

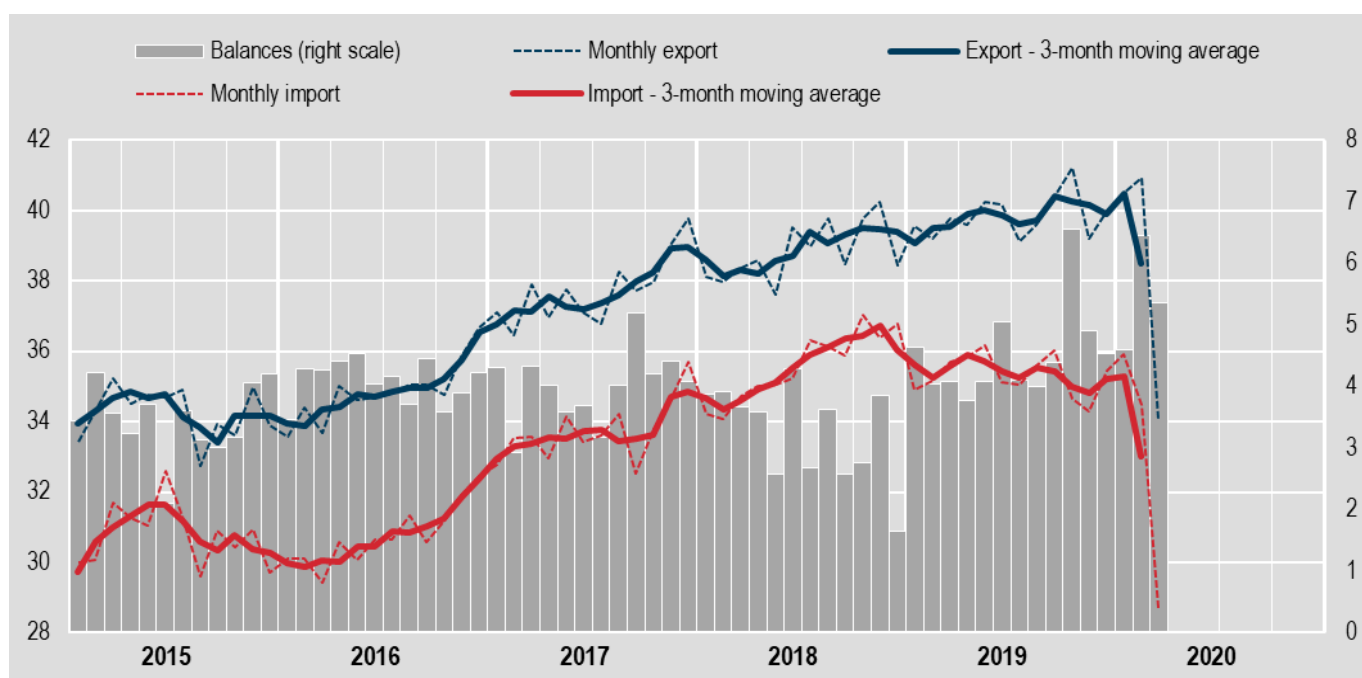
March 2020

## FOREIGN TRADE AND IMPORT PRICES

- In March 2020 seasonally-adjusted data, compared to February 2020, decreased by -16.8% for both outgoing flows and incoming flows. Exports fell for both EU countries (-15.2%) and non EU countries (-18.5%). Imports decreased by -17.0% for EU countries and by -16.4% for non EU countries.
- Over the last three months, seasonally-adjusted data, compared to the previous three months, dropped for both exports (-4.1%) and imports (-5.1%).
- In March 2020, compared with the same month of the previous year, both exports and imports fell (-13.5% and -18,1% respectively). Outgoing flows decreased by -12.2% for EU countries and by -14.7% for non EU countries. Incoming flows dropped by -15.5% for EU area and by -21.7% for non EU area. The trade balance in March 2020 amounted to +5,685 million Euros (5,082 million Euros for non EU area and +603 million Euros for EU countries).
- In March 2020, import prices decreased by 3.1% on monthly basis (unchanged for the the euro zone, -5.9% for the non-euro zone). Over the last three months, compared to the previous three months, import prices decreased by 2.0% (-0.3% for the euro zone and -3.6% for the non-euro zone).
- Import prices decreased by 5.1% in March 2020, compared to the same month a year ago (-0.7% for the euro zone, -9.2% for the non-euro zone).
- Covid-19 crisis had an impact on Intrastat survey and a decrease of number of declarations submitted was registered mainly as consequence of the deferral to 30 June of the transmission deadlines envisaged by the "Cura Italia" Decree. The actions carried out to tackle these disturbances in data collection (see Methodological note, page 11) have made it possible to process and disseminate intra-EU trade data of March 2020. These will be subject to revision when, once the suspension period of the transmission deadlines has ended, all Intrastat declarations of March will be available. Import prices survey registered a slight decrease of businesses response rate (see Methodological note, page 15).

### CHART 1. EXTERNAL TRADE FLOWS

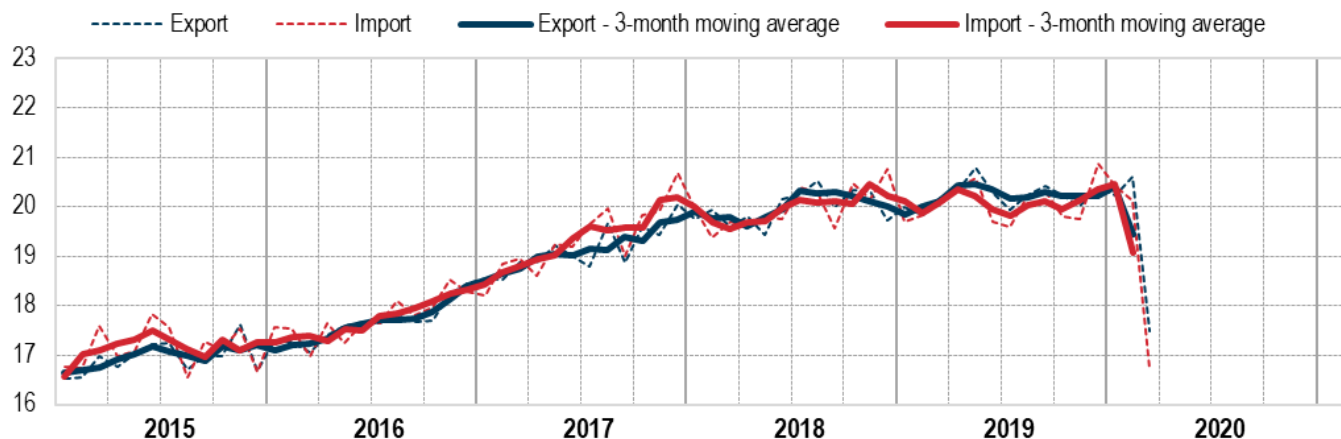
January 2015 – March 2020, monthly data and 3 month moving average, seasonally adjusted data and balance in billions of euros



## Foreign trade

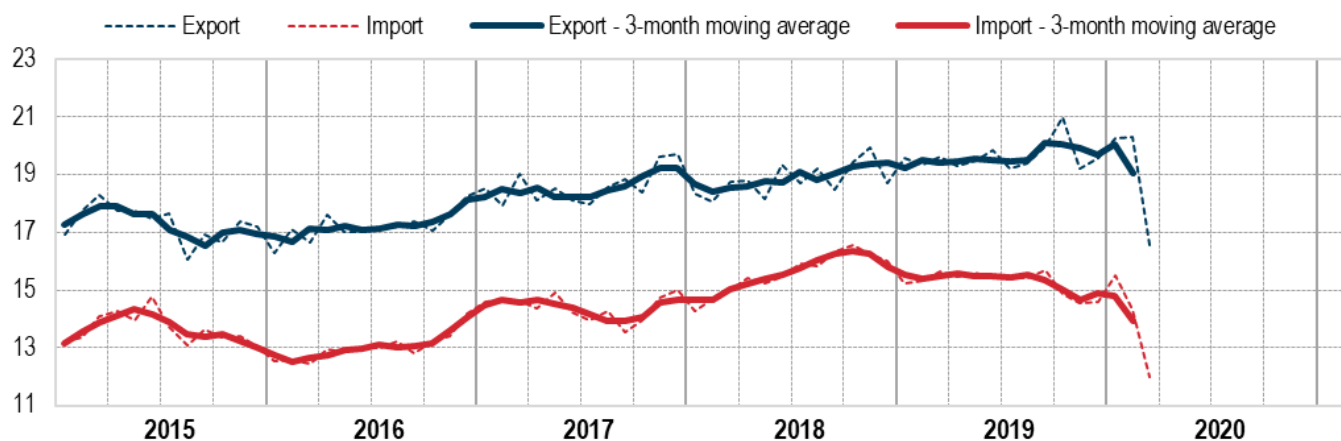
**CHART 2. EXPORTS AND IMPORTS WITH EU27 AREA**

January 2015 – March 2020, monthly data and 3 months moving average, seasonally adjusted data in billions of euros



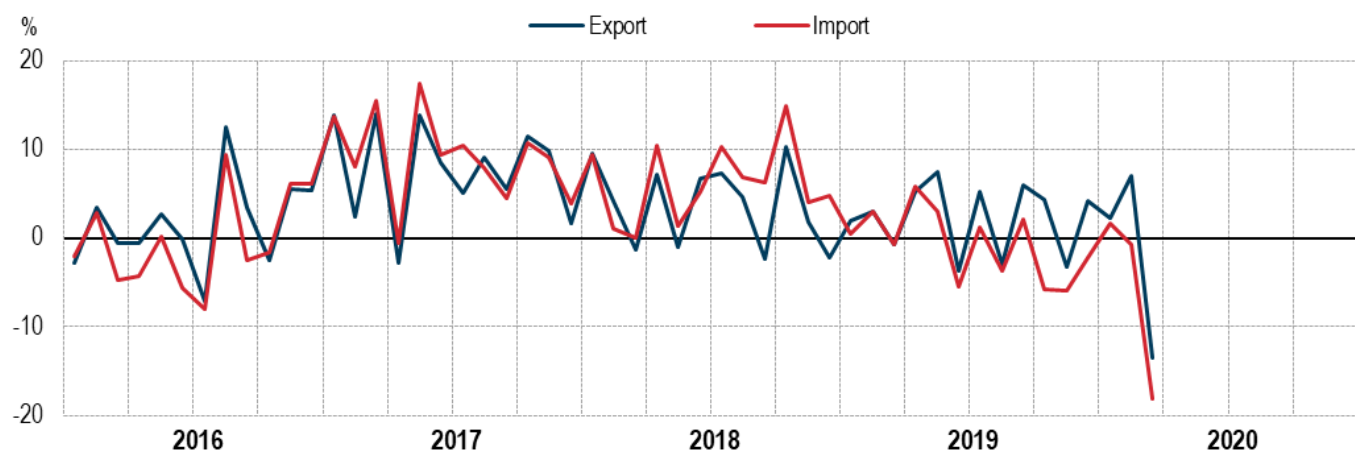
**CHART 3. EXPORTS AND IMPORTS WITH NON-EU27 AREA**

January 2015 – March 2020, monthly data and 3 months moving average, seasonally adjusted data in billions of euros



**CHART 4. EXTERNAL TRADE FLOWS, MONTH ON SAME MONTH A YEAR AGO PERCENTAGE CHANGES**

January 2016 – March 2020, non-seasonally adjusted data



**TABLE 1. EXPORTS, IMPORTS AND TRADE BALANCE**

March 2020, months on same months a year ago and months on previous months percentage changes, trade balance in millions of euros

	NON SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED				SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED		
	Millions of euros		Months on same months a year ago		Millions of euros	Months on previous months	
	Mar. 2020	Jan.-Mar. 2020	Mar. 20 Mar. 19	Jan.-Mar. 20 Jan.-Mar. 19	Mar. 2020	Mar. 20 Feb. 20	Jan.-Mar. 20 Oct.-Dec. 19
<b>TOTAL</b>							
Exports	+35,937	+112,590	-13.5	-1.9	+34,036	-16.8	-4.1
Imports	+30,252	+100,273	-18.1	-5.9	+28,688	-16.8	-5.1
Trade balance	+5,685	+12,317			+5,348		
<b>EU27 COUNTRIES</b>							
Exports	+18,715	+58,787	-12.2	-1.5	+17,476	-15.2	-3.8
Imports	+18,112	+57,561	-15.5	-4.4	+16,706	-17.0	-5.2
Trade balance	+603	+1,227			+770		
<b>NON-EU27 COUNTRIES</b>							
Exports	+17,222	+53,803	-14.7	-2.3	+16,560	-18.5	-4.4
Imports	+12,140	+42,713	-21.7	-8.0	+11,982	-16.4	-5.0
Trade balance	+5,082	+11,090			+4,578		

**TABLE 2. EXPORTS, IMPORTS AND TRADE BALANCE BY MAIN INDUSTRIAL GROUPINGS**

March 2020, shares, months on same months a year ago percentage changes, trade balance in millions of euros

MIGS	EXPORTS			IMPORTS			TRADE BALANCE	
	Share (a)	Months on same months a year ago		Share (a)	Months on same months a year ago		Millions of euros	
		Mar. 20 Mar. 19	Jan.-Mar. 20 Jan.-Mar. 19		Mar. 20 Mar. 19	Jan.-Mar. 20 Jan.-Mar. 19	Mar. 2020	Jan.-Mar. 2020
Consumer goods	34.2	-5.9	+3.1	29.1	-7.9	-1.0	+3,414	+9,809
- consumer durables	5.7	-27.5	-6.6	3.5	-30.1	-7.5	+901	+2,736
- consumer non durables	28.5	-1.3	+5.1	25.6	-4.9	-0.2	+2,513	+7,073
Capital goods	32.1	-25.1	-7.2	25.6	-22.9	-5.7	+2,674	+8,769
Intermediate goods	30.8	-8.4	-2.3	33.0	-16.6	-6.8	+1,602	+1,780
Energy	2.8	-23.6	+3.9	12.3	-35.8	-15.4	-2,005	-8,041
Total (except energy)	97.2	-13.2	-2.0	87.7	-15.7	-4.6	+7,691	+20,358
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-13.5</b>	<b>-1.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-18.1</b>	<b>-5.9</b>	<b>+5,685</b>	<b>+12,317</b>

(a) Calculated on 2019 total foreign trade.

**TABLE 3. EXPORTS, IMPORTS AND TRADE BALANCE BY COUNTRIES**

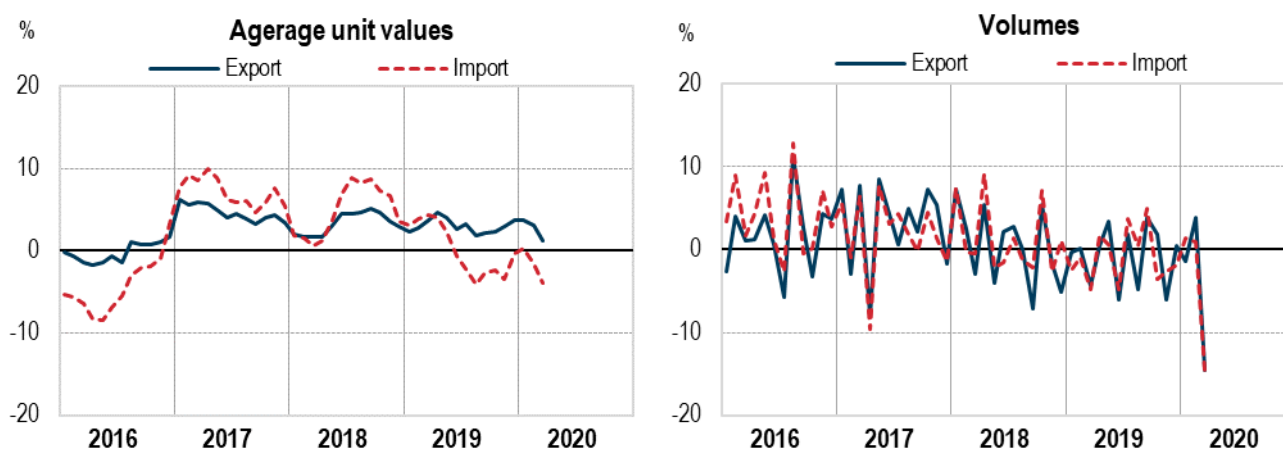
March 2020, shares, months on same months a year ago percentage changes for imports and exports and trade balance in millions of euros

COUNTRIES	EXPORTS			IMPORTS			TRADE BALANCE	
	Share (a)	Months on same months a year ago		Share (a)	Months on same months a year ago		Millions of euros	
		Mar. 20 Mar. 19	Jan.-Mar. 20 Jan.-Mar. 19		Mar. 20 Mar. 19	Jan.-Mar. 20 Jan.-Mar. 19	Mar. 2020	Jan.-Mar. 2020
<b>EU27 COUNTRIES</b>	<b>50.7</b>	<b>-12.2</b>	<b>-1.5</b>	<b>56.8</b>	<b>-15.5</b>	<b>-4.4</b>	<b>+603</b>	<b>+1,227</b>
EMU19:	40.6	-11.9	-1.3	47.2	-15.0	-4.1	-126	-671
Austria	2.2	-11.4	-4.3	2.3	-18.9	-6.3	+141	+255
Belgium	3.0	+3.2	+13.0	4.6	-8.3	+7.3	-393	-1,481
France	10.5	-18.3	-3.3	8.7	-22.7	-9.9	+1,017	+3,388
Germany	12.2	-7.2	-1.1	16.5	-19.9	-7.5	-225	-1,605
Netherlands	2.5	-5.0	+6.5	5.4	-8.0	-0.9	-892	-2,625
Spain	5.0	-19.8	-7.7	5.1	-13.4	-0.8	+21	+294
Poland	2.8	-5.4	+4.5	2.4	-24.8	-8.0	+394	+1,041
Czech Republic	1.4	-3.6	-1.5	1.6	-9.3	-0.4	-38	-143
Romania	1.6	-18.1	-5.4	1.7	-26.3	-8.5	+87	+94
<b>NON-EU27 COUNTRIES</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>-14.7</b>	<b>-2.3</b>	<b>43.2</b>	<b>-21.7</b>	<b>-8.0</b>	<b>+5,082</b>	<b>+11,090</b>
European non-EU countries	16.2	-18.8	-3.8	12.5	-21.8	-12.6	+1,874	+5,821
United Kingdom	5.2	-24.3	-11.3	2.5	-41.1	-22.0	+1,167	+3,562
Russian Federation	1.7	-3.5	+2.7	3.4	-2.6	-13.2	-484	-1,383
Switzerland	5.5	-18.9	-3.3	2.6	-18.4	-6.2	+898	+3,253
Turkey	1.8	-10.0	+16.2	2.2	-22.0	-8.5	+80	-80
North Africa	2.5	-14.0	-5.5	3.4	-45.3	-25.4	+275	-236
Other African countries	1.2	-17.8	+9.3	1.6	-25.2	-4.1	-89	-316
North America	10.5	+0.6	+10.5	4.4	-8.2	+0.3	+2,608	+8,273
United States	9.6	+0.9	+10.8	4.0	-10.8	-2.8	+2,396	+7,721
Central and South America	2.9	-13.7	-7.1	2.3	-3.3	-11.1	+268	+803
Middle Eastern countries	3.7	-21.7	-4.3	4.1	-33.5	-6.1	+219	-57
Other Asian countries	10.2	-21.4	-11.3	14.4	-19.6	-2.7	-636	-4,924
China	2.7	-15.0	-16.1	7.5	-27.4	-6.3	-729	-4,912
Japan	1.6	-12.7	+10.3	1.0	-9.5	-7.1	+192	+798
India	0.8	-22.7	-16.1	1.2	-16.3	+3.5	-122	-562
Oceania and other territories	2.1	-10.3	-2.0	0.5	-12.9	-2.2	+563	+1,727
OPEC	3.3	-24.3	-1.2	5.2	-45.6	-20.3	+72	-919
MERCOSUR	1.1	-11.9	-4.8	1.1	-9.6	-23.4	+55	+214
ASEAN	1.8	-18.4	-5.3	2.2	-10.3	+1.0	-161	-602
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-13.5</b>	<b>-1.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-18.1</b>	<b>-5.9</b>	<b>+5,685</b>	<b>+12,317</b>

(a) Calculated on 2019 total foreign trade.

**CHART 5. AVERAGE UNIT VALUES AND VOLUMES FOR EXPORTS AND IMPORTS**

January 2016 - March 2020, month on same month a year ago percentage changes (index, 2015=100)



**TABLE 4. UNIT VALUES AND VOLUME INDICES FOR EU27 COUNTRIES, NON-EU27 COUNTRIES AND TOTAL**

March 2020, indices and months on same months a year ago percentage changes (index, 2015=100)

	INDICES		MONTHS ON SAME MONTHS A YEAR AGO			
	Unit value indices	Volume indices	Unit value indices		Volume indices	
	Mar. 2020	Mar. 2020	Mar. 20 Mar. 19	Jan.-Mar. 20 Jan.-Mar. 19	Mar. 20 Mar. 19	Jan.-Mar. 20 Jan.-Mar. 19
<b>TOTAL</b>						
Exports	111.5	93.8	+1.2	+2.6	-14.5	-4.4
Imports	104.4	93.9	-3.9	-1.8	-14.8	-4.3
<b>EU27 COUNTRIES</b>						
Exports	111.3	98.0	+0.4	+1.4	-13.8	-2.9
Imports	109.4	94.7	0.0	+0.3	-16.8	-4.6
<b>NON-EU27 COUNTRIES</b>						
Exports	111.9	88.6	+2.2	+4.2	-15.3	-6.2
Imports	98.0	91.8	-8.8	-4.3	-12.5	-3.8

## Import prices

**TABLE 5. IMPORT PRICES INDEX FOR TOTAL, EURO AND NON-EURO ZONE**

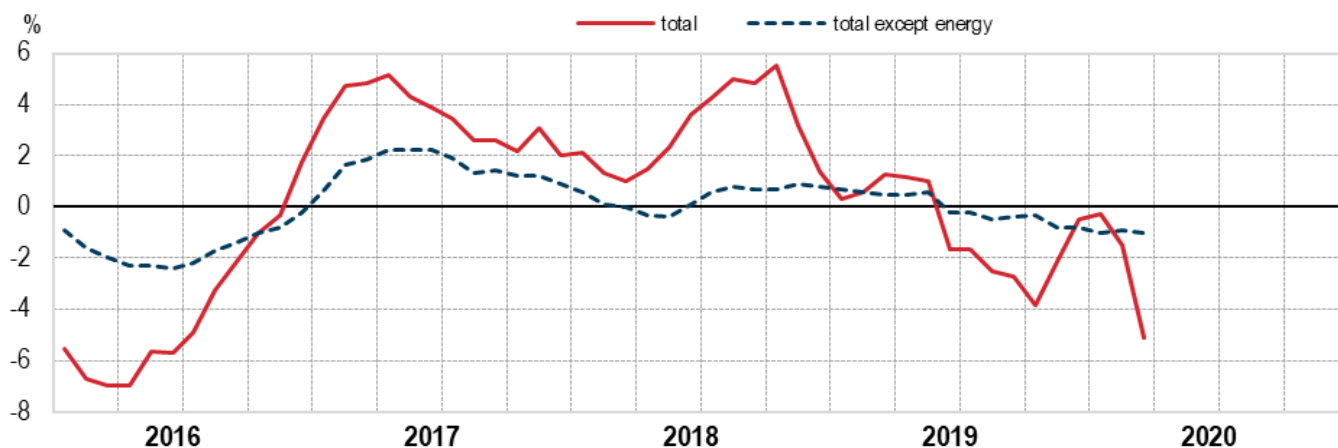
March 2020 (a), months on same months a year ago and months on previous months percentage changes (index, 2015=100)

	Index (2015=100)	Months on previous months		Months on same months a year ago	
	Mar. 2020	Mar. 20 Feb. 20	Jan.-Mar. 20 Oct.-Dec. 19	Mar. 20 Mar. 19	Jan.-Mar. 20 Jan.-Mar. 19
<b>TOTAL INDEX</b>	<b>96.7</b>	<b>-3.1</b>	<b>-2.0</b>	<b>-5.1</b>	<b>-2.3</b>
Euro zone	101.3	0.0	-0.3	-0.7	-0.7
Non-euro zone	92.5	-5.9	-3.6	-9.2	-3.9

(a) Data are provisional and subject to revisions

**CHART 6. IMPORT PRICES**

January 2016 – March 2020, month on same month a year ago percentage changes (index, 2015=100)



**TABLE 6. EXPORTS AND IMPORTS OF GOODS IN VALUE**

March 2020, revisions of percentage changes, differences in percentage points

	World		EU27 Countries		Non-EU27 Countries (a)	
	Year-on-year change	Month-on-month change	Year-on-year change	Month-on-month change	Year-on-year change	Month-on-month change
<b>March 2020</b>						
Exports	-	-	-	-	-2.0	-4.6
Imports	-	-	-	-	-1.9	-4.0
<b>February 2020</b>						
Exports	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.0	-	-0.1
Imports	0.0	-0.2	0.0	0.0	-	-0.6

(a) The larger revision of percentage changes in March for extra-EU27 aggregate is due both to the revision of the United Kingdom data and, with regard to month-on-month changes, to the revision of the seasonal adjustment procedures that became necessary to take into account the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

**TABLE 7. IMPORT PRICES**

February 2020, revisions of percentage changes, differences in percentage points (index, 2015=100)

Total		Euro zone		Non Euro zone	
Year-on-year change	Month-on-month change	Year-on-year change	Month-on-month change	Year-on-year change	Month-on-month change
0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0



## Introduction

This document provides legislative references and methodological notes relating to statistics on the international trade in goods and import prices. Background information is listed below in Table A.

**TABLE A. STATISTICS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN GOODS AND IMPORT PRICES: MAIN CHARACTERISTICS**

	STATISTICS	
	International trade in goods	Import prices
<b>Data sources</b>	1) Customs data and data collected through the Intrastat system 2) Statistical processing foreign trade in goods data 3) Estimates for trade in specific goods or movements are obtained by integrating different data sources	Direct survey
<b>Coverage</b>	All traded products (see glossary), excluding monetary gold, customized software, means of payment which are legal tender and securities, goods for and after repair. No restrictions are applied with respect to the main economic activity of traders.	1) Products listed in sections B, C and D of the CPA classification (derived from NACE Rev.2); 2) Enterprises characterized by main economic activity in sections B, C, D, E and G of the Ateco2007 classification (derived from NACE Rev.2).
<b>Dissemination frequency and geographical breakdown</b>	Monthly frequency of data at national level	Monthly frequency of data at national level
<b>Reference period</b>	Month and period which information collected refers to	Month and period which information collected refers to
<b>Main indicators</b>	1) Collected or estimated monetary statistical values (Cif, Fob) in current prices 2) Chain-linked unit values and volumes Fisher Indices	2015=100 fixed base Laspeyres Index

## International trade in goods

Statistics on international trade in goods are based on two data collection systems that measure respectively trade in goods between Italy and the EU Member States (Intrastat) and between Italy and third countries (Extrastat).

### Legal framework

Statistics related to trade in goods between Member States (intra-EU trade) are based on EU legislation: Regulations (EC) No. 222/2009, (EU) No. 1093/2013 and No. 659/2014 amending Regulation (EC) No. 638/2004, and Regulations (EC) No. 1915/2005, (EU) No. 91/2010, No. 96/2010 and No. 1093/2013 amending Regulation (EC) No. 1982/2004. EU Regulations are transposed into national legislation: Legislative Decree No. 18/2010 (Gazzetta ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana No. 41 of 19-2-2010), Decree of the Minister of the Economy and Finance of 22/2/2010 (Gazzetta ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana No. 53 of 5-3-2010) and the Legislative Act of the Customs Agency of 22/2/2010 and the Provision of the Director of the Agenzia delle Entrate (Italian Revenue Agency) of 25/09/2017.

Statistics related to trade in goods between Italy and third Countries (extra-EU trade) are based on EU legislation: Regulations (EU) No. 1724/2016 and No. 2119/2016 amending Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 471/2009, and Regulation (EU) No. 1253/2016 amending Commission Regulation (EU) No. 92/2010, and Regulation (EU) No. 2119/2016 amending Regulation No. 113/2010. EU Regulations are transposed into national legislation by specific provisions issued by the Customs Agency.

### Sources and data collection

Concerning Intra-EU trade statistics, information is gathered by Intrastat declarations both for arrivals and dispatches of goods and for import and export of services. The reference universe consists of all businesses



identified on the basis of the VAT number, which appear to have carried out at least one commercial transaction with the EU countries during the reference period. Under the law February 27, 2017 n. 19, starting from 1 January 2018, the statistical thresholds that determine the mandatory response to the monthly Intrastat survey are defined as follows:

- a) dispatches of goods, operators who have traded, at least in one of the four previous quarters, a total quarterly amount exceeding 100,000 euros .
- b) arrivals of goods, operators who have traded, at least in one of the four previous quarters, a total quarterly amount exceeding 200,000 euros.

The monthly and quarterly declarations are collected electronically by the Italian Customs Agency.

The thresholds are set in order to meet the minimum Intra-EU trade coverage required by EU Regulation (97% for dispatches and 93% for arrivals), achieving a significant reduction in burden for economic operators<sup>1</sup>.

In order to produce an accurate and timely estimate referred to the universe of Intra-UE operators, a register-based approach for estimating the share of trade flows associated to exempted operators by product and partner country is adopted, considering both national and territorial domains. During the annual revision of data in November, latest fiscal and register-based information available will be included in the estimation procedure to further improve the quality and coverage of the estimates.

Statistics on trade in goods with non-EU countries are based on monthly fiscal-administrative information (Single Administrative Document - SAD) consistent with statistical definitions and classifications.

Since 2000, in compliance with the EU legislation, import and export with non EU countries below the exclusion thresholds (commercial transactions value less than 1,000 euros, starting from 2010) are monthly included as aggregated data.

Since September 2011, a new approach for the compilation of external trade statistics on natural gas in gaseous state and electricity has been implemented. Data on physical quantities are monthly collected from reliable sources, while for the other variables required by EU regulations (total trade in values and breakdown of volumes and values by partner countries) new estimation procedures have been developed.

For the United Kingdom, no longer part of the European Union from 1 February 2020, trade flows are recorded by Intrastat declarations until 31 December 2020. In fact, according to the withdrawal agreement ratified by the European Parliament on 29 January 2020, the United Kingdom will continue, until that date, to be part of the European Union's customs and tax territory (VAT and excise duties); only after 31 December 2020 - unless otherwise agreed – trade flows between the UK and the EU will be considered trade with a third country.

## Classifications system

The main classifications used in foreign trade statistics are based on the elementary information concerning the type of goods, the statistical partner country and the province of origin or destination of the goods.

In compliance with the EU Regulations, Intra-EU trade in goods are classified according to country of consignment for arrivals and country of destination for dispatches, while trade of goods with non EU countries are classified by country of origin for imports and country of destination for exports.

Geographical and the geo-economic areas are defined according to the Nomenclature of countries and territories for the external trade statistics of the Community and statistics of trade between Member States, known as Geonomenclature.

The Combined Nomenclature (CN) is the primary nomenclature for traded goods used by the EU Member States, defined by the European Union and annually updated.

Since January 2009, products aggregations are defined according to the classification of the economic activities Ateco 2007, adapted to foreign trade (CPA). Ateco 2007 is the national version of the European nomenclature NACE rev.2 published in the Official Journal on 2 December 2006 (Regulation (EC) No. 1893/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20/12/2006). Ateco 2007 corresponds to Nace rev.2 up to the fourth digit. Data are released according to an intermediate disaggregation of the sections.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of economic operators required to submit the monthly Intrastat declaration is reduced from 78,000 in 2017 to 20,000 for arrivals, and from 70,000 in 2017 to about 32,000 for dispatches. As a further simplification measure for arrivals, operators below threshold are not required to submit Intrastat quarterly recapitulative statements, obtained by alternative fiscal sources..

In 2003, Istat adopted the classification for economic destination “Main Industrial Groupings (MIGS)”, defined by Commission Regulation n.586/2001 (Official Journal of the European Communities of 27/03/2001), amended by Regulation (EC) no. 656/2007 of 14/06/2007 following the entry into force of Nace Rev. 2.

The Main Industrial Groupings (MIGS) are:

- Consumer durables;
- Consumer non-durables;
- Capital goods;
- Intermediate goods;
- Energy.

As for Ateco 2007<sup>2</sup>, the MIGS classification has been adapted to the statistics on foreign trade.

## Data processing

Both raw and seasonally adjusted trade values are published. TRAMO-SEATS procedure for Linux (February 2010 version) provides seasonally adjusted data.

Starting from 2012, some substantial process and product innovations have been introduced in the seasonal adjustment procedures, aimed at improving the accuracy of the estimates and at providing users with a wider detail of statistical indicators at main industrial groupings level for the short-term analysis of foreign trade.

Seasonally adjusted data are monthly revised. The models are annually reviewed in November, with the final revision of raw data. The TRAMO-SEATS procedure's specifications used by Istat are available to users under request.

With the press release for February 2020, on the occasion of the definition of the new EU27 and non-EU27 areas - following the United Kingdom exit from the European Union - and the consequent revision of the entire aggregated series, the annual review of the seasonally adjusted models was carried out.

## Output

Data monthly released include monetary values, indices and year-on-year and month-on-month variations of international trade in goods. Collected or estimated monetary statistical values (Cif, Fob) in current prices are reported.

Unit values and volumes indices of foreign trade in goods are disseminated at Ateco 2007 product groups classification, main industrial groupings (MIGS) product aggregation and geographical/geo-economic areas. Monthly unit values indices are obtained using Fisher Index where the base year is the previous year (annually chain-linking index). The annual update of the weighting system makes it possible to closely follow changes in the composition of the traded products mix. However, in order to make chain-linking indexes comparable over long-time period, time series are expressed according to a fixed reference year, updated every 5 years in line with the international indications for short-term statistics. Since January 2018, the reference year is 2015. Indexes for product groups are calculated aggregating elementary index at product level (Combined Nomenclature); identification and treatment of measurement errors are applied (Istat, "Information note" of 25/02/2008). Both unit values and value indices are directly calculated, while volume indices are obtained by deflation in order to ensure the coherence between the three indices. The dissemination plan foresees the release of unit values and volumes indices. Annual and quarterly unit value indices are calculated as averages of monthly indices, including only monthly reported data; on the contrary, in volume indexes calculation all the transactions are included, in order to allow a more precise decomposition of values changes in term of volumes and unit values changes.

## Confidentiality

Starting from 2000, Istat has defined new procedures for processing and dissemination of confidential data related to foreign trade in goods statistics, according to the current national regulatory framework (Law No. 675/96, Legislative Decrees N. 322/89, 281/99 and 196/03).

In particular, the new procedures bring to a significant reduction of the risk of indirect and accidental identification of confidential data, limiting, at the same time, the loss of information available for external users.

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<sup>2</sup>The time series of the import and export of goods by MIGS classification have been recalculated, and therefore, may differ from those previously published.

In addition to the protection of confidential information according to the principle of passive confidentiality, Istat provides a specific dissemination plan for international trade of goods at national and territorial level, designed in such a way to reduce the risk of indirect identification of confidential trade. Further information on the protection of privacy is available at the following link <https://www.coeweb.istat.it/>.

## Covid-19 crisis and Intrastat survey

Covid-19 crisis and related measures, adopted by the Government in support of businesses and in order to contain the outbreak, led to issues in the Intrastat survey.

The deferral to 30 June of the transmission deadlines of February-May Intrastat declarations, without penalties, envisaged by the Law Decree 17 March 2020, No 18 ("Cura Italia" Decree), the decrease in the operating capacity of enterprises and the lockdown of several manufacturing and trade activities from the last week of March, set out by the Prime Ministerial Decree of 22 March 2020 and by the Ministerial Decree of the Ministry of Economic Development of 25 March 2020, had an impact on the March data collection. There was a reduction of the number of Intrastat declarations submitted, compared to those transmitted for the reference month of January, equal to 32% and 31%, respectively for dispatches and arrivals of goods<sup>3</sup>.

Like the previous month, in order to verify the causes of the decrease in the number of submitted Intrastat declarations (postponement of transmission deadline and/or decrease of the operating capacity of businesses and closure of their activities from the last week of March versus real lack of commercial transactions) and, at the same time, to recover information on intra-EU trade in March, Istat carried out an ad-hoc data collection (direct survey by telephone calls) on a sample of main businesses

Despite the ongoing crisis situation, also in its second edition, the survey met the effective collaboration of all the contacted businesses: over 97% of businesses confirmed that they had carried out commercial transactions in March and provided the total flow values of the transactions made, allowing a significant recovery of information on the intra-EU trade carried out in March<sup>4</sup>.

Given the estimated overall impact in terms of coverage of intra-EU trade, the available information base was integrated using appropriate estimation methods which took into account the effects on the dynamics of trade flows with EU countries, arising from the change in the status of businesses in the last week of March (open business, lockdown since 26 March). Furthermore, additional sources available in Istat were used, such as the monthly Industrial turnover and orders survey<sup>5</sup>, for intra-EU exports, and VIES data – recently made available by the Italian Revenue Agency –, for intra-EU imports<sup>6</sup>.

With the aim of completing the information framework with reference to the universe of businesses who carry out commercial transactions with EU countries, the estimates for non-responses were detailed by product and country of commercial exchange on the basis of the previously recorded transactions of non-responding operators.

Intra-EU data disseminated in this press release will be subject to revision, when all Intrastat declarations of March will be available at the end of the suspension period of the transmission deadlines.

The suspension of the transmission deadlines of Intrastat declarations will most likely lead to issues in the data collection also in May, with reference to April data. Istat is continuing the awareness activity among businesses, inviting them, if possible, to submit data according to the previous monthly deadlines, prior to the "Cura Italia" decree, and reminding them that the Italian Customs Agency ensures the operation of the application for the electronic transmission of the Intrastat declarations and guarantees the ordinary assistance.

The actions carried out in order to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on Intrastat Survey and on the compilation of statistics on intra-EU trade in goods (methods for estimating missing data, additional data sources) are consistent with Eurostat guidelines available in the website section [Covid-19: Support for statisticians](#).

<sup>3</sup> The initial impact, in terms of under-coverage of intra-EU trade flows equal to about 26% for dispatches of goods and 22% for arrivals of goods, was estimated according to a benchmarking methodology. In the estimate of the non-coverage of intra-EU trade flows, impact of lockdown of several manufacturing and trade activities – established by the Prime Ministerial Decree of 22 March 2020 and by the Ministerial Decree of the Ministry of Economic Development of 25 March 2020 – was taken into account.

<sup>4</sup> As result of the survey, the non-coverage (benchmark month January 2020), reduced to 22%, for outgoing flows, and about 17% for incoming flows.

<sup>5</sup> Turnover data from sales made on the foreign market, euro area, by industrial enterprises in March 2020, were properly processed and used as proxies of the value of the commercial transaction to that area for the enterprises, which transmitted the Intrastat declaration of January, but not that of March, while they responded to the Industrial turnover and orders Survey. As a result, the non-coverage of outgoing flows to EU countries reduced to 13%.

<sup>6</sup> For intra-EU imports, the estimate involved all businesses, who imported goods from EU countries in January, and for whom VIES data of March were communicated or extra-EU imports in March were recorded by Extrastat survey.

Also seasonal adjustment of raw series was carried out following Eurostat guidelines available in the web page [Covid-19: Support for statisticians](#).

Taking into account the extraordinary fall in intra-EU exports and imports recorded in March, models for time series treatment included additional regressors when necessary. This procedure may continue in the next months until the information collected will offer a clear insight and therefore statistical models for seasonal adjustment might be revised. Therefore, in the coming months, revisions of the seasonally-adjusted data may be larger than usual.

## Industrial import prices

### Introduction

The statistics on import prices are based on the monthly *Survey of import prices*, included in the National Statistical Programme (code IST-02418), that groups statistical surveys of public interest.

The survey aims to measure the monthly change of import price of a representative basket of main goods imported by industrial and commercial companies, in compliance with the European Union Regulations governing short-term Statistics.

This sample survey approximately counts 1,100 products linked to a list of about 2,200 companies providing more than 5600 monthly price quotations.

### Legal framework

Legislative Decree n°. 322 of 6 September 1989, and successive amendments and additions, "Regulation on the National Statistical System and on the reorganisation of the National Statistics Institute" - art. 6-a, paragraph 1 (assumptions of processing), paragraph 2 (processing of personal data), paragraph 4 (communication of personal data to members of the National Statistical System), paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 (storage of data), paragraph 8 (exercise of rights of subject), art. 7 (obligation to provide statistical data), art. 8 (professional confidentiality of workers in the statistics offices), art. 9 (provisions for the protection of statistical confidentiality), art. 11 (administrative sanctions in case of failure to respond), art. 13 (National Statistical Programme);

Legislative Decree n°. 196 of 30 June 2003, "Code regarding the protection of personal data" - art. 2 (purpose), 4 (definitions), 7-10 (rights of the subject), 13 (information), 28-30 (subjects performing processing), 104-110 (processing for statistical or scientific purposes); "Code of ethics and good conduct for processing of personal data for statistical and scientific research purposes performed in the context of the National Statistical System" (Annex A.3 of the Code regarding the protection of personal data - Legislative Decree n°. 196 of 30 June 2002).

National Statistical Programme for three-year period 2017-2019, Decree of the President of the Republic, 31 January 2018 - "Approval of National Statistical Programme for the three-year period 2017-2019". (Official Gazette of the Italian Republic, general series - 20 March 2018, n°. 66, Ordinary Supplement n°. 12)

Council Regulation (EC) n°. 1165/98 of 19 May 1998 (OJL 162, 5.6.1998), and successive amendments and additions, concerning the short-term statistics.

Commission Regulation (EC) n°. 586/2001 of 26 March 2001, on implementing Council Regulation (EC) n°. 1165/98 concerning short-term statistics as regards the definition of Main Industrial Groupings (MIGs).

Regulation (EC) n°. 1158/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2005 amending Council Regulation (EC) n°. 1165/98 concerning short-term statistics, in whose context, the survey on import prices is indicated as variable 340. The Regulation establishes a reference framework for the collection, compilation, transmission and evaluation of Community business statistics for the purpose of the analysis of the economic cycle.

Commission Regulation (EC) n°. 1503/2006 of 28 September 2006, implementing and amending Council Regulation (EC) n°. 1165/98 concerning short-term statistics as regards definitions of variables, list of variables and frequency of data compilation.

Commission Regulation (EC) n°. 656/2007 of 14 June 2007 amending Regulation (EC) n°. 586/2001 on implementing Council Regulation (EC) n°. 1165/98 concerning short-term statistics as regards the definition of main industrial groupings (MIGs);

Commission Regulation (EC) n°. 1178/2008 of 28 November 2008 amending Council Regulation (EC) n°. 1165/98 concerning short-term statistics and Commission Regulations (EC) n°. 1503/2006 and (EC) n°. 657/2007 as regards adaptations following the revision of statistical classifications NACE and CPA.



## Classifications system

The *Classification of Economic Activities (Ateco 2007)* is the national version of the NACE 2 classification. It lists the economic activities grouping by Sections, Divisions, Groups, Classes, Categories and sub-categories. The current version came into force on 1 January 2008.

The *Product Classification Associated to Activities (CPA 2008)* is the classification adopted at European Union level, grouping products and economic activities corresponding to NACE through a specific CN-CPA table.

The *Combined Nomenclature (CN)* is the classification adopted in the EU for the international trade in goods statistics.

The *ProdCom Nomenclature* is a list of products referring to mining and manufacturing industries, harmonised at a EU level. This list is annually updated by the European Commission. The titles of the Prodcom list are derived from the CN; each product item is characterised by an eight-digit numeric code, the first six being identical to the CPA code. Therefore, each Prodcom code is connected and consistent with the CPA one. The link between Prodcom list and CPA classification leads to NACE. In this way each Prodcom item is linked to its corresponding NACE activity.

The *Main Industrial Groupings (MIG)* defined by the European Commission Regulation n°. 586/2001 group products in the following aggregates: consumer durables, consumer non-durables, capital goods, intermediate goods and energy.

## Observation field, analysis and survey unit

The observation field of the import survey concerns:

- a) products included in sections B, C and D of the CPA classification;
- b) enterprises whose main economic activity is in sections B, C, D, E and G of the 2007 Ateco classification.

The product above mentioned is the analysis unit (raw material, semi-processed and finished product) acquired on the foreign market and used in the production process (industrial enterprise) or sold in the national territory or abroad (trade company).

The survey unit – company or enterprise - must be located in the national territory; in the case of an industrial company, the location refers to the industrial plant: the company acquired raw materials, semi-processed and finished products on the foreign market reusing them in its own production process. Trade company acquires raw materials, semi-processed and finished products on the foreign market for the purpose of reselling them on the national and foreign market.

Units excluded from the observation field are:

- a) imports carried out from families, public administrations and non-profit institutions;
- b) normal imports and imports under inward processing regime; imports for purpose of repairing;
- c) all services correlated to products.

## Sample design

The monthly sample survey of import prices is carried out by collecting data from industrial and commercial enterprises. A list of enterprises is linked to the basket of products. Each reporting units (enterprise) provides a set of import prices corresponding to its own production/trade.

The basket of products is a representative sample of the main goods imported by industrial and commercial enterprises. Products are selected from the international trade statistics (annual value of imports at a merchandise level, coded according to the Combined Nomenclature).

The association products/enterprises is carried out by crossing international trade data (Tax register, economic operator/VAT ID number) and those of the Business register (where the enterprises main economic activity is identified). Through this link the analysis units (imported products) are connected to the survey units (import enterprises).

At present time, the basket of products is made up (Table B) of 1,142 items and 5,624 price quotations monthly surveyed. In particular, focusing data per area, Euro and non-Euro areas respectively count 850 and 712 products; 3,272 and 2,352 price quotations. Regarding to the survey units (enterprises) the total number of units is equal to 2,198; 1,475 in the Euro area and 1,184 in the non-Euro area.

**TABLE B. IMPORT PRICES. TOTAL INDICES, EURO AND NON-EURO AREAS. SIZE OF THE PRODUCT SAMPLE, PRICES AND ENTERPRISES BY MAIN INDUSTRIAL GROUPINGS** (index, 2015=100)

Main Industrial Groupings	Total			Euro area			Non-Euro area		
	Products	Enterprises	Prices	Products	Enterprises	Prices	Products	Enterprises	Prices
Consumer goods	305	657	1,618	222	423	946	195	331	672
<i>consumer durables</i>	57	117	253	42	61	126	39	68	127
<i>consumer non-durables</i>	248	550	1,365	180	365	820	156	267	545
Capital goods	213	469	1,187	156	288	658	145	264	529
Intermediate goods	610	1,309	2,790	466	879	1,655	362	657	1,135
Energy	14	24	29	6	11	13	10	14	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,142</b>	<b>2,198</b>	<b>5,624</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>1,475</b>	<b>3,272</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>1,184</b>	<b>2,352</b>

## Data collection and quality control

Import prices are monthly collected by a web questionnaire available in the Statistical Portal of Istat. The electronic questionnaire provides a grid of checks that reduce filling in errors carried out by the respondent. Further, once filled in, data are immediately stored in the survey database. To be timeliness compliance according to the European Regulations, data may be send by the fifteenth day after the end of the reference month, and their transmission is required by the 25th day after the end of the reference month. Reminders and follow up operations are planned for reducing non-responses so to ensure high coverage levels both for provisional and final data.

The questionnaire associates to each reporting units (enterprises) its own product (the link between product and respondent – as seen above – is done by Istat). The respondent, consistently with the assigned product, identifies the most representative items that are monthly and regularly purchased over time.

Import prices: i) point out purchase prices referring to items chosen by the respondent; ii) concern goods sold by a non-resident operator to an industrial/trade enterprise resident in Italy; iii) are market prices, that is, true selling prices; iv) are surveyed in Euro according to the CIF clause (cost, insurance and freight) at the national border; v) tare net of VAT and of any other cost borne by the buyer.

Data correction processes are currently undertaken to ensure good quality standard. Missing data, anomalous values, lack of consistency between item price and product are all data controls monthly carried out. Follow up operations are also planned. Missing data even after final index compilation are estimated by putting forward the last price transmitted and checked.

Data monthly collected are compiled in terms of index numbers, disseminated as aggregate information to ensure confidentiality

## Index compilation

The import price index expresses the dynamic of the prices of a representative basket of the main industrial products imported by industrial and commercial companies. The import price index measures changes of prices for industrial products bought (in the Euro zone and the non-Euro zone) by industrial and commercial enterprises resident in Italy, Since January 2018 indices are compiled in the reference base 2015.

The import price is Laspeyres fixed base type indices. The first compilation step consists in calculating products indices through simple geometric averages of (items) ratios. Each ratio is a price relative that is a quotient between current item price (numerator) and base price (denominator). Geometric averages group item ratios consistently with the product they are associated. The second index compilation step consists in grouping product indices by the Laspeyres formula to get sub-aggregate indices up to the overall one.

## Weighting structure of the base 2015

The index weighting system is derived from the international trade statistics. There are two weighting systems depending upon the Euro and the non-Euro area. Total indices are defined by weighted arithmetic means of Euro and non-Euro indices. The variable used to set up weights is the annual value of imports of goods in 2015. For both areas, values concern goods according to the Combined nomenclature (eight digit level). These data are reported to the Prodcom nomenclature by the corresponding tables available in the Eurostat website. Table C shows weights 2015 - separately for each areas and the total – in terms of Main Industrial Groupings (MIG).

**TABLE C. IMPORT PRICES. TOTAL INDICES, EURO AND NON-EURO AREAS** Weighting structures. (index, 2015=100)

Main Industrial Groupings	Total	Euro area	Non-Euro area
Consumer goods	27.9023	28.5241	27.3362
<i>consumer durables</i>	4.4241	3.3944	5.3618
<i>consumer non-durables</i>	23.4783	25.1297	21.9744
Capital goods	25.3618	31.1911	20.0525
Intermediate goods	33.0427	37.8057	28.7042
Energy	13.6932	2.4791	23.9071
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0000</b>	<b>100.0000</b>	<b>100.0000</b>

The table below (D) shows per area weights as they contribute to the compilation of the total index.

**TABLE D. IMPORT PRICES. COMPOSITION RATIOS.** (index, 2015=100)

Main Industrial Groupings	Euro area	Non-Euro area
Consumer goods	48.7282	51.2718
<i>consumer durables</i>	36.5699	63.4301
<i>consumer non-durables</i>	51.0192	48.9808
Capital goods	58.6214	41.3786
Intermediate goods	54.5372	45.4628
Energy	8.6298	91.3702
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.666</b>	<b>52.334</b>

## Confidentiality

Data on import prices are disseminated ensuring confidentiality rules aimed to protect individual data. Statistical confidentiality is detailed in the Art. 9 of Legislative Decree n°. 322/89; the regulation regarding the protection and processing of personal data is contained in the Legislative Decree n°. 196 of 30 June 2002.

## Covid-19 crisis and the monthly import prices survey

Covid-19 crisis led to few issues in the monthly import prices survey in April. Overall, even if working under critical conditions, the majority of businesses involved in the survey provided the information required. The responses rate of businesses decreased only by 4 percentage points compared with the usual rate of provisional estimates.

As the responses loss occurred was very limited, the ordinary approach for missing price imputation was used. Imputation was preceded by a careful and strengthened data checking and editing activity; where necessary for data validation, follow-up on respondent companies was carried out. All the re-called companies, despite the crisis situation, cooperated effectively.



## Foreign trade and import prices: data issue

### Timeliness of release and revision of data

Data are published 45 days after the reference month. The release calendar is defined annually, and published on the Institute website: <https://www.istat.it/en/information-and-services/journalists/release-calendar>

At the first publication, foreign trade data are provisional and undergo a first revision in the following month in order to integrate additional information which become available after their first dissemination; final data will be definitively consolidated in the month of November of the following year.

The final data on import prices are instead released after 75 days. The dates of dissemination comply with the conditions required by Eurostat according to the EC Regulation n°. 1158/2005 on short-term statistics.

For more information on revisions to short-term indicators, see the [specific section](#), relating to the revision policies of the foreign trade indicators and import prices.

### Dissemination channels

- Data are disseminated through the monthly press release - the Flash Statistics "[Foreign Trade and Import Prices](#)" - released on the Istat website.

The updated time series are attached to the press release.

Data on the import prices are published in the Institute data warehouse (I.stat) within the *Prices* theme-[Import prices](#).

Further foreign trade press releases:

- [Foreign trade with non Eu countries](#)
- [Exports of Italian regions](#)

In compliance with the European Regulation on the short-term Statistics, data are transmitted to Eurostat on a monthly basis and available at <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> (Theme *Industry, trade and services*, topic *Short-term business statistics (sts)/Industry (sts\_ind)*).

International trade data are available on Coeweb<sup>7</sup> in the month following the press release. The datawarehouse provides, on a monthly basis, detailed information on the trade of goods between Italy and the rest of the world and time series since 1991.

### Insights (only Italian version available)

- Methodology adopted for foreign trade indices calculation [Nota Informativa 25/02/2008](#)
- Statistical production system for international trade in natural gas and electric energy [Nota informativa 15/11/2011](#)
- The start of import prices survey [Nota Informativa 24/02/2014](#)
- The reconstruction of the time series on import prices for the period of January 2005 - December 2009 [Nota Informativa 16/10/2015](#)
- New reference year, 2015=100, in import prices indexes [Nota informativa 17/05/2018](#)

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<sup>7</sup> Data warehouse devoted to foreign trade statistics

## For technical and methodological information

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