

Exports by enterprise size

Key facts

- In the majority of countries, more than 50% of total exports are accounted for by enterprises with 250 employees or more.
- High-value exporters are concentrated among the largest firms. Finland has the biggest gap in the value of average exports between large (more than 50 employees) and small firms (less than 10 employees), while Turkey has the smallest. Across all size classes, Belgium has the highest value of exports per firm.

Relevance

Production has become increasingly fragmented in global value chains. Data on exports and imports by enterprise characteristics can help policy-makers identify instruments that support the international competitiveness of firms of different size and sectors.

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 Goods simply being transported through a country (goods in transit) or temporarily admitted or withdrawn (except for goods for inward or outward processing) do not add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country and are not included in the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 2.17 shows the merchandise exports of enterprises in each size class as a percentage of exports of all enterprises.

Figure 2.18 presents the value (in million US dollar) of exports divided by the number of exporting enterprises, by size classes.

Comparability

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

For the first time in this year's data release, the data for EU member states refer to all exporters, either trading within the EU or outside the EU. In the past, intra-EU and extra-EU trade were treated separately, with a possible double count-

ing of exporters compromising the comparisons with non-EU countries.

Some international differences may 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 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. The category "Unknown" refers to trade flows that cannot be linked to an individual enterprise (and its characteristics) in the business register, either as a result of matching problems or because of substantive reasons (e.g. VAT traders in Europe). When comparing countries in Figure 2.17, it should be kept in mind that the percentage of firms with unknown size class is high in several countries (and particularly in Luxembourg and Belgium).

Source/online databases

OECD Trade by Enterprise Characteristics Database (TEC).

For further reading

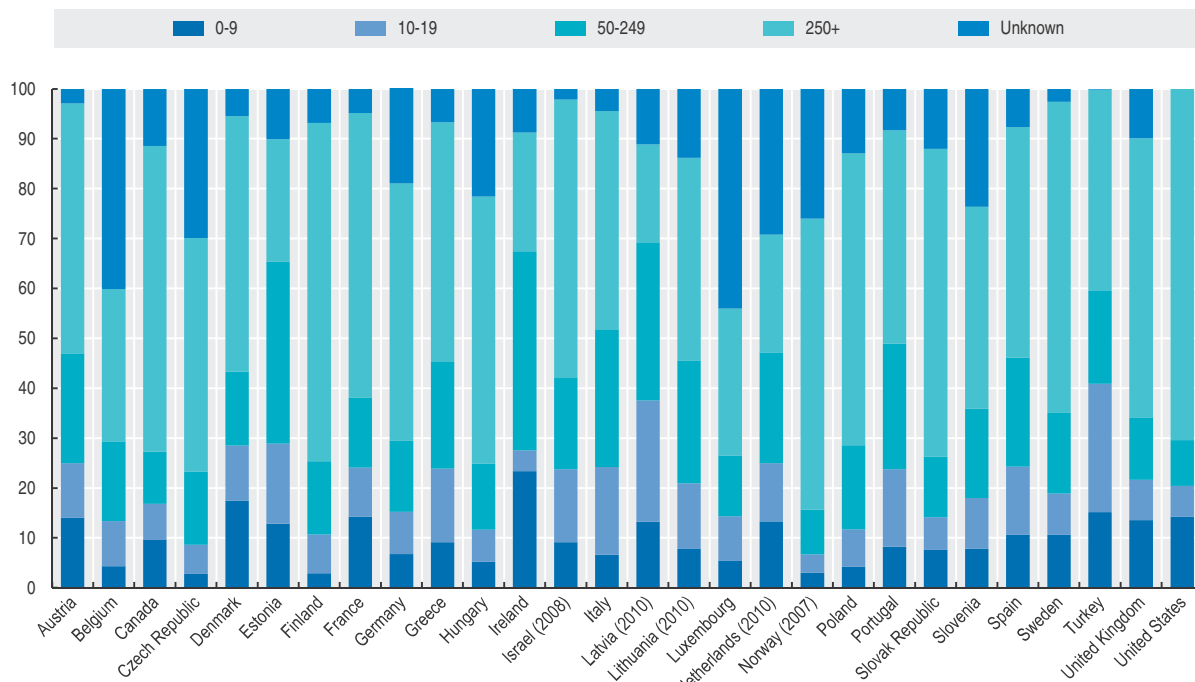
Eurostat (2007), "External Trade by Enterprise Characteristics", Luxembourg.

OECD (2011), "Selling to Foreign Markets: a Portrait of OECD Exporters", Statistics Brief No, 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>.

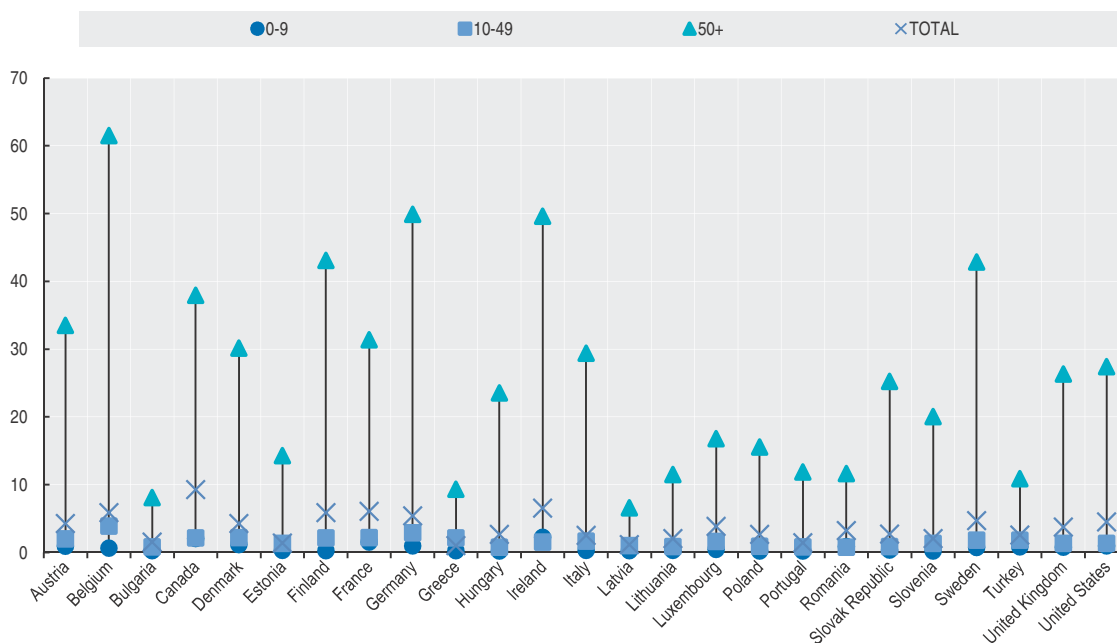
Figure 2.17. **Exports by enterprise size**
Percentage of exports of all exporting enterprises, 2011 or latest available year



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933063575>

Figure 2.18. **Average value of export per enterprise, by enterprise size**

In millions USD, 2011



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933063594>



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