Asymmetry in foreign trade statistics in Mediterranean partner countries

The mirror exercises carried out in the MEDSTAT II programme proved a powerful instrument for assessing the quality of the trade data, detecting deviations between methodologies and identifying particular problems linked to international trade. In several cases specific action has been taken to change the methodology applied, to widen the coverage and to correct trade data, thereby immediately enhancing data quality and comparability. The efforts made during the project to support closer coordination between administrations, at both national and international levels, have helped to create the conditions for stable and sustainable cooperation between producers of statistics. For details of the study, see attachment.

A huge difference between import value and export value in the comtrade database? Is the reason merely a CIF price basis on the import values, and FOB price basis on the export values?

A CIF and FOB would cause a difference. However, in this case, it might be that many of the major importing countries have reported their data, while many of the major exporting countries had not yet reported their data.

This problem appears to be consistent over many years, which also tells me that many of the major exporters are none reporting countries or that the data are reported hidden, as confidential, under unspecified exports, which would be in chapters 99. Chapter 99 covers all unspecified commodities.

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