

Product description: Foreign trade country surveys and surveys by industries 1.1.-31.12.2003

The purpose

The foreign trade statistics and the country surveys, and the surveys by industries are an important tool for decision makers, planners, and researchers in the public and private sectors at national level, as well as for the operations of the EU and many international organisations. The Board of Customs publishes annually many country surveys, country group surveys and surveys by industries. Partly some of the most important countries and industries, partly some trade partners and industries which in different ways are of interest, are selected to the publication scheme. Proposals for thematic surveys are received from different units of the Board of Customs, other government authorities, and also from the press and the business sector.

Concepts, definitions, and classifications used

For the country surveys and for the surveys by industry the UN Standard International Trade Classification (SITC, Rev. 3) is used as it is internationally compatible. The compilation of the statistics on goods is based on the Combined Nomenclature (CN). Export statistics are compiled according to countries of destination using the FOB ("free on board") value and import statistics according to country of origin using the CIF ("cost, insurance and freight") value. The information based on SITC-classification can be derived from the CN-nomenclature according to UN definitions (UN/1986: Statistical Papers, Series M, No 34/Rev 3; Standard International Trade Classification Revision 3).

Also other international classifications can be used in the surveys by industry, such as Classification of Products by Activity or CPA, or classification of products by main use of goods (Main Industrial Groupings or MIG), or by using the European Community statistical classification of economic activities (Nomenclature générale des Activités économiques dans les Communautés européennes, NACE, rev 1). All surveys by industry (e.g. in the survey on high technology) give information about which groups of commodities belong to each branch of activity.

The country classification is based on the Commission Regulation (EC)1779/2002 on nomenclature of countries and territories for the external trade statistics of the Community and statistics and trade between the Member States. The country codes are standard codes in accordance with the ISO/DIS 3166 by International Organization for Standardization. The commentaries in the Monthly Publication contain definitions on the country groups. All country group surveys (e.g. surveys on developing countries) provide information on which countries belong to the group concerned.

Reliability and actuality of the statistics

In the country surveys and the surveys by industry the most recent statistical information available for the time period covered by the survey is used. The reliability of the information in the surveys depends on when the survey is published. The surveys can be published immediately when the data for the month concerned is compiled. In such a case the *preliminary* data are used in the same way as the data in the monthly surveys. That is to say that the information can be changed in the final check of the statistical material. In the surveys which are published later the corrections done before the time of publishing are included.

More detailed information about the verification of the figures in the foreign trade statistics and when they are published is available in the Foreign Trade Annual Publication (vol. 1) under the heading Quality Reports, or on the internet pages of the Board of Customs (<http://www.tulli.fi>). The information for the entire calendar year is confirmed before the end of April the following year. The statistical data for the previous year published after the end of April the following year, and which are included in the country surveys and the surveys by industry, are therefore the final data.