European Commission

Directorate General Economic and Financial Affairs

Economic Tendency Surveys in the EU

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Business and consumer surveys and
short-term forecast (DG ECFIN A4.2)

International Workshop on Short-term Statistics, 18-20 May 2015, Beijing

Outline

Introduction to 'Economic Tendency Surveys' (ETS)

The Joint Harmonised EU Programme of Business and Consumer Surveys (BCS):

- history
- administration of the survey
- time-table of data-collection & publication
- geographical scope and sample sizes
- overview of survey questions by sector
- aggregation of responses into 'balances'
- presentation of survey results on website

Introduction to 'Economic Tendency Surveys' (ETS)

definition: 'ETS' ask economic agents to (qualitatively) assess past, current and future economic developments

- (i) business managers or
- (ii) consumers

<u>example:</u> "How do you expect your production to develop over the next three months? It will..."

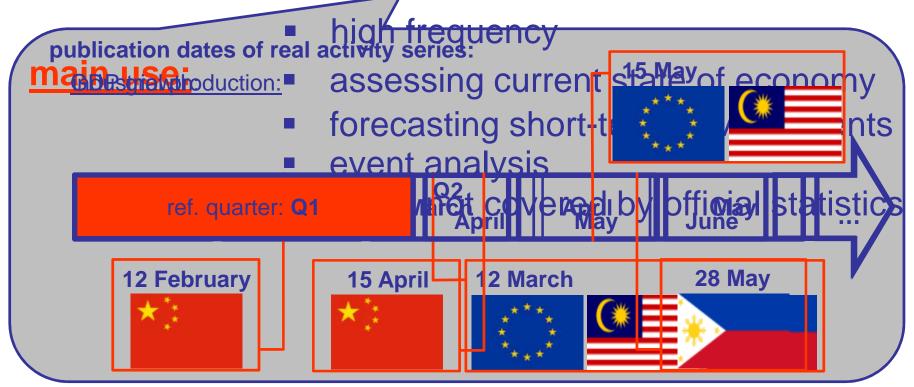
+ ...increase = ...remain unchanged - ...decrease advantages:

- simplicity of the questions allows for a quick response
- no need for respondents to consult accounting records
- replies are given by business managers that have a general view of their business' situation/outlook

Introduction to 'Economic Tendency Surveys' (ETS)

definition: 'ETS' ask economic agents to (qualitatively) assess past, current and future economic developments purpose: complementing (delayed) quantitative statistics

<u>added value:</u> • timeliness (end of reference month)



History of the Joint Harmonised EU Programme of Business and Consumer Surveys (BCS)

since 1962: monthly survey in **Industry**

since 1966: monthly survey in Construction

since 1972: monthly survey among Consumers

since 1984: monthly survey in **Retail Trade**

since 1996: monthly survey in **Services**

since 2007: monthly survey in **Financial Services**

additionally:

since 1966: bi-annual investment survey of the

manufacturing sector

Administration of the BCS

decentralised structure:

- surveys carried out by <u>national</u> institutes
- all the "big" names...





National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies





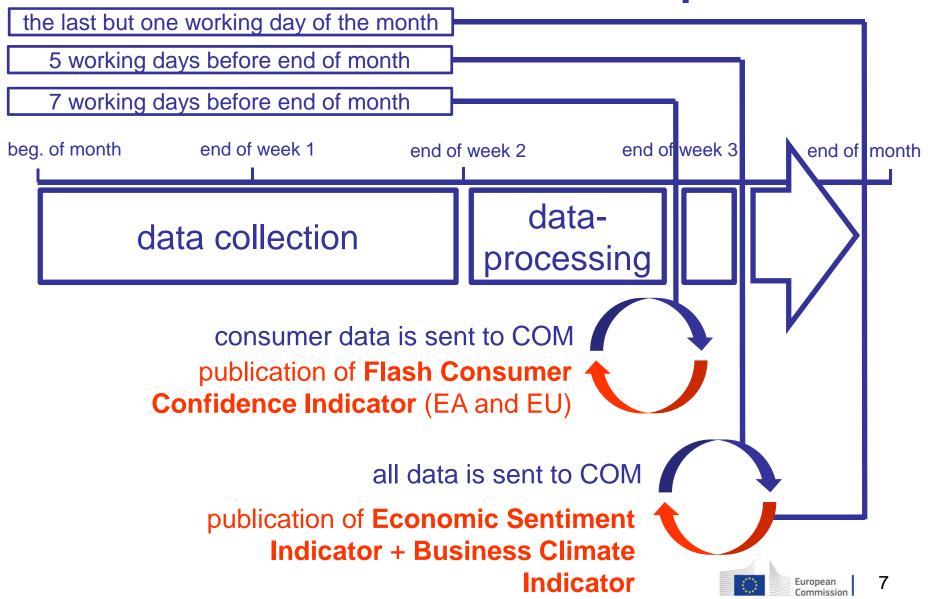


high degree of harmonisation:

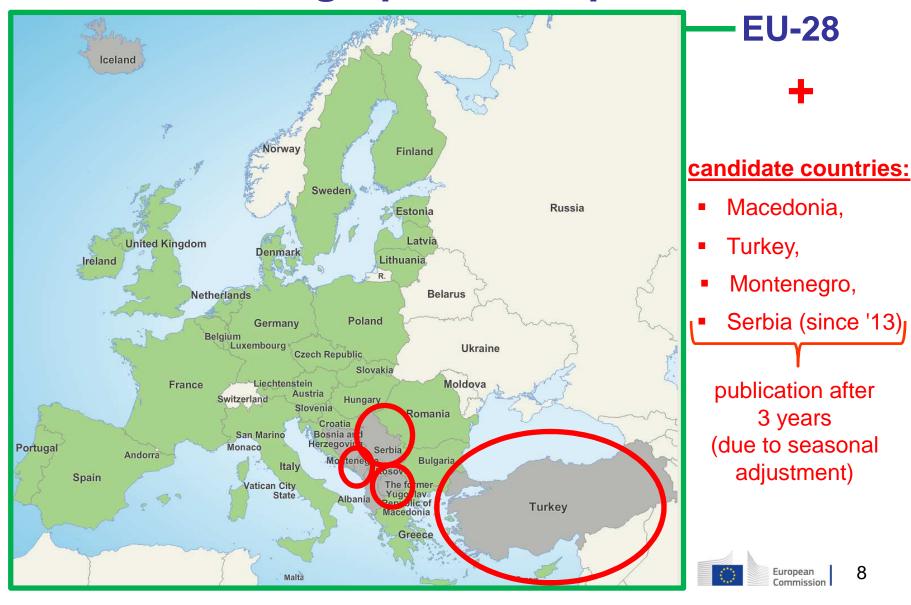
- same harmonised questionnaires
- same frequency
- same timetable
- methodology: soft harmonisation respect of guidelines on data collection and survey design, metadata sheets

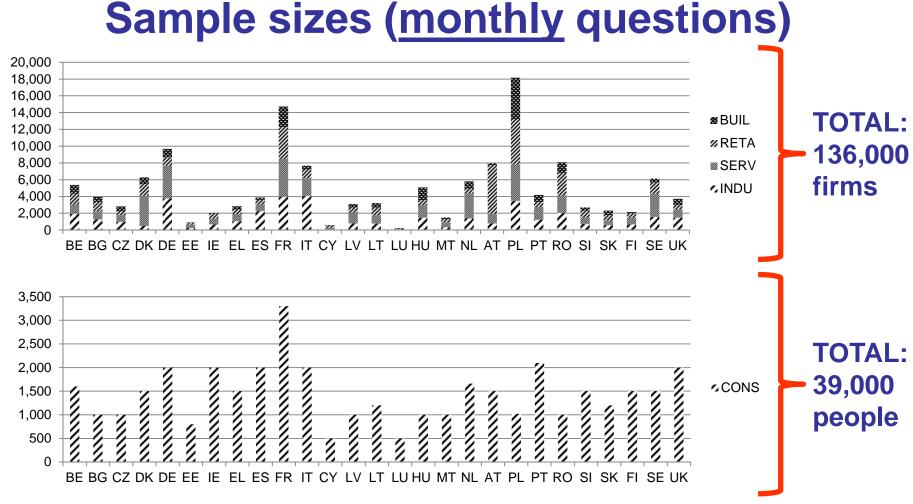
financing: Commission grant covering up to 50% of institutes' costs ('prime d'harmonisation')

Timetable for data collection and publication



Geographical scope

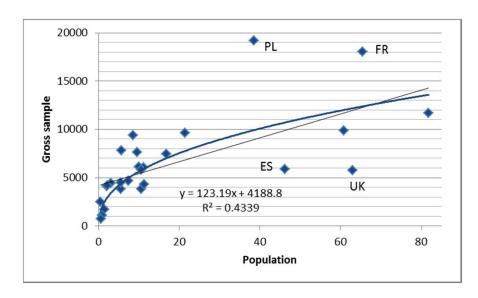


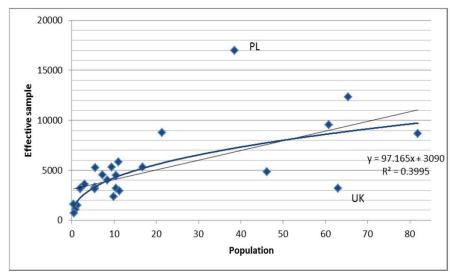


Furthermore:

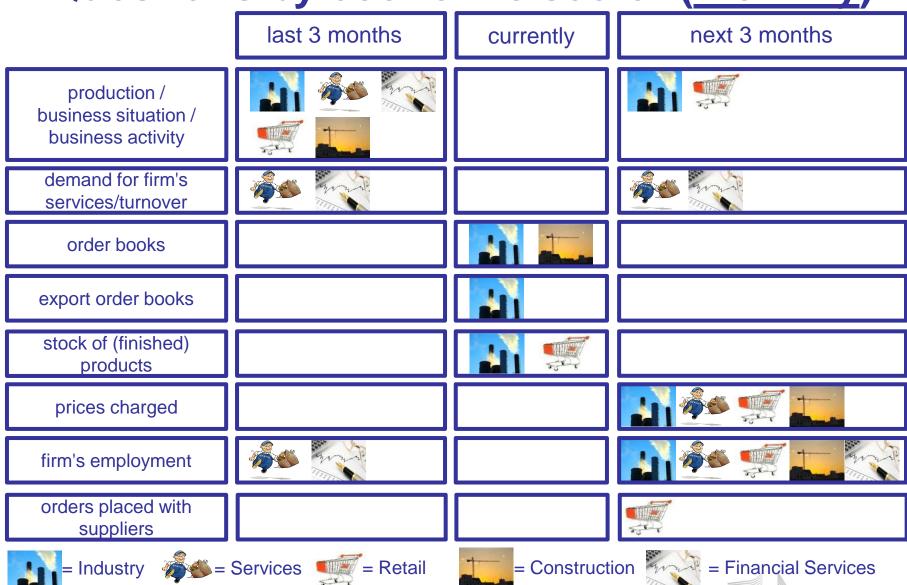
- sample size for bi-annual investment survey: 53,000
- sample size for monthly financial services sector survey: 500 (spread over 11 Member States)

Sample size vs. country size

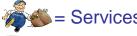




Questions by economic sector (monthly)















Questions by economic sector (quarterly) **Industry:**

- main <u>factors limiting production</u> (insufficient demand, labour shortage, etc.)
- assessment of <u>current production capacity</u>, given order books and expected demand
- months of production assured by current order books
- development of <u>order books past 3 months</u>
- development of <u>export order books next 3 months</u>
- current <u>capacity utilisation</u> (in % of full capacity)
- development <u>competitive position</u> on i) domestic market, ii) foreign markets in EU, iii) foreign markets outside EU over last 3 months

Services:

- main factors limiting business (insufficient demand, labour shortage, etc.)
- capacity utilisation (by what %age could you increase volume of activity with current resources?)
 Construction:
- months' of work accounted for by work in hand and work already contracted for

Financial Services:

development over past 3 months / next 3 months of:

- firm's operating income
- firm's operating expenses
- firm's profitability
- firm's capital expenditure
- firm's competitive position

Questions of investment survey (bi-annual) March/April survey:

- % change in investment year t-1 compared to year t-2
- % change in investment year t compared to year t-1

October/November survey:

- % change in investment year t compared to year t-1
- % change in investment year t+1 compared to year t
- → 4 consecutive estimates for each year

TABLE 2f:	Industrial i	investme	nt survey	- all bran	ches. EU	Membe	r States.						
	Results of Ma	arch/April 20	15 investment	survey, % cha	nge in volum	e, over the pr	eceding year						
Year:		2012			20	13			20	2015			
Date of	Mar./Apr.	Oct./Nov.	Mar./Apr.	Oct./Nov.	Mar./Apr.	Oct./Nov.	Mar./Apr.	Oct./Nov.	Mar./Apr.	Oct./Nov.	Mar./Apr.	Oct./Nov.	Mar./Apr.
survey:	2012	2012	2013	2012	2013	2013	2014	2013	2014	2014	2015	2014	2015
	Provis.	Estim.	Final	Provis.	Provis.	Estim.	Final	Provis.	Provis.	Estim.	Final	Provis.	Provis.
EU	4	1	4	1	4	1	2	5	7	3	4	4	6
EA	1	-2	2	0	2	-2	-2	5	7	1	1	3	4
BE	14	-1	2	18	14	-3	-1	9	21	-2	-2	11	18
BG (a)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:		:	:
CZ.	6	-1	-1	-2.	0	1	9	1	7	11	12	3	8

October/November survey – additional questions:

- description of kind of investment in year t and t+1
 - replacement investments
 - extension of production capacity
 - rationalisation
 - other (pollution control, safety, ...)
- factors influencing investments of year t and t+1: from "very stimulating" to "very limiting":
 - demand
 - financial resources / expected profits
 - technical factors
 - other factors

Introduction to ETS -- EU BCS: history -- administration -- time-table of data-collection & publication -- geographical scope & sample sizes -- overview of survey questions by sector -- aggregation of responses into 'balances' -- presentation of survey results on website

Breakdown of answers by sectors

for SERV: NACE 2-digit level* (div. 49-96)

for BUIL: NACE 2-digit level (div. 41-43)

for RETA: NACE 2+3-digit level (div. 45, 47)

for INDU:NACE 2-digit level (div. 10-33)

- main industrial groupings (industry goods sector, intermediate goods sector, etc.)
- for INVE:NACE 2-digit level (div. 29)
 - main industrial groupings
 - business size classes (business
 <50 employees, etc.)
- for FIN.-SERV: NACE 2-digit level (div. 64-66)

Questions to consumers (monthly)

last 12 months

currently

next 12 months

micro questions

development household's financial position right moment for people to make major purchases?

good moment to save money?

household's position (from running into debt to saving a lot) development household's financial position

spending more or less on major purchases?

household's likelihood of saving money

macro questions

development general economic situation in MS

development consumer prices

development general economic situation in the MS

development consumer prices

development unemployment in MS

Questions to consumers (quarterly)

- likelihood of <u>buying a car</u> in next 12 months
- likelihood of <u>buying / building house</u> in next 12 months
- likelihood of <u>spending money on renovations</u> in next 12 months

for both monthly and quarterly questions:

Breakdown of answers by respondents' characteristics:

- household income
- education
- age
- sex
- type of job (self-employed, etc.)
- working part- or full-time?



Aggregation of questions into balances (per MS)

3 possible answer categories to the questions:

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+ e.g. production? - "has increased!",order books? - "more than sufficient!"
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= e.g. production? - "remained unchanged!",

order books? - "normal for the season!"

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e.g. production?"decreased!",
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order books? - "below normal!"

calculation of P (= % of positive answers) & N (= % of negative answers)

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balance B (in %age points!):

B = P - N
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A few remarks:

1) for questions referring to consumers:

- 6 instead of 3 answer categories:
 ++ (PP: very positive) + (P: positive) = (N:neutral)
 (N: negative) -- (NN: very negative) ? (don't know)
 - revised balance: B = (PP + 1/2P) (1/2N + NN)

2) in case of all balances:

- seasonal adjustment using Dainties algorithm
- 3) aggregation of country-level balances on:
- EU-level
- Euro-area level

Presentation of results on website



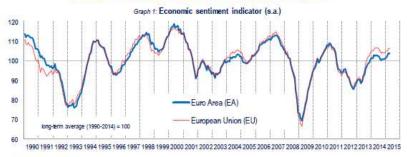
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April 2015



The press release

BUSINESS AND CONSUMER SURVEY RESULTS



ourne: European Commission services

April 2015: Economic Sentiment broadly unchanged in both the euro area and the EU

In April, after three consecutive months of improved readings, the *Economic Sentiment Indicator* (ESI) remained broadly unchanged in both the euro area (-0.2 points to 103.7) and the EU (+0.3 points to 106.4).

Euro area developments

The stabilisation of euro-area sentiment resulted from increasing confidence in the services sector being offset by opposite developments in the construction sector and among consumers. Industry and retail trade, by contrast, signalled no major changes compared to the last month. Amongst the largest euro-area economies, Spain (+1.3) and the Netherlands (+0.9) saw economic sentiment improving, whereas it declined in France (-1.4) and Germany (-0.6) and remained unchanged in Italy.

With managers sending mixed signals, industry confidence remained broadly flat (-0.3). While the appraisals of the current level of overall order books brightened and the assessment of the stocks of finished products was fairly unchanged, production expectations deteriorated markedly. Of the questions not included in the confidence indicator, past production was viewed much more positively, the same going, to a lesser extent, for export order books. Services confidence (+0.6) improved on the back of managers' increased satisfaction with developments in the recent past (past demand and the past business situation). Looking into the future, demand expectations, by contrast, became more cautious. Consumer confidence eased (-0.9) as a consequence of faltering optimism about macro-economic variables, notably the level of future unemployment and the future general economic situation. Consumers' expectations in respect of their financial situation and future savings remained largely unchanged. The unchanged level of retail trade confidence (+0.0) reflects managers' positive judgments on the adequacy of the volume of stocks and the present business situation, coupled with reduced optimism concerning the expected business situation. Construction confidence (-1.4) declined, with managers revising their employment expectations significantly downwards, while keeping their appraisal of the level of order books broadly unchanged. Lower confidence in financial services (not included in the ESI) resulted from managers' diverging assessments of the most recent and future developments. While the past business situation and past demand were viewed more positively, demand expectations, which had surged in March, were corrected downwards again.

Employment plans were revised downwards in construction and retail trade, while remaining broadly unaltered in industry and services. Selling price expectations increased among retail trade and industry managers, while remaining broadly unchanged in services and edging down in the construction sector. Consumer price expectations continued the upward trend observed since February.

EU developments

In line with euro area developments, the headline indicator for the EU remained broadly flat (+0.3). The block's two largest economies outside the euro area, the UK and Poland, sent comparatively positive signals (+2.0 and +1.3, respectively). From a sectoral perspective, developments in industry, consumer, services and financial services confidence paralleled euro-area trends; however EU developments differed in so far as confidence in retail trade dropped somewhat, while it rallied in construction.

Employment expectations differed from the euro area as the retail trade and construction sectors were signalling upward revisions, while industry managers became more cautious compared to last month. Turning to price expectations, developments in the EU were univocal, with also the services and construction sectors revising their assessments upwards.

summary of headline indicator developments

summary of developments in euro area, by sector

differences in EU, compared to euro area





		the section	Sin	ce 1990	(*)	[85]	31			301	4			T		201	5	
		Mir		Ave	Ma		-											
		Date	Value		Date	Value	May	Am	Ful	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	A
EU	1. Industry	03-09	-38.7	-7.0	06-07	7.5	-1.6	-2.2	-2.4	-2.9	-3.9	-3.2	-2.5	-3.4	-3.1	-3.0	-2.7	- 0
	2. Services	03-09	-31.1	8.6	06-98	33,5	9.1	11.0	10.3	8.3	8.5	8.7	8.5	9.1	8.7	8.0	B.1	
	3. Consumer	03-09	-32.2	-12.0	08-00	1.6	4.1	4.3	-5.5	-6.4	-8.0	-7.4	-6.1	-7.5	-5.8	4.4	-1.8	- 3
	4. Retail trade	12-08	-26.8	-6.2	12-10	8.4	4.3	3.4	2.8	1.5	-1.4	-2.0	-2.4	0.0	1.8	-0.5	2.1	
	5. Construction	06-93	-45.3	-19.5	12-06	3.8	-24.8	-25.4	-22.2	-21.7	-20.5	-19.5	-20.0	-17.6	-20.2	-19.1	-20.5	
	= 6. ESI	03-09	66.5	100.0	05-00	117.2	106.6	106.6	106.1	104.8	103.8	104.3	104.1	104.2	104.8	105.2	106.1	10
	7. Financial services (a)	01-09	-20.0	13.4	04-06	43.3	21.9	20.8	17.1	19.0	18.3	13.4	14.9	19.0	15.7	20.9	21.2	
388	25555						77700	4.50										
EA	1. Industry	03-09	-38.1	-6.8	04-07	7.9	-2.8	4.1	-3.6	-5.0	-5.1	4.7	-3.9	-5.0	4.5	4.6	-2.9	
	2. Services	03-09	-26.1	9.0	08-98	35.4	4.8	5.8	5.0	4.1	4.4	4.9	4.5	6.4	5.3	5.3	6.1	
	3. Consumer	03-09	-34.4	-13.0	05-00	2.4	-7,1	-7.5	-8.3	-10.1	-11,4	-11.1	-11.6	-10.9	-8.5	-6.7	-3.7	
	4. Retail trade	01-93	-24.8	-8.8	12-10	5.3	-2.0	-1.1	-1.3	-3.7	-6.6	-5.5	-5.2	-4.6	-2.7	-1.3	-0.8	- 9
	5. Construction	09-93	-46.0	-18.4	02-90	6.0	-29.0	-31.0	-27.3	-27.8	-26.9	-23.6	-25.0	-24.2	-25.3	-25.1	-24.2	-
	= 6. ESI	03-09	69.3	100.0	05-00	118.8	102.9	102.4	102.5	100.9	100.2	100.9	100.8	100.9	101.5	102.3	103.9	11
	7. Financial services (4)	01-09	-21.8	11.4	04-06	42.6	17.1	16.4	14.2	14.6	12.7	8.4	10.4	14.8	12.1	16.0	16.8	- 3
BE	1. Industry	03-09	-33.8	-9.7	06-07	6.9	-6.3	-6.0	-7.5	-7.2	-6.5	-4.9	-5.7	-9.7	-9.0	-9.3	-8.1	
-71	2. Services	04-09	-42.9	11.5	08-07	32.2	19.2	16.1	14.2	15.4	9.5	10.3	14.4	17.2	13.7	11.2	9.3	
	3. Consumer	02-09	-26.5	-7.1	12-00	16.2	-5.2	-5.8	-7.6	-8.1	-9.6	-12.5	-14.1	-12.1	-8.3	-6.3	-6.1	
	4. Retail trade	01-09	-27.9	-4.1	10-10	13.7	0.7	3.4	-6.8	-7.2	-6.7	-8.3	-10.8	-17.2	-12.8	-10.8	-8.3	-
	5. Construction	11-95	-35.1	-10.2	02-90	9.7	-22.1	-21.6	-20.6	-19.5	-20.3	-22.1	-18.6	-21.5	-23.6	-24.2	-19.3	100
	= 6. ESI	03-09	70.2	100.0	06-00	116.8	103.8	103.6	101.6	101.8	99.5	99.4	99.5	98.1	98.8	98.8	99.6	10
BG	1. Industry	06-93	-32.1	-6.2	01-08	12.3	-2.2	-0.7	-1.9	-0.4	-2.5	-1.7	0.0	0.4	95.5	2.5	-1.3	- 10
BG	2. Services	06-10	-13.6	10.0	03-07	33.4	10.2	8.4	7.9	1.0	-0.7	-1.1	0.7	3.6	6.8	6.5	3.9	
	3. Consumer	04-09	-13.0	-34.0	03-07	-13.0	-31.1	-36.0	-35.2	-36.9	-39.8	-42.5	-37.0	-39.4	-38.6	-35.9	-33.2	-
	4. Retail trade	07-09	-14.8	14.3	08-94	31.8	14.0	15.2	11.9	5.8	5.3	4.1	5.0	9.4	10.4	12.9	10.0	_1
	5. Construction	10-09	-56.0	-25.3	11-07	23.9	-30.4	-33.7	-32.2	-31.1	-33.7	-28.2	-29.4	-32.1	-28.3	-27.4	-23.9	130
	= 6. ESI	05-93	71.3	100.0	04-07	120.3	104.1	102.9	102.2	99.7	96.8	96.7	99.8	100.5	102.2	103.8	101.6	10
CZ	1. Industry	02-09	-35.6	2.1	06-00	29.8	3.5	2.7	1.9	2.8	4.2	3.3	3.0	3.4	2.4	2.2	4.1	
	2. Services	09-09	6.4	33.4	02-07	52.6	24.8	29.0	27.7	29.9	30.1	29.2	32.1	34.0	31.9	29.7	26.7	- 2
	3. Consumer	03-98	-35.8	-12.4	10-06	3.9	-3.4	-1.6	-1.7	-5.0	-6.3	-0.8	0.3	3.0	3.3	-0.1	0.3	
	4. Retail trade	02-99	-1.3	14.4	11-07	29.5	12.5	13.5	15.4	11.5	12.6	15.7	11.0	16.6	19.3	20.0	18.1	- 2
	5. Construction	02-99	-54.9	-20.9	01-05	5.3	-38.9	-37.0	-36.4	-31.5	-27.6	-29.7	-24.8	-21.1	-20.7	-21.6	-22.2	-1
	= 6. ESI	01-99	73.0	100.0	02-07	118.2	99.3	101.3	100.5	101.0	101.9	102.8	103.6	106.0	105.1	103.2	102.7	10
DK	1. Industry	02-09	-34.5	-11	09-94	16.7	3.9	-2.8	-9.9	-2.8	-7.0	-10.8	-13.4	-15.9	-16.2	-16.4	-19.3	-
D 11.	2. Services	02-13	-10.4	5.1	05-10	28.4	6.9	6.8	6.1	7.1	4.3	10.9	7.7	5.9	7.9	5.9	5.5	
	3. Consumer	10-90	-11.8	8.0	03-15	21.9	17.4	20.4	19.5	19.8	14.5	16.5	16.7	15.6	16.8	17.3	21.9	
	4. Retail trade	11-11	-11.6	5.0	04-15	17.1	3.8	13.5	4.2	9.4	15.6	12.3	8.6	6.8	9.8	11.8	10.0	
	5. Construction	10-09	-50.0	-10.1	11-06	242	-12.0	-9.6	-7.4	-7.5	-10.0	-11.1	-9.8	-12.4	-15.0	-10.5	-16.8	
	= 6. ESI	02-09	68.3	100.0	05-10	118.1	105.0	102.9	98.6	104.5	99.3	101.1	98.3	94.8	96.8	96.4	95.9	-
D.E.	l. Industry	03-09	42.1	-7.6	02-11	16.0	1.2	-1.3	-0.3	-2.7	-3.1	-41	-3.0	-3.4	-3.0	-3.4	-1.2	-
DE	2. Services	12-02	-19.9	17.8	03-99	50.1	14.6	15.0	12.1	10.6	12.5	15.3	12.6	13.4	12.6	11.7	14.0	
	2. Services 3. Consumer	04-09	-19.9	-8.4	11-10	10.9	5.5	4.3	3.9	0.3	-1.1	-0.7	-1.6	-1.4	0.0	-0.1	3.2	
	4. Retail trade	01-03	-37.4	-11.4	12-90	22.3	-1.1	1.1	-4.1	-4.4	-7.2	-7.5	-9.0	-10.3	-5.4	-4.6	-5.4	
	5. Construction	12-02	-55.4	-27.9	02-90	2.2	-12.4	-9.9	-12.0	-13.0	-11.5	-8.4	<-11.7	-7.2	-10.1	-12.1	-12.5	ic.
	= 6. ESI	03-09	71.8	100.0	08-90	119.2	107.7	106.3	105.8	103.9	103.5	104.2	103.4	103.4	103.5	103.3	105.1	10
EE	1. Industry	03-09	-39.1	2.7	12-06	28.5	-2.0	-3.9	-2.0	-0.5	-3.2	-0.6	0.5	-1.2	-1.3	-2.1	4.1	
	2. Services	02-09	-50.3	10.5	01-06	38.3	0.4	-0.7	-8.7	-1.6	2.1	4.3	4.9	5.6	3.2	-4.6	-10.1	- 2
	3. Consumer	04-93	-56,3	-16.2	04-06	12.8	-5.0	-3.7	-1.4	-4.0	-5.7	-2.7	-0.3	-0.6	-3.4	-B.0	-1.3	
	4. Retail trade	06-09	-45.6	7.8	04-07	35.6	14.1	13.0	10.3	13.8	10.0	14.3	16.6	17.7	9.2	7.0	7.5	
	5. Construction	04-09	-76.0	-1.9	05-06	48.8	-20.0	-29.9	-30.2	-23.6	-24.2	-21.6	-15.6	-17.3	-15.5	-17.2	-21.7	-
	= 6. ESI	03-09	67.8	100.0	09-06	118.1	99.1	98.4	97.7	99.8	99.6	101.6	102.8	101.9	100.6	97.5	96.4	- 5
IE	1. Industry	:	:	:	5)	100	1	100	112		100	1 1	1.1	100	112	- 11	1	
	2. Services	- :				- 10										- 1		
	3. Consumer	05-09	-32.1	-5.4	04-15	20.5	10.0	6.9	11.3	12.0	13.9	15.1	11.8	15.4	17.1	17.5	16.4	- 2
	4. Retail trade		-	- 1		-	1111	-	- income		-	-	- 1	-	-	-	Sec.	
	5. Construction	:33	- 1		3 3	3	1 1	16	14	16	184	16	18	112	112	1.5	1.5	
	= 6. ESI						7.4	7.4	74	17.4	74	7.4	74	7.4	74	1/4	1/4	
EL	1. Industry	03-09	-36.6	-4.1	03-00	13.3	4.9	1.3	1.5	0.3	-5.4	-0.6	13	-3.0	-7.9	-9.2	-10.2	-
	2. Services	10-12	-46.0	10.0	08-00	58.7	6.5	18.4	19.7	22.3	14.8	15.8	21.6	15.3	9.0	4.4	-0.3	
	3. Consumer	10-11	-83.8	-38.7	04-00	-5.8	-50.5	-47.7	-46.1	-54.2	-55.8	-50.9	-49.9	-53.9	-49.3	-30.6	-31.0	-
3943														-35.9 4.7			-51.0	
	4. Retail trade	10-12	-48.4	-2.3	07-07	39.0	-7.4	2.5	4.8	6.6	-2.5	5.0	10.3		-1.0	-3.9		
	5. Construction	08-11	-77.4	-20.4	04-00	32.5	-20.3	-19.1	-19.6	-21.1	-32.7	-21.2	-34.2	-16.6	-29.8	-31.9	-40.0	-
	= 6. ESI	03-09	74.5	100.0	07-00	119.4	99.3	104.2	103.1	102.1	99.3	102.3	102.8	99.1	95.3	98.2	96.8	5
ES	1 Industry	01-93	-43.2	-10.1	11-97	7.1	-6.0	-7.4	-5.7	-5.7	-5.7	-6.0	-4.0	-5.8	4.5	4.3	-0.9	
	2. Services	01-09	-38.7	9.5	06-98	54.0	6.4	12.5	7.0	6.4	13.1	8.5	12.9	20:7	16.4	18.7	17.3	- 1

ca. 25 pages of data annex:

exact figures
 by Member State,
 by sector,
 by survey question

Further information on the Harmonised EU BCS programme

methodological User Guide (March 2014):

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/documents/bcs_user_guide_en.pdf

all time-series free for download:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/time_series/index_en.htm

questionnaires in original languages:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/questionnaire_s/index_en.htm

Thanks for your attention!