

### 3. STRUCTURAL INDICATORS ON THE ENTERPRISE POPULATION

#### Exports by enterprise size class

Exports by enterprise size class describe the contribution of enterprises of different sizes to total exports. This indicator provides information on the importance of small and larger firms in shaping a country's position in the global economy.

##### 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 Goods simply being transported through a country (goods in transit) or temporarily admitted or withdrawn (except for goods for inward or outward processing) do not add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country and are not included in the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.

Figure 3.5 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 3.6 presents the total number of exporters by size class as a percentage of the total number of enterprises in the corresponding size class. The population of the numerator refers only to enterprises exporting extra-EU.

##### Comparability

Trade statistics by enterprise characteristics are developed by linking trade registers and business registers.

The main comparability issue that arises is due to differences in the trade system used by countries to compile international merchandise trade statistics, i.e. *general trade system* and *special trade system*. The *general trade system* 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.

For EU Member States, data on intra-EU and extra-EU exports are treated separately, owing to different data col-

lection systems and thresholds. Total exports are compiled by adding intra-EU and extra-EU exports.

An additional issue concerns the differences in the statistical unit used for the collection of raw data. In European countries the enterprise is used as the statistical unit, while the establishment is used in Canada and the United States.

Data are presented for four enterprise size classes: from 0 to 9 employees; between 10 and 49 employees; between 50 and 249 employees; and equal to or more than 250 employees. Enterprises whose number of employees is not available are grouped in the category "unknown".

For Figure 3.5, the reference year is 2009, except for Israel (2008) and Norway (2007). Data cover ISIC Rev.4 sectors: industry, wholesale, retail trade and repair, and other services, excluding financial services and hotel/restaurants. For Israel and Norway data are in ISIC Rev. 3.

For Figure 3.6, the reference year is 2008. Data cover ISIC Rev.4 sectors: industry, wholesale, retail trade and repair, and other services, excluding financial services and hotel/restaurants.

##### Highlights

In the majority of countries, more than 50% of total exports are accounted for by the enterprises with 250 employees or more. Moreover, the propensity to export increases with the enterprise size: across countries, less than 5% of micro-enterprises are exporters while typically half of large enterprises have an export activity.

##### Source/online databases

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/dataoecd/28/27/47014723.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/28/27/47014723.pdf).

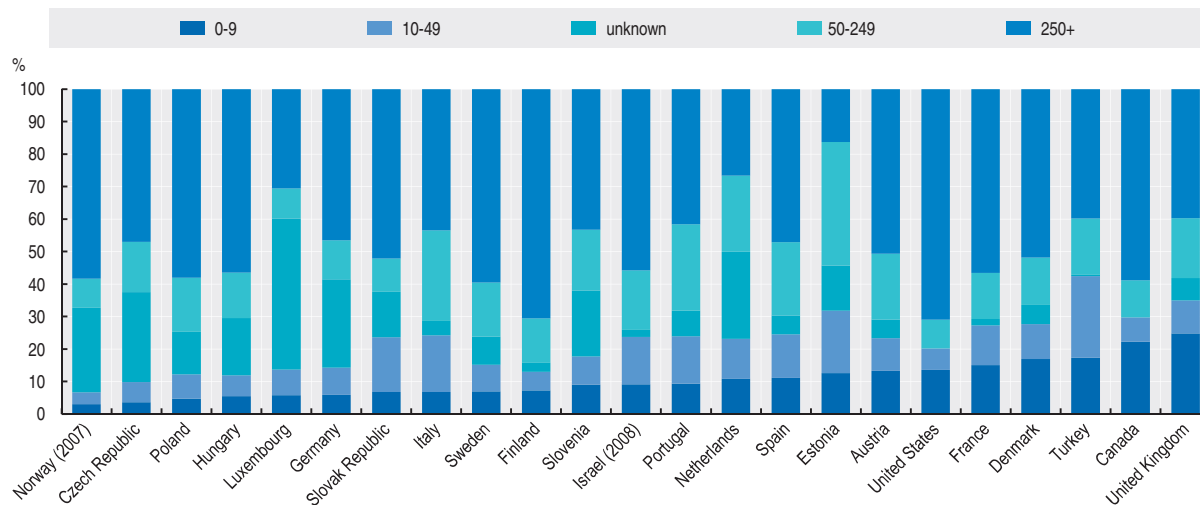
OECD (2010), *Structural and Demographic Business Statistics*, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264072886-en>.

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>.

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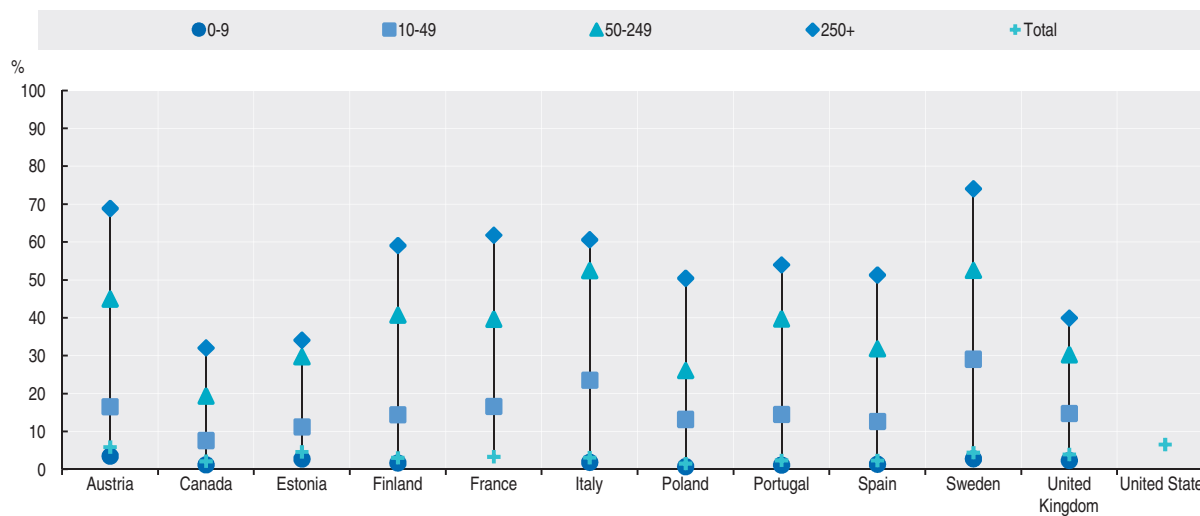
#### Exports by enterprise size class

Figure 3.5 **Exports by enterprise size class, 2009 or latest available year**  
Percentage of exports of all enterprises



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932597068>

Figure 3.6 **Export propensity by enterprise size class, 2008**  
Percentage of exporting enterprises on total enterprises in the corresponding size class



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932597087>



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