

# Standard-documentation Meta information

(Definitions, comments, methods, quality)

on

## Foreign trade statistics

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## Executive Summary

Monthly international trade in goods statistics (ITGS) covers imports and exports including electricity. Therefore, it constitutes essential economic information on cross-border movement of commodities between the national statistical territory and foreign countries and is a key indicator for the assessment of the economic situation and economic development. The statistical territory for imports and exports conforms the customs area of application in accordance with paragraph 3 of the Customs implementation law, [Federal Law Gazette \(BGBl.\) No. 659/1994](#). The Austrian foreign trade volume in 2019 amounted import-sided to 37.7% and export-sided to 38.9% in relation to the GDP (gross domestic product), and showed once again, that foreign trade is a major economic factor in the context of the Austrian economy (cf. [Statistische Nachrichten 8/2020](#)).

European legislation in the field of foreign trade statistics warrants the statistics to be based on precise legal texts directly applicable in the Member States as well as highly harmonised definitions and procedures. Austrian foreign trade statistics are legally regulated on two levels, the EU (European Union) level and the national level, which essentially refers to EU laws and simultaneously considers specific national situations.

Foreign trade statistics are based on the data collection systems **INTRASTAT** (cross-border movement of commodities within the EU) and **EXTRASTAT** (cross-border movement of commodities with third countries). The realisation of the internal market on 1 January 1993 disestablishing customs formalities, led to the introduction of the data collection system INTRASTAT as a basis for the statistics of trade within the EU. After Austria accessed the European Community on 1 January 1995, the INTRASTAT system entered into force in Austria. It is based on a close connection to the monthly VAT return system for the internal market. Trade in goods is collected according to the system of special trade. According to the primary statistical survey system INTRASTAT data on trade with EU Member States are collected directly from approx. **13 500 providers of statistical information (PSIs)** which covers about 94% of all imports and 97% of all exports for reporting year 2019.

In principle, all kind of services are not subject of foreign trade statistics, except processing transactions in context with cross-border movements of goods. These are recorded and included in foreign trade statistics.

Data on trade with third countries (EXTRASTAT) is completely gathered from customs authorities based on customs declarations and is transmitted directly to Statistics Austria.

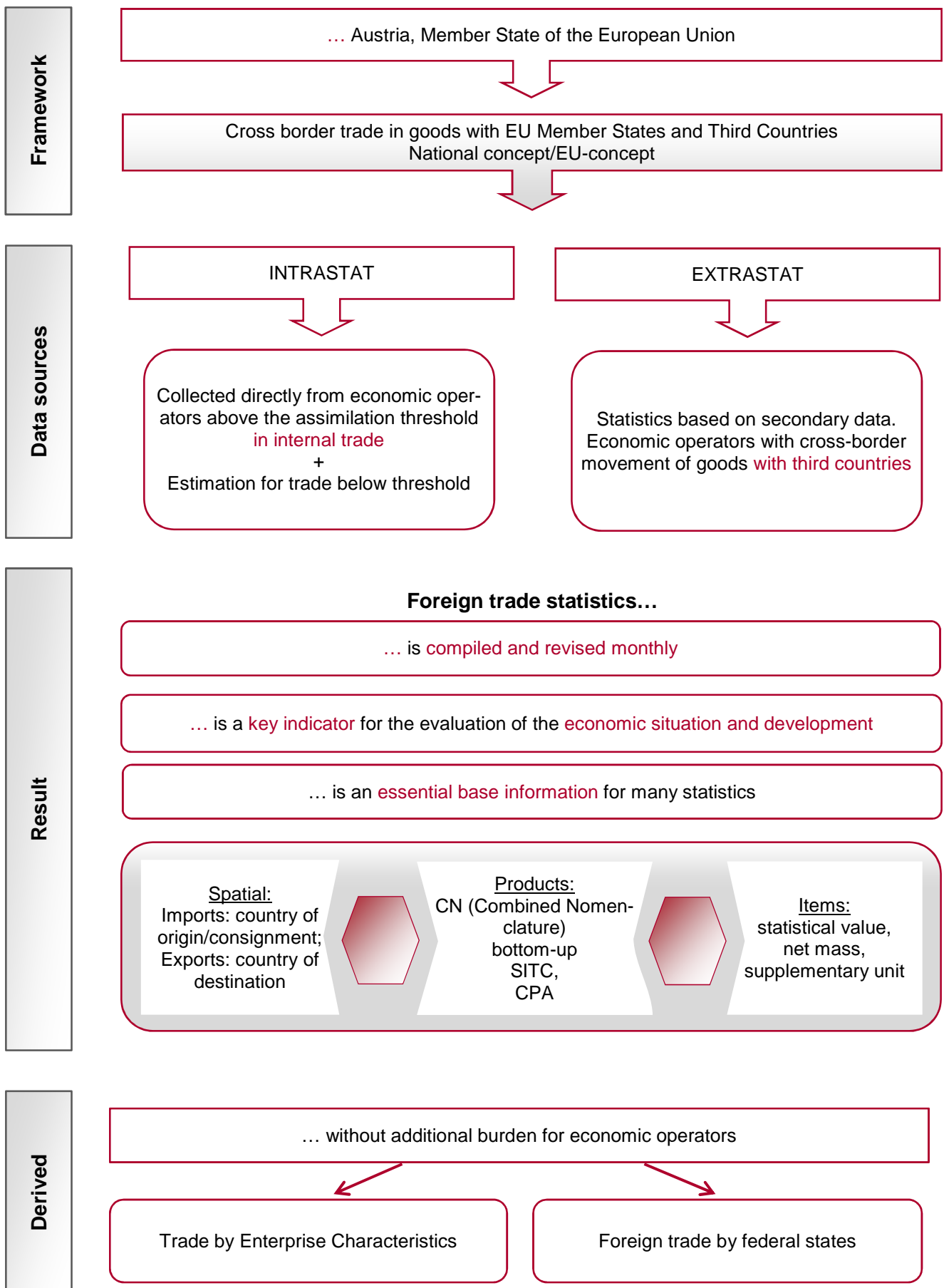
The collected data from both survey sources is checked for validity and credibility. Mostly INTRASTAT and EXTRASTAT are validated in the same way. The monitoring of the content of the information is divided into a formal plausibility test (validity of variables), a logical plausibility check (combined control) and quantity control (quantity-value ratio control). For testing the INTRASTAT records' completeness further checks are relevant. Statistical offices of the Member States in accordance with EU legislation obtain information from other secondary data sources, such as from the monthly VAT return data (national monthly Value Added Tax returns, European VAT collection on trade within the EU – VIES (VAT Information Exchange System)) respectively the aircraft or vessels register.

To ensure the quality of the data, numerous quality management actions in the framework of processing of the survey data are performed (such as electronic reporting tools, plausibility checks, personal economic operator care by competent officials in charge, completeness checks, on-going training of employees, use of automation-assisted checking programs). Non-response due to the application of a threshold system and due to missing consciousness of reporting in INTRASTAT can be compensated with the help of secondary data (national VAT return), a long term proven estimation system at the most detailed level and a consistent reminder system. The quality of the survey data in INTRASTAT is therefore also related to the quality of the tax data from the EU-wide VIES data and from the national monthly VAT returns, used for plausibility purposes as well as for estimation purposes. The survey data from EXTRASTAT is provided almost entirely from customs data survey and broadly depend, in terms of quality, on the thoroughness and reliability of this secondary source.

The analysis and release of results of Austrian foreign trade statistics by Statistics Austria takes place from the Austrian perspective according to **national concept**. These results cannot be compared directly with the Austrian results published by Eurostat, which are analysed from the European perspective according to EU-concept, although both concepts are based on the principle of special trade. There are two essential differences between EU-concept and national concept, being the definition of partner country imports and the statistical treatment of indirect movement of goods.

Figure 1: Foreign trade statistics in Austria gives an overview of the concept of foreign trade statistics (ITGS – International Trade in Goods Statistics) in Austria.

Figure 1: Foreign trade statistics in Austria



| <b>Foreign trade statistics – Main Features</b>  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Subject Matter</b>                            | Austrian foreign trade statistics (ITGS – International Trade in Goods Statistics) describes the cross-border movement of goods of the survey territory with foreign countries. A foreign country in foreign trade statistics means the area outside the survey territory. The statistical territory corresponds to the customs area of application.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Population</b>                                | All VAT registered economic operators or customs declarants with cross-border movement of goods.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Type of statistics</b>                        | <u>INTRASTAT</u> : Primary statistical survey<br><u>EXTRASTAT</u> : Secondary statistics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Data sources / Survey techniques</b>          | <u>INTRASTAT</u> : Census with variable threshold values with mandatory representation criteria.<br><u>EXTRASTAT</u> : Census                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Reference period</b>                          | 2019                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Periodicity</b>                               | Monthly                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Survey participation (Primary statistics)</b> | Mandatory (no INTRASTAT reporting obligation for economic operators below the assimilation threshold for each trade flow)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Main legal acts</b>                           | <p><u>national</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Trading Statistics Act</b><br/><a href="#">Gazette 173/1995</a> as amended</li> <li>- Regulation on the <b>characteristics</b> in the trade statistics application<br/><a href="#">Gazette 181/1995</a></li> <li>- Regulation on statistical <b>thresholds</b> for commercial application<br/><a href="#">Gazette II 306/2009</a> as amended</li> </ul> <p><u>EU</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basic and implementing regulations for trade <b>with EU Member States</b><br/><a href="#">RG (EC) No 638/2004</a> as amended</li> <li>- Basic and implementing regulations for trade <b>with third countries</b><br/><a href="#">RG (EC) No 471/2009</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Basic and implementing regulations on EBS – European Business Statistics RG (EU) 2019/2152</a></li> </ul> |
| <b>Most detailed regional breakdown</b>          | Structure by partner countries and groups of countries according to ISO alpha2-digit code and Geonomenclature (GEONOM).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Availability of results</b>                   | Preliminary data: t + 70<br>Final data: June of the following year                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Other</b>                                     | The Austrian foreign trade statistics are compiled and published according to the national concept. Application of passive confidentiality.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |