uljas.tulli.fi

6. Comparability of statistics

There is information on the total imports and exports of goods since 1856. Electronic data from 1987 on is available in the Uljas database. Older information is available on paper or on microfiche cards at the reading room of the Statistics Service or in archives. The Monthly publication is being produced since 1904.

7. Clarity and consistency / coherence

The monthly statistics gets specified monthly as new statistics are published.

Beside foreign trade statistics, statistical information on foreign trade is available from the National Accounts of the Statistics Finland and Balance of Trade statistics of the Bank of Finland.

Statistics on foreign trade of other countries are also available at the reading room of the Statistics Service.

Statistical information on the foreign trade of the EU Member States is available in the Eurostat publications, websites and its Easy Comext database. This database can be used over the Internet free of charge.

Foreign trade statistics compiled by the UN (the Comtrade database) are available free of charge on the UN website.

The dissimilarities of the concepts and definitions applied by the EU Member States and their most important trading partners influence the comparability of statistics.