

Frequently asked questions relating to Brexit and its impact on trade in goods statistics

June 2021. V2.0

1. Does Eurostat continue to publish international trade in goods statistics (ITGS) data for the UK in 2021?

Yes and No - depending on whether the UK is a partner or a reporting country.

As a partner country, the UK became an extra-EU partner after Brexit. Eurostat continues to publish data on trade with partner UK, although some differences apply compared to the other extra-EU partners (see next questions).

As a reporting country, the UK is no longer legally obliged to transmit any data to Eurostat since the end of the transition period (31 December 2020). This concerns new reference periods, as well as revisions of data previously transmitted to Eurostat.

Currently the ITGS data transmitted by the UK to Eurostat cover the full period up to October 2020. Pending a new agreement on statistical cooperation between the EU and the UK, Eurostat will not publish any new data for reporter UK, whether via the database or other products, such as statistical publications.

2. When did the UK become an extra-EU partner country?

In February 2020, with the entry into force of the Withdrawal Agreement.

3. Did special provisions apply during 2020 regarding trade with the UK?

Yes. The Withdrawal Agreement included a transition period, during which the UK remained part of the single market. Until 31 December 2020, the UK continued to report trade data as if it were a member state, while the EU Member States continued to collect trade data for the UK as a partner according to the statistical concepts applicable to trade between EU countries. Consequently, 2020 trade data with the UK cannot be fully compared with data on trade with other extra-EU trade partners, like China for instance.

4. What is the main change in statistical concepts for EU's trade with the UK since Brexit?

The main difference is on the import side and relates to the definition of the partner country. The concept of country of consignment applies to the exchange of goods within the internal market, while imports from any other non-EU trade partner are grouped by country of origin.

Until the end of 2020, imports from the UK reflected the country of consignment (see previous question). This means that the goods imported by the EU from the UK were physically transported from the UK, but part of these goods could have been of other origin than the UK.

As of 1 January 2021, the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (part of the Withdrawal Agreement) applies. As a result, data on imports from the UK are based on a **mixed concept**:

- the concept of country of consignment continues to be used for imports from Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland being part of the internal market), while

- the concept of country of origin applies for the imports from the UK (excluding Northern Ireland), as for any other extra-EU partner country.

5. Do Member States compile UK trade data like any other extra-EU data from 1 January 2021?

No. Since 1 January 2021, in application of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland, the EU Member States collect and send trade data for partner UK via two separate channels:

- UK (excluding Northern Ireland) data – code XU – are collected via customs declarations, like any other extra-EU trade data. The legal deadline for sending the data to Eurostat is 40 days after the end of the reference month.
- UK (Northern Ireland) data – code XI – continue to be collected via Intrastat declarations. The legal deadline for sending the data to Eurostat is 70 days after the end of the reference month.

Eurostat aggregates the data and publishes them for partner UK.

6. Is Eurostat publishing partner UK data at the same time as the other extra-EU data?

Yes and No.

For total trade of the broad partner areas by broad categories of products (the aggregated data), Eurostat uses estimates compiled by the Member States, so that data on partner UK (code GB) can be published at the same time as the other extra-EU data, notably in the monthly press releases.

Detailed data for partner UK (code GB) are published with a one-month delay compared to the other extra-EU partners, due to the later availability of data relating to trade with ‘Northern Ireland’ (see previous question). In other words, data on trade with UK are compiled only if the two components (trade with UK excluding NI and trade with Northern Ireland) are available.

The mentioned aggregated and detailed data can for example be found under this link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/international-trade-in-goods/data/database>



7. Is trade for reporter UK (Northern Ireland) published in ITGS statistics?

Yes. From March 2021 (reference month January 2021), the UK in respect of Northern Ireland transmits detailed monthly trade data to Eurostat (see question 4 for more information about the application of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland in ITGS). Eurostat publishes a series of new datasets with Northern Ireland as reporter (see for example [dataset DS-1267290](#)). In the Comext database, they are grouped under the heading ‘Non-EU datasets’. For the latest information about data availability, users are invited to consult the corresponding metadata.

8. Does Eurostat continue to provide the EU28 aggregate in its EU datasets?

Yes, but only up to Brexit. From the reference periods February 2020, first quarter 2020 and the year 2020 onwards Eurostat publishes only the EU-27 aggregate.