E. Combined presentation of international merchandise and trade in services statistics

20.65. The presentation of an integrated set of statistics is recommended by the Statistical Commission, as it will benefit the user by creating a better understanding of the disseminated data and reinforcing messages in favour of evidence-based policy- and decision-making. [1]

20.66. Users expect that trade statistics cover both goods and services and are presented to them as a coherent data set. Such presentation of the data is essential for enabling users to better understand international trade between countries A and B and a country’s export and import profile.

20.67. To meet that user expectation, it is good practice for compilers, in addition to making trade in services statistics available in their own right, to closely cooperate with compilers of international merchandise trade statistics (IMTS) in order to develop a policy of presenting some data on resident/non-resident trade in services and merchandise trade alongside each other (as appropriate), accompanied by an appropriate explanation of their scope, including conceptual overlaps and numerical assessments of such overlaps. It is also good practice to provide guidance on interpreting the data, including examples on how the data can and cannot be used.

20.68. In particular, a combined presentation of the data should be considered, as long as users are informed of the methodological differences behind the figures, and the data are made as comparable as possible beforehand. For further discussion of the methodological differences between trade in services and merchandise trade (e.g., in terms of coverage, timing, valuation and classification) and for adjustments needed to make the data comparable, see annex D. [2]

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