

Exports by enterprise size class

Key facts

- In the majority of countries, more than 50% of total exports are accounted for by enterprises with 250 employees or more. The share of exports provided by the smallest firms (micro enterprises) varies from 3% (in Norway) to 17% (in Denmark).
- Most enterprises are not exporters: in all countries, fewer than 10% of firms are exporters. The propensity to export increases with enterprise size. Across countries, less than 5% of micro-enterprises are exporters while typically half of large enterprises export.
- The average value of export per firm increases with enterprise size; Canada, Germany and the United States have the highest average values.

Relevance

Companies are increasingly engaging in global value chains to generate growth by specialising in specific tasks. Developing policies that allow smaller companies to engage either directly or indirectly into global value chains is high on the policy agenda.

Definitions

Exports refer to the outward flows of goods subtracted from the stock of material resources of a country. Goods simply being transported through a country (goods in transit) or temporarily admitted or withdrawn (except for goods for inward or outward processing) do not add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country and are not included in the international merchandise trade statistics (*International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concept and Definitions 2010*, United Nations).

Figure 2.12 shows the merchandise exports of enterprises in each size class as a percentage of exports of all enterprises. For EU countries the population of the numerator and denominator refers only to enterprises exporting extra-EU.

Figure 2.13 presents the value (in million US dollar) of exports divided by exporting enterprises, by size class.

Comparability

Trade statistics by enterprise characteristics are developed by linking firms identified in trade registers to the same firms in business registers.

In European countries the enterprise is used as the statistical unit, while the establishment is used in Canada and the United States.

For EU member states, data on intra-EU and extra-EU exports are treated separately, owing to different data collection systems and thresholds. For Figure 2.12, total exports are compiled by adding intra-EU and extra-EU exports.

Some differences may also arise due to the way in which countries compile international merchandise trade statistics. The *general trade system*, used by Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Norway, Slovenia, United Kingdom and the United States, is recommended by the International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) manual and includes all goods that cross the national frontier including goods that are imported into and exported from custom-bonded warehouses and free zones. The *general trade system* is in use “when the statistical territory of a country coincides with its economic territory so that imports include all goods entering the economic territory of a compiling country and exports include all goods leaving the economic territory of a compiling country”. The *special trade system* is recommended by Eurostat and covers goods that cross the customs frontier plus goods that are imported into and exported from custom-bonded areas. The *special trade system* is in use when the statistical territory comprises only a particular part of the economic territory.

Data are presented by enterprise size classes of employees.

Data cover ISIC Revision 4 sectors: industry, wholesale, retail trade and repair, and other services. For Israel and Norway data are in ISIC Revision 3.

Source/Online database

OECD Trade by Enterprise Characteristics Database (TEC).

For further reading

Eurostat (2007), “External Trade by Enterprise Characteristics”, Luxembourg.

OECD (2011), “Selling to Foreign Markets: a Portrait of OECD Exporters”, *Statistics Brief No. 16*, www.oecd.org/std/47014723.pdf.

OECD (2010), *Structural and Demographic Business Statistics*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264072886-en>.

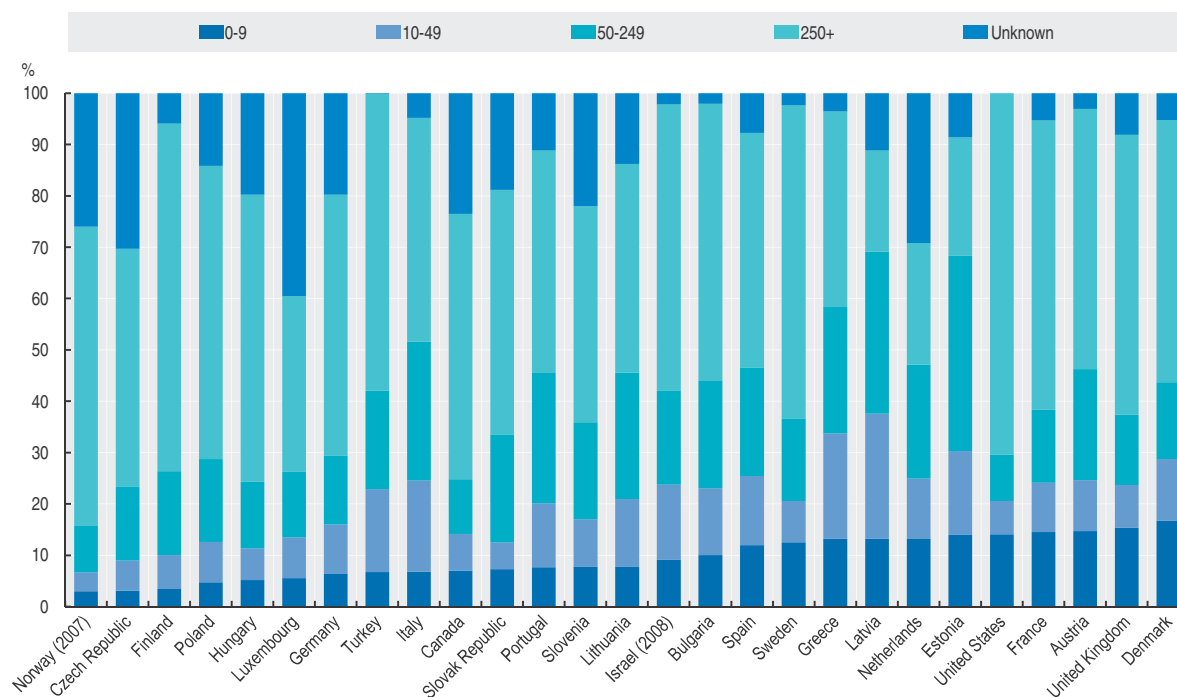
United Nations (2011), *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concept and Definitions 2010* (IMTS 2010), <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/IMTS%202010%20%28English%29.pdf>.

2. STRUCTURAL INDICATORS ON ENTERPRISE POPULATION

Exports by enterprise size class

Figure 2.12. **Exports by enterprise size class**

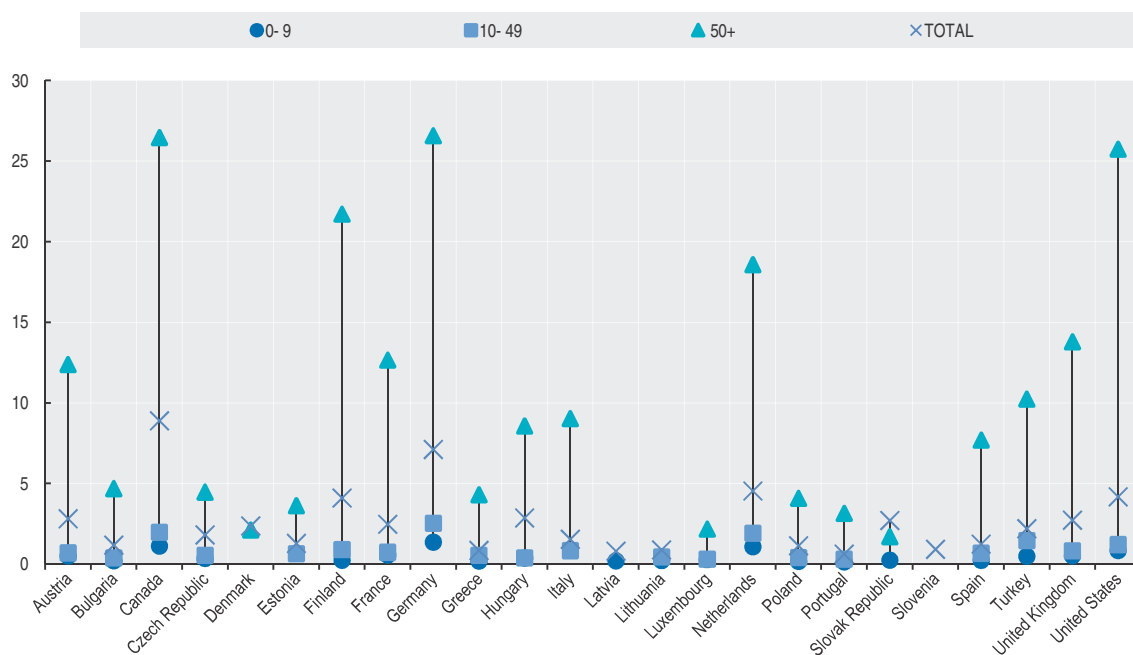
Percentage of exports of all exporting enterprises, values in US dollars, 2010 or latest available year



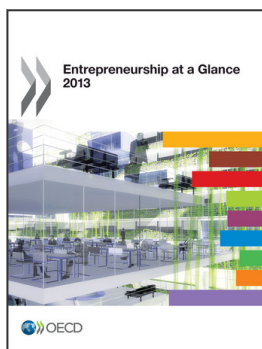
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932828393>

Figure 2.13. **Average value of exports per firm, by enterprise size class**

In million US dollar, 2010 or latest available year



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932828412>



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