



Structural business statistics

Reference Metadata in Euro SDMX Metadata Structure
(ESMS)

Compiling agency: Eurostat, the statistical office of the
European Union

Eurostat metadata

Reference metadata

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1. Contact

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1.1. Contact organisation	Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union
1.2. Contact organisation unit	G2: Competitiveness of European businesses
1.5. Contact mail address	2920 Luxembourg LUXEMBOURG

2. Metadata update

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2.1. Metadata last certified	16 November 2009
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2.2. Metadata last posted	16 November 2009
2.3. Metadata last update	22 February 2011

3. Statistical presentation

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3.1. Data description

SBS covers the Nace Rev.2 Section B to N and division S95 which are organized in four annexes, covering Industry (sections B-E), Construction (F), Trade (G) and Services (H, I, J, L, M, N and S95). Financial services are covered in three specific annexes and separate metadata files have been compiled. Up to reference year 2007 data was presented using the NACE Rev.1.1 classification. The SBS coverage was limited to NACE Rev.1.1 Sections C to K. Starting from the reference year 2008 data is available in NACE Rev.2. Double reported data in NACE Rev.1.1 for the reference year 2008 will be available in the first and second quarter of 2011.

Main characteristics (variables) of the SBS data category:

- Business Demographic variables (e.g. number of enterprises)
- "Output related" variables (e.g. Turnover, Value added)
- "Input related" variables
 - labour input (e.g. Employment, Hours worked)
 - goods and services input (e.g. Total of purchases)
 - capital input (e.g. Material investments)

Several important derived indicators are generated in the form of ratios of certain monetary characteristics or per head values.

Annual enterprise statistics: Characteristics collected are published by country and detailed on NACE Rev 2 and NACE Rev 1.1 class level (4 digits). Some classes or groups in 'services' in NACE Rev 1.1 sections H, I, K have been aggregated.

Annual enterprise statistics broken down by size classes: Characteristics are published by country and detailed down to NACE Rev 2 and NACE Rev 1.1 group level (3-digits) and employment size class. For trade (NACE Rev2 and NACE Rev 1.1 Section G) a supplementary breakdown by turnover size class is available.

Annual regional statistics: Four characteristics are published by NUTS-2 country region and detailed on NACE Rev 2 and NACE Rev 1.1 division level (2-digits) (but to group level for the trade section).

More information on the contents of different tables: the detail level and breakdowns required starting with the reference year is defined in Commission Regulation [N° 251/2009](#). For previous reference years it is included in Commission Regulations (EC) [N° 2701/98](#) and amended by [N°1614/2002](#) and [N°1669/2003](#).

SBS data are collected primarily by National Statistical Institutes (NSI). Regulatory or controlling national offices for financial institutions or central banks often provides the information required for the financial sector

(NACE Rev 2 Section K / NACE Rev 1.1 Section J).

3.2. Classification system

Annual enterprise statistics: National data are broken down at the detailed (4-digit) level of the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE Rev.1 until 2001, and NACE Rev. 1.1 since 2002, NACE Rev 2 will be used from 2008 data onwards. Key data will be double reported in NACE Rev.1.1 and NACE Rev.2 for 2008. From 2009 onwards, only NACE Rev.2 data will be available.

Annual enterprise statistics broken down by size classes: Employment size classes are used for breakdowns in all sectors, combined with an activity detail on NACE group (3 digits) level. Turnover size classes are used for trade and sales area size classes are defined for a specific series applying only to retail trade.

Annual regional statistics: Regional data are broken down according to the NUTS-2 classification, generally combined with a NACE division (2 digits) level activity detail (but a more detailed NACE 3-digit group level activity breakdown for the trade sector). More information on these nomenclatures is found on the appropriate ESTAT website ['RAMON'](#).

Specific statistical series have been defined, most often applying to one sector specific annex only. More information is found in the appropriate ESMS files.

The regional breakdown of the EU Member States is based on the [Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics \(NUTS\)](#).

The detailed overview of the series defined by annex starting from the reference year 2008 is found in Commission Regulation [N° 251/2009](#). For previous reference years the series are defined in Commission Regulation N° [2701/98](#) and amended by [N°1614/2002](#) and [N°1669/2003](#).

3.3. Sector coverage

NACE Rev.2 Sections B to N and S95 from reference years 2008 onwards and NACE Rev.1.1. Sections C to K for previous reference years. NACE Rev.2 Section K and NACE Rev.1.1. Section J is only covered partially by the data on insurance services, credit institutions and pension funds.

3.4. Statistical concepts and definitions

Structural Business Statistics (SBS) describe the economy through the observation of the activity of units engaged in an economic activity. They answer such questions as: how much wealth is created in an activity? How many work forces are needed to create this wealth? How is this activity developing? Is this activity participating in the growth of the economy? How much investments are realized in this activity?

The SBS characteristics are defined in Commission Regulation [N° 250/2009](#). This regulation covers all business demographic, employment and monetary characteristics as well as indicators consisting of ratios of monetary characteristics or per head values.

Characteristics and indicators are also coded by a 5 digit number. The first two digits indicate the set the characteristics belong to. Some main characteristics collected in the framework of the structural business statistics are:

- Business Demographic variables: (set of characteristics coded as 11 xx x)

o **number of enterprises:** a count of the number of enterprises active during at least a part of the reference period.

o **number of local units:** a count of the number of local units active during at least a part of the reference period.

- "Input related" variables

- Labour inputs (coded as 16 xx x)

o **Number of persons employed** is defined as the total number of persons who work in the observation unit (inclusive of working proprietors, partners working regularly in the unit and unpaid family workers), as well as persons who work outside the unit who belong to it and are paid by it (e.g. sales representatives, delivery personnel, repair and maintenance teams). It excludes manpower supplied to the unit by other enterprises, persons carrying out repair and maintenance work in the enquiry unit on behalf of other enterprises, as well as those on compulsory military service.

o **Number of employees** is defined as those persons who work for an employer and who have a contract of employment and receive compensation in the form of wages, salaries, fees, gratuities, piecework pay or remuneration in kind. A worker from an employment agency is considered to be an employee of that temporary employment agency and not of the unit (customer) in which they work.

- Cost of inputs (coded as 13 xx x)

o **Total purchases of goods and services** include the value of all goods and services purchased during the accounting period for resale or consumption in the production process, excluding capital goods (the consumption of which is registered as consumption of fixed capital).

o **Personnel costs** are defined as the total remuneration, in cash or in kind, payable by an employer to an employee (regular and temporary employees as well as home workers) in return for work done by the latter during the reference period. Personnel costs also include taxes and employees' social security contributions retained by the unit as well as the employer's compulsory and voluntary social contributions. Personnel costs are made up of wages and salaries and employers' social security costs

- Capital input (coded as 15 xx x)

o **Gross investment in tangible goods** is defined as investment during the reference period in all tangible goods. Included are new and existing tangible capital goods, whether bought from third parties or produced for own use (i.e. Capitalised production of tangible capital goods), having a useful life of more than one year including non-produced tangible goods such as land. Investments in intangible and financial assets are excluded.

- "Output related" variables: (coded as 12 xx x)

o **Turnover** comprises the totals invoiced by the observation unit during the reference period, and this corresponds to market sales of goods or services supplied to third parties; it includes all duties and taxes on the goods or services invoiced by the unit with the exception of the VAT invoiced by the unit to its customer and other similar deductible taxes directly linked to turnover; it also includes all other charges (transport, packaging, etc.) passed on to the customer. Price reductions, rebates and discounts as well as the value of returned packing must be deducted.

o **Production value** measures the amount actually produced by the unit, based on sales, including changes in

stocks and the resale of goods and services. The production value is defined as turnover, plus or minus the changes in stocks of finished products, work in progress and goods and services purchased for resale, minus the purchases of goods and services for resale, plus capitalised production, plus other operating income (excluding subsidies). Income and expenditure classified as financial or extra-ordinary in company accounts is excluded from production value.

o **Value added at factor costs** is the gross income from operating activities after adjusting for operating subsidies and indirect taxes. Value adjustments (such as depreciation) are not subtracted.

SBS consists of a horizontal module (Annex I), including a limited set of basic statistics for all market activities. Seven sector-specific annexes cover a more extended list of sector-specific characteristics. The sector-specific annexes are: industry (Annex II), distributive trades (Annex III), construction (Annex IV), insurance services (Annex V), credit institutions (Annex VI), pension funds (Annex VII) and business services (Annex VIII). Annex IX covers business demography statistics for all market activities. The detailed overview of the availability of characteristics by sector is found in [Commission Regulation N° 251/2009](#) for data starting with the reference year 2008 and in [Commission Regulation No 2701/98](#). For example, annex II for industry includes a breakdown of the gross investment in tangible goods into categories of goods, more detail regarding stocks, costs of energy consumption, payments for agency workers, number of part-time workers and number of hours worked by employees. A breakdown of the turnover between industrial activity, construction, trade and services is also collected on a multi-annual basis.

3.5. Statistical unit

National data and data broken down by size class of number of persons employed both refer to **enterprises**.

The enterprise is the smallest combination of legal units that is an organisational unit producing goods or services, which benefits from a certain degree of autonomy in decision-making, especially for the allocation of its current resources. An enterprise carries out one or more activities at one or more locations. An enterprise may be a sole legal unit.

Regional data refer to **local units**.

The local unit is an enterprise or part thereof (e.g. a workshop, factory, warehouse, office, mine or depot) situated in a geographically identified place. At or from this place economic activity is carried out for which - save for certain exceptions - one or more persons work (even if only part-time) for one and the same enterprise.

For detailed information on statistical units, please see [Council Regulation \(EEC\) No 696/93](#) of 15 March 1993 on the statistical units for the observation and analysis of the production system in the Community (Official Journal of the European Communities No L 076, 30/03/1993, p. 1), Section III of 15.03.1993 on the statistical units for the observation and analysis of the production system in the Community.

3.6. Statistical population

The SBS regulation covers NACE Rev.2 Sections B to N and Group S95 (NACE Rev.1.1 sections C to K), which broadly speaking covers Market activities.

3.7. Reference area

The data category covers EU27, the EU Candidate countries, Norway and Switzerland. Not only country specific data are disseminated but European aggregates as well.

3.8. Time coverage

1995 is the first reference year for SBS implementation. From 1995 till 1998 was a transitional period for SBS implementation. The data set is more complete and comparable starting from reference year 1999. European aggregates are available for most important characteristics and tables from reference year 1999 onwards. The

SBS Recast Regulation (No 295/2008) entered into force for the data for the reference year 2007 for business demography Annex (IX) and for the data for reference year 2008 for all other annexes. Until reference year 2007 data is available in NACE Rev.1.1. Starting with the reference year 2008 data is available in NACE Rev.2. For reference year 2008 a number of statistics will be double reported in NACE Rev.1.1 and NACE Rev.2. For some series, this results in a break in series between the reference year 2007 and 2008.

3.9. Base period

Not relevant

4. Unit of measure

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- Monetary data are expressed in millions of €. See annex at the bottom of the page for annual average exchange rates vis-à-vis the euro.
- Per head values are expressed in thousands of € per head.
- Per hours values are expressed in € per hour.
- Ratios of monetary variables are expressed in percentages.

Employment variables are expressed in *units* for individual countries, but in *hundreds* for European aggregates

5. Reference period

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SBS data refer to the calendar year, which in most cases corresponds to the fiscal year.

6. Institutional mandate

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6.1. Legal acts and other agreements

European Parliament and Council Regulation [No 295/2008](#) is the basic legal instrument for collecting structural business statistics starting with the reference year 2008 (2007 for business demography statistics).

Council Regulation [N° 58/97](#), amended by Commission Regulation N° 1614/2002 and European Parliament and Council Regulation No 2056/2002 are the main legal framework for structural business statistics until reference year 2007. Those regulations were replaced by the European Parliament and Council Regulation N° 295/2008. New implementing commission regulations are being drafted. . An overview is also found in the background section of the [dedicated website](#). For the implementation of the Council Regulation a number of Commission Regulations were adopted, specifying the characteristics, the series of data to be provided, the technical format for the transmission of the data and possible derogations.

Legal texts prior to 2004 and relevant for SBS are available on "[Legislation](#)"; more recent legislative text can be retrieved from the [EuroLex](#) server. The 'background' section on the [dedicated website](#) also contains the links to the legislation applicable.

6.2. Data sharing

Eurostat makes available all non-confidential and sufficiently reliable data on its dissemination website.

7. Confidentiality

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7.1. Confidentiality - policy

[Regulation \(EC\) No 223/2009 on European statistics](#) (recital 24 and Article 20(4)) of 11 March 2009 (OJ L 87, p. 164), stipulates the need to establish common principles and guidelines ensuring the confidentiality of data used for the production of European statistics and the access to those confidential data with due account for

technical developments and the requirements of users in a democratic society.

7.2. Confidentiality - data treatment

Confidentiality - if data are of truly confidential nature according to the above mentioned regulation, they have to be flagged confidential, and they will not be published by Eurostat. Eurostat makes available all non-confidential data on its dissemination website.

8. Release policy

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8.1. Release calendar

Not applicable

8.2. Release calendar access

Not available.

8.3. User access

In line with the Community legal framework and the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#) Eurostat disseminates European statistics on Eurostat's website (see item 10 - 'Dissemination format') respecting professional independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably. The detailed arrangements are governed by the [Eurostat protocol on impartial access to Eurostat data for users](#).

9. Frequency of dissemination

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Annual, however, some specific sector information is available only on a multi-yearly basis.

10. Dissemination format

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10.1. News release

News releases on-line

10.2. Publications

Annually: [Pocketbook on Business in Europe](#)

Frequently: Statistics in Focus on sector specific or more general topics

[Statistics Explained](#)

On the Eurostat Website dedicated to [European Business](#)

10.3. On-line database

Please consult free data on-line or refer to [contact details](#).

10.4. Micro-data access

Not relevant

10.5. Other

Internet address: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

11. Accessibility of documentation

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11.1. Documentation on methodology

Recent and detailed information on the statistical system and the SBS survey strategy of individual member states (MS), candidate countries (CC) or European Economic Area countries (NO, CH) is available.

11.2. Quality documentation

National methodology reports and some yearly quality reports, referring to 1998-2005, of MS and NO are available [here](#)

12. Quality management

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12.1. Quality assurance

Not available.

12.2. Quality assessment

Information on quality is expected to be delivered by Member States for the data referring to reference year 2008 and to be published by Eurostat in 2011

13. Relevance

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13.1. User needs

The main users of SBS data, the Commission policy DGs, are consulted in order to identify unfulfilled user needs.

13.2. User satisfaction

Eurostat has not yet organised a user satisfaction survey, but plans to do so in the near future

13.3. Completeness

The period 1995-1998 corresponds to a transitional period in SBS implementation. The data set is more complete starting from reference year 1999. Thus, European aggregates are available for most important variables and tables from reference year 1999 onwards. For 2007, overall 90% of the data required by the SBS Regulation Annexes 1 to 4 was provided. All non-confidential data of sufficient quality has been published.

14. Accuracy and reliability

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14.1. Overall accuracy

The SBS Regulation is an output-oriented Regulation, leaving data providers the choice of data sources. In most countries a combination of survey and administrative data is used. It is very hard to assess the accuracy of the administrative data. No quantitative indicator is available.

14.2. Sampling error

For the data covered by survey the coefficients of variation have to be transmitted. Work is ongoing to calculate an overall EU coefficient of variation, but this is not available yet. Data of individual countries cannot be published.

14.3. Non-sampling error

The unit non-response and item non-response are provided by EEA Member States, but cannot be disseminated.

15. Timeliness and punctuality

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15.1. Timeliness

Preliminary data are normally released at T+12 and most definitive data at T+22. European aggregates (final data only) may be released with an additional time-lag. While calculating EU totals, estimates for missing countries characteristics, may be needed.

15.2. Punctuality

Final data ought to be sent to Eurostat 18 months after the end of the reference period (T). Preliminary data should be sent to Eurostat 10 months after the end of the reference period. Punctuality has improved over time.

16. Comparability

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16.1. Comparability - geographical

Comparisons across countries are sometimes limited by methodological factors: summary of main issues (*See annex at the bottom of the page*).

16.2. Comparability - over time

Comparisons over time are sometimes limited by methodological factors: summary of main issues (*See annex at the bottom of the page*).

17. Coherence

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17.1. Coherence - cross domain

Non confidential national and EU data are released at the finest possible level of detail. Yet the general principle "the higher the level of aggregation (the more aggregated the data), the better the quality" applies to SBS. Detailed data for small countries have to be used with a certain caution.

Data on Structural business statistics can be found in the following related domains:

Regional statistics, environmental protection expenditure statistics, research and development, labour cost statistics, labour force survey, European business trends, short-term statistics.

In these collections data similar to SBS can be found. It should be noted that methodological differences exist which can explain inconsistencies. Apparent inconsistencies between SBS data and the data from labour cost statistics, labour force survey and short term statistics have been examined.

The OECD also collects and disseminates enterprise statistics in its new Structural Business Statistics Database, containing the database known as SSIS (Structural Statistics for Industry and Services) and SEC (Statistics by Enterprise Size Class). In order to reduce the response burden on member countries and to harmonise SBS data collections between Eurostat and OECD, the OECD sources since 2004 data from Eurostat for EU countries (according to the terms of a "Memorandum of Understanding" signed by both organisations). Comparable data on other OECD countries is collected by the OECD and made available to Eurostat

17.2. Coherence - internal

The internal consistency of the data (links between variables, coherence between data series,...) are checked by Eurostat before dissemination.

18. Cost and burden

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Based on information collected from the data providers the burden on the economy due to SBS Annexes I - IV adds up to about €75 million for the whole Community. Efforts are being undertaken to reduce the burden.

19. Data revision

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19.1. Data revision - policy

Eurostat accepts the revision of definitive data. Whenever national data are revised, European aggregates are revised accordingly so that both data (at national and EU level) are synchronised.

19.2. Data revision - practice

Definitive data replace preliminary data as soon as they are available.

As far as the method used for the production of SBS preliminary data is concerned, most countries use auxiliary sources such as Short Terms Statistics combined with the latest available SBS data. The alternative is to gross up the sample at an early stage of the survey.

Definitive data are sometimes revised as well, e.g. further to the implementation of a new (and improved) survey strategy, the latest technique being used to revise old data.

20. Statistical processing

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20.1. Source data

SBS data are generally collected by the National Statistical Institutes (NSI) among enterprises.

The data are collected through statistical surveys, the business register or administrative sources. The NSIs can use one or several of these sources, according to the survey strategy they have adopted, taking into account the costs, the quality and the response burden on enterprises. For more detailed definition on these statistical sources, please see "Annex" at the bottom of the page.

[Recent and detailed information](#) (see "Annex" at the bottom of the page) on the statistical system and the SBS survey strategy of individual member states (MS), candidate countries (CC) or European Economic Area countries (NO, CH) is available.

20.2. Frequency of data collection

Annual data are requested. Some series with mostly specialist information on a specific sector, which is burdensome to collect, are covered on a multi-annual basis.

20.3. Data collection

As far as *statistical surveys* are concerned, large businesses are completely enumerated whereas small businesses are usually sampled only.

20.4. Data validation

At Eurostat level data is validated before publishing. A number of logical checks between different variables are performed and the consistency of data over time is checked as well.

20.5. Data compilation

The following European aggregates are available:

EU25 (European Union, 25 countries, from reference year 1999-2005)

EU27 (European Union, 25 countries, starting from reference year 2005)

European aggregates are calculated and disseminated twice a year for most characteristics of the main series broken down by economic activity and for some characteristics of the series broken down by size class.

Whenever those aggregates do not rely on a full coverage, estimates can be published. In these cases such data are flagged with either one or some of following flags.

e: Estimated value (precise within $\pm 1\%$ unless also flagged 'u')

i: Values refer to rounded estimates based on non-confidential data. Note difference between aggregates and components can due to rounding.

u: Unreliable or uncertain data: (Estimation error from $\pm 1\%$ to $\pm 5\%$)

Missing data are estimated for the purpose of the calculation of European aggregates only, these estimates are not released. Countries might send data with substantial delays to the regulation deadline. Occasionally, some characteristics or some NACE codes are missing. Eurostat would be unable to release European aggregates if these data were not estimated.

In order to protect confidential data at the national level rounding some of the EU25/EU27 aggregates were rounded (in the free data dissemination these aggregates are marked with an "i"). This way the confidential data at national level can only be determined with a very high error margin, the EU aggregates are however still acceptably accurate. A consequence of this method to hide confidential national data is that the breakdown of the data for a certain activity level into more detailed activities does not correspond fully with the figure provided for this activity level.

Financial data used generally derive from accounting data.

20.6. Adjustment

Monetary characteristics of the different countries are converted to and/or rounded to millions of euro.

21. Comment

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Structural Business Statistics on the non-financial business economy have many characteristics in common. As such they are the backbone of a wider set of related statistics, covering also the financial sector (for which there are related characteristics) and several development programs existing for specific topics: see "Annex" at the bottom of the page.

Related Metadata

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[bs_esms](#) - Business services statistics
[bd_esms](#) - Business demography statistics - all activities
[fobs_esms](#) - Factors of Business Success statistics - all activities
[fats_esms](#) - Foreign controlled EU enterprises - inward FATS
[ier_esms](#) - Inter-enterprise relations statistics - all activities
[iss_esms](#) - International sourcing statistics - all activities
[ds_esms](#) - Demand for services statistics - all activities

Annex

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