

**External Trade Statistics 2015**  
**National Reference Metadata in Euro SDMX Metadata Structure (ESMS)**  
**National Statistics Office (NSO)**  
**Time Dimension: 2015**  
**Data Flow: COMEXT\_ESMS\_A\_MT**

Concept name	
1 Contact	
1.1 Contact organisation	National Statistics Office (NSO)
1.2 Contact organisation unit	Unit A4: International Trade and Transport Statistics, Directorate A - Economic Statistics
1.3 Contact name	Mr. Anthony Portelli
1.4 Contact person function	Manager
1.5 Contact mail address	National Statistics Office (NSO), Unit A4: International Trade and Transport Statistics, Lascaris, Valletta, VLT2000, Malta
1.6 Contact email address	anthony.portelli@gov.mt
1.7 Contact phone number	+356 2599 7160
1.8 Contact fax number	+356 2599 7205
2 Metadata update	
2.1 Metadata last certified	30/06/2015
2.2 Metadata last posted	30/06/2015
2.3 Metadata last update	30/06/2015
3 Statistical presentation	
3.1 Data description	International trade in goods statistics are an important data source for many public and private sector decision-makers. Data record the monthly trade in terms of arrivals and dispatches of goods as well as the monthly trade in terms of imports and exports. The statistical information is mainly provided by the traders on the basis of Customs (extra-EU) and Intrastat (intra-EU) declarations. Imports/Arrivals are valued on cost, insurance and freight (c.i.f.) basis. Total exports/Dispatches are valued on a free on board (f.o.b.) basis.

	<p>Monthly data, in millions of euro (€), for total exports/dispatches and total imports/arrivals, as well as breakdowns by major categories, are disseminated by the NSO.</p> <p>The NSO also disseminates monthly direction of trade data with nine major regions, namely the European Union, European Free Trade Area, Other Europe, Africa, North and Central America, Caribbean and Bahamas Islands, South America, Asia, Australia and Oceania, and includes also Ships and Aircraft Stores.</p>
<p>3.2 Classification system</p>	<p><u>Product classifications:</u></p> <p>The Combined Nomenclature is the goods classification used within the EU for the purposes of foreign trade statistics. It is also used by Directorate General "Taxation and Customs Union" of the European Commission for customs duty purposes. The classification is maintained by Eurostat for the statistical aspects and by Taxation and Customs Union Directorate General for the tariff aspects.</p> <p>The product classification codes are based on the Combined Nomenclature (CN) which is based on the World Customs Organizations Harmonized System Code (HS). Headings in the CN are identified by means of an eight-digit numerical code the first six of which are in full agreement with the HS code. The very considerable numbers of subdivisions within the CN were introduced with the EU's specific customs and foreign trade statistics requirements in mind. The CN is revised annually and, as a Council Regulation, is binding on the Member States. It appears in all EU official languages.</p> <p>Use of other nomenclatures such as SDG which is part of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC Rev 3). SDG stands for Section, Division and Group; and the United Nations Statistical Divisions BEC code (Broad Economic Categories) for end-use classification and data dissemination purposes. Standard International Trade Classification (SITC Rev.3) used for aggregated data dissemination and analytical purposes. This nomenclature is managed by the United Nations. A link is available from SITC Rev.3 and Rev. 4 to CN. SITC Rev. 3 is a version still used by a number of countries for dissemination purposes.</p> <p><u>Country and region classification:</u> The country nomenclature in use is the Geo-nomenclature (based on the ISO 3166 alpha - 2).</p>
<p>3.3 Coverage - sector</p>	<p><u>System of trade:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>General trade</u></li> </ul> <p>The goods that are imported directly into, or exported directly from, the free circulation area plus goods that are imported into warehouses or re-exported from warehouses are included in the trade statistics as used for reporting and dissemination purposes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Special trade (relaxed definition)</u></li> </ul> <p>Traditionally, special trade is differentiated by either using the strict or the relaxed definition. Malta, follows the relaxed definition, where the goods that cross the boundary of free circulation area as well as the goods that are imported, or exported after, for inward processing, are included. All transactions between foreign countries and customs-bounded warehouses and commercial free zones are excluded. Trade data sent monthly to Eurostat for both Intra and Extra data are in this format. Alternatively, under the strict definition of the special trade system, goods imported for inward processing and goods that enter or leave an industrial or commercial free zone or customs warehouses would not be recorded since they would not have been cleared through customs for home use.</p> <p>Additionally, the following goods and transactions are excluded:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 goods in transit , or being trans-shipped (simply transported or moved from one ship to another),</li> <li>2 personal and household effects except those attracting duty,</li> <li>3 fresh fish caught by Maltese fishing craft,</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 goods sent or received by diplomatic missions in Malta,</li> <li>5 repairs,</li> <li>6 services,</li> <li>7 monetary gold, legal tender (securities, bank notes, coins in circulation),</li> <li>8 advertising materials and commercial samples provided they are not subject to a commercial transaction,</li> <li>9 temporary transactions where no processing is planned or made, and duration is no longer than 24 months,</li> <li>10 emergency aid for disaster areas.</li> </ol> <p>These exclusions are generally in accordance with the international recommendations and therefore do not represent an exception.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Treatment of specific movements of goods are considered as follows:</li> <li>2 Repair of means of transport - Not included.</li> <li>3 Supplies to own armed forces overseas - Not included.</li> <li>4 Industrial plant - Not included.</li> <li>5 Staggered consignments - Not included.</li> <li>6 Bunker supplies - Included.</li> <li>7 Ships stores - Included.</li> <li>8 Joint productions - Not included.</li> <li>9 Postal consignment - Included.</li> <li>10 Vessels and aircraft - Included.</li> <li>11 Deep-sea fishery - Not included.</li> <li>12 Motor vehicle and aircraft parts - Included.</li> <li>13 Installations at sea - Not included.</li> <li>14 Military goods - Not included.</li> <li>15 Petroleum products - Included.</li> </ol>
3.4 Statistical concepts and definitions	Detailed statistics on the trading in goods is collected and disseminated on a monthly basis. The trade value and the quantity are the basic indicators available for all products of the Combined Nomenclature. Recommendations followed: UN International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions (Series M, No 52, and Rev. 2) 1998 and the updated version IMTS 2010.
3.5 Statistical unit	<p>Any natural and legal person lodging a customs declaration in Malta is reporting to the extra-EU trade statistics on the condition that the customs procedure is of statistical relevance.</p> <p>Within intra-EU trade statistics any taxable person carrying out an intra-EU trade transaction is responsible for providing the information.</p> <p>However, small and medium trade operators are exempted from obligation to provide Intrastat declarations. An annual exemption threshold for the arrivals and dispatches of goods to and from Malta and the Member States of the European Union is established by the VAT authorities. Traders and enterprises whose value of annual gross merchandise arrivals and dispatches of goods to and from Malta, falls below this threshold, are exempted from providing supplementary information about their Intra-EU transactions. Traders and enterprises whose value of annual gross merchandise arrivals and dispatches of goods to and from Malta exceeds the said established threshold, have to provide regular information about their transactions. Currently the Exemption Threshold for Malta is 700.</p>
3.6 Statistical population	Trade in goods between Malta and its EU trading partners include all goods which add or subtract from the stock of material resources of Malta by entering (imports) or leaving (exports) its economic territory including goods for processing. Information on the goods is provided by legal or natural person.
3.7 Reference	Since the accession to the EU on May 1, 2004 foreign trade statistics in Malta are made up of Extra and Intra

area	<p>trade statistics covering non-EU and EU trade respectively. Foreign trade statistics are inclusive of both these concepts and are presented as complete to users.</p> <p>Up till the end of April 2004, Customs Declarations were the main source of all International Trade Statistics data. As from May 2004 the Customs Department collects the basic data for non-EU Trade. At the end of each month an electronic extraction of customs declarations covering non-EU movements of goods across the customs territory of the Maltese Islands is transferred to the NSO.</p> <p>Intra-EU Trade data is collected by means of the Supplementary Declaration System. All transactions above the exemption threshold of 700 established by the VAT Department and covering arrivals and dispatches of goods between Malta and the other EU Member States are to be recorded.</p>
3.8 Coverage - Time	Time series of trade data on a consistent basis for most aggregates are available electronically as from 1995. Data for earlier periods are available on paper publications.
3.9 Base period	The previous year is used as a base year for unit value indices calculations.
4 Unit of measure	The value of trade is expressed in euro. The net mass in kg and the quantity in supplementary unit (e.g. m, m <sup>2</sup> , number of items) as defined in the Combined Nomenclature are used to measure the volume of the trade.
5 Reference Period	The data for which the report refers is 2015. Intra-EU and Extra-EU trade data are compiled on a monthly basis. The calendar month during which the customs declaration is accepted by the national authorities on extra-EU trade and for intra-EU trade the calendar month during which VAT becomes chargeable on intra-EU acquisitions.
6 Institutional Mandate	
6.1 Institutional Mandate - legal acts and other agreements	<p>Legal framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Malta Statistics Authority Act, 2000</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Import Duties Act, chap. 337</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Excise Duties Act, 1995</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Value Added Tax Act, 1998</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Legal Notice 131 of 2004 (Value Added Tax (Collection of Supplementary Information), Regulations, 2004)</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Council Regulation (EC) No. 638/2004</a> (Basic Regulation) as amended by Regulation (EC) No. 229/2009 and Council Regulation (EC) No. 1982/2004 (Implementing Regulations) as amended by Regulations (EC) Nos. 1915/2005, 91/2010 and 96/2010 for EU member States;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Council Regulation (EC) No. 471/2009</a> (Basic Regulation) and Council Regulation (EC) No. 1917/2000 (Implementing Regulations) as amended by Regulations (EC) No. 92/2010 and 113/2010 for External Trade.</li> </ul>
6.2 Institutional Mandate - data sharing	<p>Part VIII, Article 39, of the Statistics Act states that:</p> <p>The Director General may:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 on delivery of a notice, request any public authority to allow officers of statistics at all reasonable times to access, to inspect, and to take copies of or extracts from any records in its charge; and</li> <li>2 request any public authority to consult and cooperate with him for the purpose of assessing the potential of the records of the authority as a source of statistical information and, where appropriate and practicable, developing its recording methods and systems for statistical purposes, and the public authority shall comply with any such request, insofar as resources permit.</li> </ol>

	<p>If any public authority intends to carry out activities with statistical implications, it shall consult, for coordination, with the Office and accept any recommendations the Office may make.</p> <p>Formal and informal coordination and agreements between the NSO and other data-producing agencies are in place. A number of examples of cooperation with agencies include the Central Bank of Malta (CBM), the Ministry for Finance, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), the Inland Revenue Department (IRD), and the Customs Department regarding the timely provision of statistics and/or access to their databases.</p>
7 Confidentiality	
7.1 Confidentiality - policy	<p><u>At National level</u>: Confidentiality is one of the major principles guiding the activities of the NSO.</p> <p>Article 40 of the MSA Act stipulates the restrictions on the use of information and in Article 41, the prohibition of disclosure of information. Furthermore, Section IX of the Act (Offences and Penalties) lays down the measures to be taken in case of unlawful exercise of any officer of statistics regarding confidentiality of data. No cases of breaches in the law have been recorded to date.</p> <p>Since its inception, the NSO has always operated within a culture of strict confidentiality to which it is also bound by the provisions of the Data Protection Act. This Act, which came fully into effect on July 15, 2003, seeks to protect individuals against the violation of their privacy by the processing of personal data.</p> <p>Refer also to the NSO policy "Confidentiality of Personal and Commercial Data"  <a href="https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/About_NSO/Documents/NSO_Policies/Confidentiality_of_personal_and_commercial_data.pdf">https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/About_NSO/Documents/NSO_Policies/Confidentiality_of_personal_and_commercial_data.pdf</a>.</p> <p>Further information on access to microdata is available on the NSO's website through:  <a href="https://nso.gov.mt/en/Services/Microdata/Pages/Access-to-Microdata.aspx">https://nso.gov.mt/en/Services/Microdata/Pages/Access-to-Microdata.aspx</a>.</p> <p>During 2009, the NSO has set up a Statistical Disclosure Committee to ensure that statistical confidentiality is observed, especially when requests for microdata are received by the NSO.</p> <p>Upon employment, NSO employees are informed of the rules and duties pertaining to confidential information and its treatment. According to the MSA Act, before commencing work, every employee is required to take an oath of secrecy whose text is included in the Act.</p> <p><u>At European level</u>: Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics (recital 24 and Article 20(4) of 11 March 2009 (OJ L 87, p. 164), stipulates the need to establish common principles and guidelines ensuring the confidentiality of data used for the production of European statistics and the access to those confidential data with due account for technical developments and the requirements of users in a democratic society.</p>
7.2 Confidentiality - data treatment	<p>This Unit applies a passive treatment for confidentiality across the European Statistical System. Upon data transmission to Eurostat no confidential flagging is carried out. As regards data requests to our users and clients, only aggregated data which is not considered as very sensitive and confidential is provided.</p>
8 Release policy	
8.1 Release calendar	<p>The NSO News Releases are covered by a pre-announced release calendar including the current month and the subsequent two. Only in the occurrence of unforeseen circumstances, News Releases appearing in the NSO calendar are subject to deferral. National data become visible on Eurostat's online database usually one to two days after their reception (processing including quality monitoring).</p>

8.2 Release calendar access	<a href="http://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx">http://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx</a> .
8.3 Release policy - user access	<p>In line with the Malta Statistics Authority Act 2000 and the European Statistics Code of Practice, the National Statistics Office disseminates statistics on its official website respecting professional independence, objectivity, transparency in which all users are treated equitably. In fact, the mission of the office is to produce efficiently and with minimum burden on respondents high-quality statistics that are relevant, reliable and comparable, and to disseminate them in an impartial, independent and timely manner, making them available simultaneously to all users. The news release calendar is made known to users at least three months in advance. In the case of SDDS, this is available four months in advance. Changes to news release dates are implemented immediately as specified in the NSO Policy on Dissemination:</p> <p><a href="http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/About_NS0/Documents/NSO_Policies/Dissemination_07_2014.pdf">http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/About_NS0/Documents/NSO_Policies/Dissemination_07_2014.pdf</a>.</p>
9 Frequency of dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly News Release</li> <li>• Monthly Transmission of Aggregated data to Eurostat</li> <li>• Monthly Transmission of detailed data to Eurostat for Intra-EU and Extra-EU trade</li> <li>• Annual transmission of data to Eurostat covering Trade with Enterprise Characteristics</li> <li>• Bi-annual transmission of Extra-EU Trade classified by the invoicing currency used. Customs collect this information for Imports only and an ad hoc survey of Exporters is necessary to collect the data</li> <li>• Annual transmission of trade data to the United Nations Statistics Division</li> </ul>
10 Dissemination format	
10.1 Dissemination format - News release	<p>The monthly news release "International Trade" is available electronically free of charge in PDF and spreadsheet format on the NSO website:</p> <p><a href="http://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/View_by_Unit/Unit_A4/International_Trade_and_Transport_Statistics/Pages/International-Trade.aspx">http://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/View_by_Unit/Unit_A4/International_Trade_and_Transport_Statistics/Pages/International-Trade.aspx</a>.</p>
10.2 Dissemination format - Publications	<p>A set of selected indicators on trade data is included in an annual compendium named Malta in Figures. The publication can also be accessed from NSOs website by making use of the following link:</p> <p><a href="http://nso.gov.mt/en/publicatons/Publications_by_Unit/Pages/D2-External-Cooperation-and-Communication.aspx">http://nso.gov.mt/en/publicatons/Publications_by_Unit/Pages/D2-External-Cooperation-and-Communication.aspx</a>.</p>
10.3 Dissemination format - online database	<p>No information about trade statistics is available through the online statistical database (<a href="#">StatDb</a>).</p>
10.4 Dissemination format - microdata access	<p>Not available.</p>
10.5 Dissemination format - other	<p>Ad hoc reports for imports/exports data are disseminated (in various formats) by the External Cooperation and Communication Unit and are subject to cost-recovery charges. Data can be made available at different levels and various formats according to the needs of the user. Such information can be requested through <a href="https://nso.gov.mt/en/Services/Pages/Request-for-Information.aspx">https://nso.gov.mt/en/Services/Pages/Request-for-Information.aspx</a>.</p>
11 Accessibility of documentation	

<p>11.1 Documentation on methodology</p>	<p>A detailed statement on the methodology used for the compilation of international trade data is disseminated on the NSO website at:  <a href="http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_A4/International_Trade_and_Transport_Statistics/Pages/External-Trade-Statistics.aspx">http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_A4/International_Trade_and_Transport_Statistics/Pages/External-Trade-Statistics.aspx</a>.</p> <p>Guidelines for the implementation of trade statistics are available online and can be downloaded from:  <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64445/4439642/Guidelines_2013-EN/d24a9909-b5b4-4d02-95a4-5c31514b1de9">http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64445/4439642/Guidelines_2013-EN/d24a9909-b5b4-4d02-95a4-5c31514b1de9</a>.</p>
<p>11.2 Quality management - documentation</p>	<p>Eurostat Quality questionnaire on an annual basis. This questionnaire is related to quality issues and is provided to Member States by Eurostat.</p>
<p>12 Quality management</p>	
<p>12.1 Quality assurance</p>	<p>The MSA Act, Article 10, item (c) states that the NSO shall supply the information necessary to evaluate the quality of official statistics, and make accessible to the public the methods used for their production, and how the principles, under which such statistics are gathered, are compiled with.</p> <p>The focus on quality is also evident from the NSOs mission statement: To produce efficiently and with minimum burden on respondents high-quality statistics that are relevant, reliable and comparable, and to disseminate them in an impartial, independent and timely manner, making them available simultaneously to all users.</p> <p>Management is sensitive to all dimensions of quality and in all areas of its work, it gives increased consideration to the accuracy of data released to the public with clear methodological notes explaining the processes involved in the collection and production of official statistics. Processes are in place to monitor adequately the quality of compiled and disseminated statistics. The NSO regularly undertakes data checks for coverage, classification, and missing data. In addition, it monitors the internal consistency of source data and consistency across source datasets. It notes and investigates all unusual movements in the source data received. The advance release calendar ensures that all deadlines are met, and quality statistics are compiled and disseminated.</p> <p>The NSO discusses quality aspects of statistics in its annual planning meetings and follow-up meetings. Moreover, as an EU member country, Malta monitors methodology, quality standards, and outputs through regular reporting.</p> <p>Articles 7 and 10 of the MSA Act stipulate the functions and processes necessary to deal with quality considerations in planning the statistical program of the NSO.</p>
<p>12.2 Quality management - assessment</p>	<p>The data can be considered of good quality as various data quality checks and validations are applied to our data at different stages of the data processing. These include various checks and validations at the data entry stage through our online Supplementary Declaration System; built in data validations in our Schema XML file which is provided to our users who want to bulk upload their data in our systems; continuous and ongoing data vetting of the Providers of Statistical Information (PSI's) microdata including the value per item and value per kilo checks. Furthermore, in-depth macro data analysis is also conducted on a regular basis which involves various data checks and data extracts from our systems, and the comparison of the levels of imports and exports between same reference months in different years and comparisons between the same annual periods in different years by chapter.</p>
<p>13 Relevance</p>	
<p>13.1 Relevance -</p>	<p>The list of users includes: Eurostat, Ministry for Finance, Economic Policy, Central Bank, students and</p>

User Needs	researchers, private individuals, and NSO users including, National Accounts, Agricultural and Fisheries Unit and Balance of Payments.
13.2 Relevance - User Satisfaction	<p>A user satisfaction survey was carried out by the NSO to measure the degree with which it meets its obligations towards its users. The survey was held in 2014, and results for the total statistical output for Unit A4 (International Trade and Transport Statistics) were as follows:</p> <p><u>News Releases:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality 63.3 % high/good</li> <li>• Timeliness 82.8 % timely</li> <li>• Usefulness 78 % useful</li> </ul> <p><u>Requested data:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality 59.8 % high/good</li> <li>• Frequency 16.7 % regular</li> <li>• Timeliness 76.5 % timely</li> </ul> <p>A dedicated news release outlines main results from this survey, and can be accessed through:  <a href="http://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/View_by_Unit/Unit_01/Methodology_and_Research/Pages/User-Satisfaction-Survey.aspx">http://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/View_by_Unit/Unit_01/Methodology_and_Research/Pages/User-Satisfaction-Survey.aspx</a>.</p>
13.3 Completeness	Malta compiles the EU trade statistics which are based on the EU legislation which is directly applicable in the Member States. In particular, the legislation includes a clear and precise list of all the statistical variables to be provided by the Member States to Eurostat. All the mandatory variables are provided by the NSO.
14 Accuracy	
14.1 Accuracy - overall	<p>As intra-EU trade statistics stem from Intrastat declarations by the traders, a main source of error that affects accuracy of intra-EU data is late or non-response. Intra-EU as well as extra-EU trade data accuracy is also affected by specific characteristics of this statistical field, such as the exemption thresholds applicable in order to reduce the burden on enterprises.</p> <p>As intra-EU trade statistics stem from Intrastat declarations by the traders, a main source of possible error that affects accuracy of intra-EU data is late or non-response. Intra-EU as well as extra-EU trade data accuracy is also affected by specific characteristics of this statistical field, such as the exemption thresholds applicable in order to reduce the burden on enterprises.</p> <p>Whilst complete coverage can be achieved with the use of estimates, the NSO is not currently making any estimates since it is difficult to have a clear pattern of certain movements of goods such as fuel and trade in vessels and aircraft. However, the NSO is currently in the process of exploring the introduction of estimates to minimise as much as possible the differences between first and final data.</p>
14.2 Sampling error	Not applicable. Malta's trade statistics are based on the EU Intrastat system for the intra-EU trade and on the customs clearance system for the extra-EU trade. Thus, international trade in goods statistics are not affected by sampling errors.
14.3 Non-sampling error	Not available (in quantified terms). Possible sources of non-sampling errors include: misclassification of commodity codes, non response, late response, data entry errors and treatment of specific movements of trade.
15 Timeliness and punctuality	



15.1 Timeliness	Trade data covering both Intra-EU and Extra-EU are disseminated about 40 days after the end of the reference month.
15.2 Punctuality	Considering News Releases related to International Trade, disseminated between June 2012 and June 2015, 2 out of 37 were late i.e. released after 11.10am.
16 Comparability	
16.1 Comparability - geographical	<p>One characteristic of international trade statistics is that they are not compiled on the balance sheet principle. Consequently, when exports from country A to country B are compared with imports to country B from country A, these figures may not match due to the adoption of different trade systems in use, and methodological aspects. Once asymmetries are identified and measured through a mirror analysis, further expert studies and analytical work are initiated to identify the main causes. Some of the causes may be easy to detect and correct while for some cases it may be harder to pinpoint. In any cases, data corrections and/or changes in methodologies and practices require the Member States involved to perform the asymmetry analysis jointly, to agree on the asymmetry causes and on the corrections/adjustments carried out in their respective data. Such an exercise between Member States is called a reconciliation exercise.</p> <p>Results from these studies carried out in-house or by Eurostat are not always easy to carry out as the asymmetry itself can be attributed to several factors; the identification of which is quite resource dependent. One of Malta's main drawback in resolving asymmetries with other member States is the level of thresholds in the other partner country which would include estimates for below the threshold trade with Malta in that particular Member State. Nevertheless, asymmetry exercises serve to indicate where potential discrepancies can be discovered. A study on asymmetries to include Malta's main EU partners was carried out in 2010. Malta's asymmetry levels with the other Member States, especially when compared to those of all other Member States, may be viewed as being of a relatively negligible nature. However, for national purposes, Malta makes every effort to improve the situation.</p> <p>A number of revisions covering Maltese trade data for the 2008/2009 period were discovered in the course of a similar asymmetry study which identified and corrected a number of asymmetry cases. In this context, it is encouraging to note that the total asymmetry levels for 2009 are less than the levels calculated at the end of this study for the 2008 period. In fact the absolute asymmetry situation for 2009 shows that arrivals are under reported by -816.5m and dispatches by -645.7m. As at the end of this study, the revised total absolute asymmetry level for 2008 stood at -858.9m and -964.8m for arrivals and dispatches respectively. Moreover, the percentage share of the total 2009 absolute asymmetries of seven EU Member States particularly Italy, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Denmark, the Netherlands and Cyprus has gone down to 78.8% in arrivals when compared to 83.7% in 2008. Similarly, the percentage share for dispatches has also improved from 83.3% to 68.6%.</p>
16.2 Comparability - over time	Changes due to definitions, coverage or methods and other changes have an impact on the continuity of international trade series. The impact of the different methodological and practical changes that have occurred in recent years (enlargement of the EU, changes in the Intrastat and Extrastat legislation, changes in product nomenclatures, etc.) is difficult to assess precisely. In particular the accession of new Member States to the EU may cause problems to the comparability over time since it implies for the acceding country a change from an administrative data source (Extrastat) to a purely statistical data collection system (Intrastat). This may have an impact on the accuracy of statistics at detailed level. Time series of trade data on a consistent basis for most aggregates are available electronically as from 1995. Data for earlier periods are available on paper publications.
17 Coherence	
17.1 Coherence - cross domain	Apart from the international trade statistics, information on trade flows can be found in National Accounts, Business Statistics and Balance of Payments. The compilation of the data and the production of the above

	<p>mentioned statistics follow the recommendations (sources and methods) of different international organisations, i.e. Eurostat, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations (UN), etc. The Quality Report on International Trade Statistics published by Eurostat documents the main differences between these sources in terms of concepts and definitions, statistical unit or object, classification (nomenclature) used, geographical breakdown, reference period and correction methods. This quality report can be accessed from:</p> <p><a href="http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3888793/6182577/KS-TC-14-009-EN-N.pdf/fc46caf3-5c6d-4359-af64-af0a0952e231">http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3888793/6182577/KS-TC-14-009-EN-N.pdf/fc46caf3-5c6d-4359-af64-af0a0952e231</a>.</p> <p>Adjustments from international trade data to balance of payments merchandise data are also disseminated by the NSO in its annual National Accounts publication.</p>
17.2 Coherence - internal	<p>Considerable component detail is disseminated along with the totals for both exports and imports to permit assessment of reasonableness. The monthly news release covering international trade includes data which is consistent across different classifications. The news release includes tables which cover Balance of Trade by quarter, annual/monthly/year to date and quarterly trade by final use (BEC, [Broad Economic Categories]), balance of trade classified by 1st digit SITC rev 3, direction of trade for the reference month and year to date of the current and previous period, and trade by principal trading commodities classified by the CN chapter.</p>
18 Cost and Burden	<p>The human resources involved in compiling International Trade Statistics include one manager, one Principal Statistician, three Senior Statisticians, one Statistician, one Assistant Statistician, and one Senior Statistics Executive.</p>
19 Data revision	
19.1 Data revision - policy	<p>Data are revised frequently according to national needs and practices. They become normally final from six months up to more than one year after the reference year. Revisions to older data are also possible. Malta sends the revised data to Eurostat and publishes it to its users, as soon as it becomes available. The NSO's policy on the revision of official statistics is available on the official website:</p> <p><a href="http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/About_NS/Documents/NSO_Policies/Revisions_of_Official_Statistics.pdf">http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/About_NS/Documents/NSO_Policies/Revisions_of_Official_Statistics.pdf</a>.</p>
19.2 Data revision - practice	<p>Monthly, annual and quarterly data which are published in the monthly news release are marked as provisional and revisions are reflected in the next available news release. Revisions and methodological changes of a substantial nature are referenced in the methodological notes section at the end of each news release. Data which is still provisional and subject to changes due to corrections, revisions or methodological changes, is marked accordingly. Revision studies and analyses are undertaken as needed.</p>
20 Statistical processing	
20.1 Source data	<p>The source of international trade data covering non-EU countries is the Customs Administration, which provides an electronic extract of customs declarations data to the NSO. The data is collected by an automated system which replaced ASYCUDA (Automated SYstem for CUstoms Data). The current system in use since May 2004 is designated as Customs Electronic System (CES/MEX) covering both Imports and Exports. This system handles all customs declarations where both importers and exporters are obliged by law to report using electronic data transmission all their transactions with non-EU countries.</p> <p>Intrastat: direct company declaration:</p> <p>The Supplementary Declaration System (Intrastat) is used to collect trade data covering transactions between EU Member States. Arrivals cover goods that are produced in the EU or which are in free circulation with respect to EU Customs Law that are received in Malta, while dispatches record the same designated community goods that are sent to other Member States.</p>

	<p>Traders who annually exceed the exemption threshold of 700 are to submit their monthly declarations within 10 working days after the end of the reference month. Most traders follow the NSOs recommendation to declare on a per consignment basis. Failures to declare in time or not at all are checked and noted by the VAT Department which according to the VAT regulation can initiate a regulatory offence procedure which may result in a fine for defaulters. Data providers can submit their information in one of the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Electronically through a web-based form. Traders opting for this practice will be provided with their own username and password that would allow them to compile and transmit their data in a highly confidential manner and within a very secure environment.</li> <li>2 In hard copy format to the relative Supplementary Information Collection Offices at the Customs Department, Valletta or the Customs Section at the Malta International Airport or directly to the NSO. The Customs Department has been appointed as a Supplementary Information Collection Office for this purpose by the VAT Department.</li> </ol>
20.2 Frequency of data collection	Monthly.
20.3 Data collection	For data related to Non-EU trade the data is available and complete at the end of each month. Data is extracted electronically from Customs by the NSO. For the Intrastat system the data is mostly collected online and is available quite early due to the prevailing per consignment usage of the system.
20.4 Data validation	<p>Validations at data source are carried out by the Customs Electronic System (CES) and Intrastat System on the most important data elements that are required. These include the verification and validation of the Combined Nomenclature (CN) for Intra-EU trade data and the Taric code for Extra-EU data, the country information and the value. The Taric code is made up of the CN 8 digit code plus another two digits. Additionally to this NSO staff review and analyze the plausibility of the data by checking the statistical value and weight of each commodity. All records are checked for correctness with various IT tools and statistical concepts. Other validations at entry point include validations on the statistical and invoice value, the period covered, Nature of Transaction, Mode of Transport, Terms of Delivery, and additional requirements of the CN code in terms of Net Mass and Supplementary Quantity.</p>
20.5 Data compilation	<p>A detailed statement on the methodology used for the compilation of international trade data is disseminated on the NSO website: at:  <a href="http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_A4/International_Trade_and_Transport_Statistics/Pages/External-Trade-Statistics.aspx">http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_A4/International_Trade_and_Transport_Statistics/Pages/External-Trade-Statistics.aspx</a>.</p>
20.6 Adjustment	<p>Adjustments to improve coverage are applied to some categories of specific movements such as the inclusion of trade in sea vessels and aircraft which by their nature may never cross the local customs borders. Additional information is checked with national registers for ships and aircraft.</p> <p>No seasonal adjustments are applied. Likewise, no adjustments are made for grossing or netting procedures. Additionally, all VAT registered persons who do not exceed the established annual threshold of 700 of arrivals/dispatches, are exempt from the provision of International Trade data. However, also in this case, no adjustments are made.</p>
21 Comment	Not applicable.