Microdata Exchange in Intrastat

Since January 2022, the EU Regulation on European Business Statistics, Regulation (EU) 2019/2152, has been in force. It requires the statistical authorities of the Member States to exchange microdata on exports of goods between EU countries.

The purpose of the microdata exchange (MDE) is to improve the quality of statistics on trade between EU Member States while at the same time reducing the reporting burden on businesses. Through this exchange, one Member State can use another Member State's export data as a source for compiling import statistics.

Today, the microdata exchange is an established part of the EU statistical system for trade in goods. The exchange takes place on a monthly basis between Member States in accordance with common technical and legal provisions established within the framework of European Business Statistics.

The objectives of the modernisation of Intrastat are to:

- reduce the administrative burden on businesses,
- ensure high quality and accessibility of the statistics,
- create more efficient and flexible production methods for national statistical authorities.

Experience from the first years of implementation shows that the microdata exchange can serve as an important source for compiling import statistics. Several Member States have already been able to reduce or simplify the collection of import data by combining microdata received from other Member States with national data sources. In Sweden, MDE data has started to be used for estimating trade below the import threshold, contributing to improved quality of the statistics at both country and commodity group level. In the future, the objective is to reduce the reporting burden on businesses reporting imports by raising the import threshold.

The microdata exchange is based on the principle that the same information should not need to be collected more than once. Since one country's exports correspond to another country's imports, data that has already been collected for export statistics can be used by the receiving country for statistical purposes. Export data has generally been shown to be of high quality and is therefore well suited as a source for the compilation of import statistics.

All statistical authorities participating in the exchange are required to implement the necessary legal, organisational and technical safeguards to ensure the confidentiality and protection of the exchanged microdata.

Further information

- Regulation (EU) 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Business Statistics. Regulation - 2019/2152 - EN - EUR-Lex
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1225 laying down the arrangements for data exchange between Member States. Legislation - International trade in goods - Eurostat