



UNITED NATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
STATISTICS DIVISION

**Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics**  
**First meeting**  
**New York, 3-6 December 2007**

*Country Presentation*  
**France**

*Item 14: Data quality*

## The quality assessments in the European practice and their possible inclusion in the IMTS framework

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Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics – 1<sup>st</sup> meeting  
New York, 3-6 December 2007

### “Internal” and “external” quality reports

- › There is a working group “Assessment of quality in statistics” managed by Eurostat, a lot of documents being publicly available on Internet (public Circa);
- › Of which a working document on “Quality assessment of administrative data for statistical purposes” (2003, 6<sup>th</sup> meeting);
- › Of which a “Standard report” declining the content of 7 components of quality (- completeness, + cost and burden) (2003, 6<sup>th</sup> meeting);
- › The synthesis of the EU members “Quality questionnaire” on “International Trade Statistics” is also public.

## Internal : from 'customs data' to 'IMT Statistics'

General recommendations

Suggestions for IMTS

clarity	international legal context, trade system, methods, valuation (collected / estimated)
administrative concepts	regimes, procedures, partner country
coverage	customs vs. statistical territory, thresholds
reference time	entry/leaving of goods or tax declaration
data freshness	policy of revisions and dissemination
errors in the data	techniques of correction, accuracy estimates
completeness	specific lists of IMTS, estimates of missing data
record matching ability	SBS, tax data, go and return for processing
confidentiality	rules, military use, delay for raising confidentiality
compatibility file formats	detailed / aggregated, seasonal adjustments
comparability in time	new events, estimates, policies
envisaged uses	for taxation (adm) or NA, BoP (stat)



## The European quality report: relevance

Microsoft Excel - Quality questionnaire\_FR2007.xls

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2 **1. RELEVANCE OF STATISTICAL CONCEPTS**

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Relevance of statistical concepts means that the data meets users' needs. It refers to whether all statistics that are needed are produced and the extent to which concepts used reflect user needs.

Statistics on the trading of goods, as provided by Eurostat, follow the international recommendations by United Nations Statistics Division (International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions). This general recommendations manual is updated regularly so that it reflects the changes in the environment of international trade. Furthermore, the Intrastat and Extrastat Regulations as well as classifications for international trade are revised regularly in order to take into account the economic and administrative environment as well as users' needs.

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Optional comment

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## The European quality report: accuracy

- › **Thresholds:** Intrastat / Extrastat, exemption / simplification, statistical + invoice values / invoice value;
- › **Non-response:** estimates of missing data;
- › **Statistical value:** ratio statistical / invoice, corrections of statistical;
- › **Revisions:** first/last, detailed/aggregated, Intrastat/Extrastat
- › **Confidentiality:** impact, rules (including delay for raising)

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## The European quality report: timeliness

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3. TIMELINESS

Table 16 : Transmission of detailed and aggregated results, 2005-2006  
Annual median delay (positive) or advance (negative) in working days after the legal deadline

Member State	Aggregated data		Detailed data			
	Intra and extra-EU trade		Intra-EU trade		Extra-EU trade	
	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
FRANCE	-1	0	-28	-28	0	-1

Optional comment:

Source: Eurostat

**COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 1917/2006**  
Art. 12 - Pursuant to Article 13 of the Basic Regulation, Member States shall transmit to the Commission without delay, and no later than six weeks after the end of the reference period, the monthly results of their external trade statistics.

**REGULATION (EC) No 638/2004 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL**  
Art. 12 - Transmission of data to the Commission  
1. Member States shall transmit to the Commission (Eurostat) the monthly results of their statistics relating to the trading of goods between Member States no later than:  
(a) 40 calendar days after the end of the reference month for the aggregated data to be defined in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 14(2),  
(b) 70 calendar days after the end of the reference month in the case of detailed results including the information referred to in Article 9(1), first subparagraph, point (b) to (h).

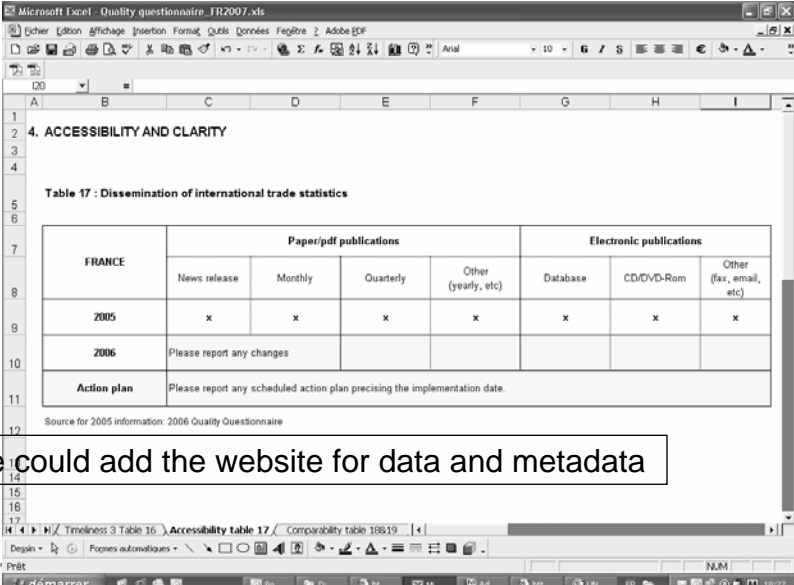
Accuracy 2.5 Tables 11 to 15 / Timeliness 3 Table 16 / Accessibility table 17

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## The European quality report: accessibility



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4. ACCESSIBILITY AND CLARITY

Table 17 : Dissemination of international trade statistics

FRANCE	Paper/pdf publications				Electronic publications		
	News release	Monthly	Quarterly	Other (yearly, etc)	Database	CD/DVD-Rom	Other (fax, email, etc)
2005	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2006	Please report any changes						
Action plan	Please report any scheduled action plan precising the implementation date						

Source for 2005 information: 2006 Quality Questionnaire

We could add the website for data and metadata

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## The European quality report: comparability

### In intra-EU flows:

- › reported arrivals vs. mirror arrivals (from dispatches reported by other EU countries), by countries;
- › reported dispatches vs. mirror dispatches (from arrivals reported by other EU countries), by countries.

## What UN could add: relevance (1)

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1. RELEVANCE

Relevance of national statistics on International Merchandise Trade Statistics is here to be assessed in respect with international recommendations by International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, Rev.3.

4 Chapter I: coverage and recording, main recommendations Yes / No

5 Are customs clearances the main source of your International Merchandise Trade Statistics?

6 Do you use also enterprise administrative declarations?

7 Do you use also enterprise statistical surveys?

Precise in case of enterprise declarations or surveys

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10 Chapter II: trade system, main recommendations Yes / No

11 Do you use the general trade system?

12 If No, do you use the special trade system?

13 The relaxed special trade system (short updated definition by IMTS, Rev.3)?

Precise in case of special trade

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16 Chapter III: commodity classifications, main recommendations Yes / No

17 Do you use the Harmonized commodity description and coding system (including Combined Nomenclature)?

18 Do you use the SITC, Rev.3?

19 Do you use the Classification by Broad Economic Categories?

20 Do you use the International Standard Classification of All Economic Activities (including NACE)?

21 Do you use the Central Product Classification (including CPA)?

Precise in case of other classifications than WCO

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Optional comment

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33 Chapter V: quantity measurements, main recommendations Yes / No

34 Do you use the standard units of quantity recommended by the WCO on the base of SH?

35 Do you report the weight figures on a net weight basis?

36 In the case of HS headings with other standard unit than weight, do you also collect weight?

37 Does the NSI survey "producer's price" at exports and imports?

Precise in case of other standard units than WCO

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40 Chapter VI: partner country, main recommendations Yes / No

41 For imports, do you record the country of origin?

42 Do you follow the relevant provisions of the Kyoto convention for determining country of origin?

43 For exports, do you record the country of last known destination?

Precise in case of other partner countries recorded

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## What UN could add: relevance (2)

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24 Chapter IV: valuation, main recommendations Yes / No

25 Do you value the detailed exports Fob?

26 Do you value the detailed imports Cif?

27 Do you value the detailed imports Fob?

28 Do you make efforts to collect separately data for freight and insurance at the most detailed level possible?

29 Do you use full transaction value for goods: supports of information or software?

30 Do you use monthly official rates of currency conversion?

Optional comment

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33 Chapter V: quantity measurements, main recommendations Yes / No

34 Do you use the standard units of quantity recommended by the WCO on the base of SH?

35 Do you report the weight figures on a net weight basis?

36 In the case of HS headings with other standard unit than weight, do you also collect weight?

37 Does the NSI survey "producer's price" at exports and imports?

Precise in case of other standard units than WCO

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40 Chapter VI: partner country, main recommendations Yes / No

41 For imports, do you record the country of origin?

42 Do you follow the relevant provisions of the Kyoto convention for determining country of origin?

43 For exports, do you record the country of last known destination?

Precise in case of other partner countries recorded

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## What UN could add: coherence & completeness (1)

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Table 12: Goods to be included in the detailed international merchandise trade statistics

Headings	detailed IMTS	Balance Payments	of National Accounts
Non monetary gold	Yes	Id	Id
Unissued banknotes and securities, and coins not in circulation	Yes	Id	Id
Barter trade	Yes	Id	Id
on Government account	Yes	Id	Id
humanitarian aid	Yes	Id	Id
for military use	not public	Yes (total)	Yes (CPF4)
travellers value > threshold	Yes	Id	Id
on consignment	Yes	Id	Id
Carriers of information and softwares	Yes	Id	Id
Goods for processing	Yes	Other source	like IMTS
Transactions between parent corporations	Yes	Id	Id
Returned goods	Yes	Id	Id
Electricity, gas and water	Yes	Id	Id
Goods dispatched through postal or courier services	Yes	Id	Id
Migrants' effects	No	Id	Id
Buffer stock organisations	Yes	Id	Id
under financial lease	Yes	Id	Id
ships, aircrafts and other mobile equipment	Yes	Id	Id
Offshore installations	No	Id	Id
Fish catch and sea products bought from foreign vessels	Yes	Id	Id
Bunkers, stores, ballast and dunnage in the economic zone	No	Yes	Yes (other source)
Empty bottles (except for refilling)	Yes	Id	Id
Waste and scrap with positive value	Yes	Id	Id

Optional comment:

completeness of IMTS

coherence of various statistics on international trade of goods

Completeness of various statistics on international trade of goods

Timeliness / Accessibility / Comparability / Completeness & coherence /

## What UN could add: coherence & completeness (2)

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Table 13: Goods to be excluded from the detailed international merchandise trade statistics

Headings	detailed IMTS	Balance Payments	of National Accounts
Monetary gold	Excluded	Id	Id
Issued banknotes and securities, and coins not in circulation	Excluded	Id	Id
Goods temporarily admitted or dispatched	Excluded	Id	Id
Goods in transit	Excluded	Id	Id
Goods consigned to and from territorial enclaves	Excluded	Id	Id
Non-financial assets	Excluded	Id	Id
Part of trade in services	Some included	Id	Recl. in serv.
Fish caught by national vessels and landed abroad	Excluded	Id	Id
Acquired and relinquished within the comp. country by non-under operational lease	Excluded	Id	Id
Lost or dest. between "export" and "import" (excl. from imp)	Excluded	Id	Id
Empty bottles to be refilled	Excluded	Id	Id
Waste and scrap without positive value	Excluded	Id	Id

Optional comment:

completeness of IMTS

coherence of various statistics on international trade of goods

Completeness of various statistics on international trade of goods

Timeliness / Accessibility / Comparability / Completeness & coherence /

## What UN could add: coherence & completeness (3)

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64 **Table 14: Goods to be excluded from the detailed international merchandise trade statistics but recorded**

65 **separately for the purpose of National Accounts and Balance of Payments**

Headings	detailed IMTS	Balance of Payments	of National Accounts
Mobile equipment that changes ownership abroad	No (except Airbus)	Id	Id
Fish catch sold from national vessels abroad	No	Id	Id
Bunkers, stores, ballast and dunnage abroad	No	Estimated	Other source
Goods purchased by internat. org. located on the ec. territory	No	Id	Id
Goods for repair	Yes	+ other source	like Balance
Illegal trade	No	Id	Id
Lost or dest. between "export" and "import"	No	Id	Id

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75 **Optional comment:**

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completeness of IMTS

coherence of various statistics on international trade of goods

Completeness of various statistics on international trade of goods

Timeliness / Accessibility / Comparability / **Completeness & coherence**

Définir Formes automatiques

## Conclusion

- › Some issues to add to chapter I: thresholds, non-response, coherence or divergence of concepts in IMTS, Rev.3, BPM6, SNA 1993 Rev.1;
- › Recommendation of a structured internal quality report between the customs office and the National Statistical Institute (when this latter compiles IMTS);
- › Recommendation of a structured external quality report for users in general (available on a website);
- › Adaptation of UN surveys to this framework and to what is already available in Eurostat (and OECD).