

Background Quality Report

Vehicle & Aircraft Holdings within the scope of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty

1. Introduction

Overview

This is an annual publication which provides information on equipment holdings of the United Kingdom and other nations within the scope of the [Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty](#) (CFE), as at 1 January each year. Within this publication, Tables 4.02.01 to 4.02.03 show UK holdings of vehicles and aircraft in the UK, Germany, Cyprus and Gibraltar within the scope of the CFE Treaty, at 1 January from 2008 to 2015. The declared holdings and ceilings for a selection of countries in, and not in NATO at 1 January from 2010 to 2015 are also shown (Tables 4.02.04 to 4.02.08). All the tables are National Statistics.

It should be noted that under the terms of the CFE Treaty, all participating states are required to exchange information on their equipment holdings annually with all other participating states. These data are exchanged no later than 15th December and is valid as at 1st January the following year. Therefore the figures in this publication have been available to all other participating states since 15th December.

Methodology and Production

To produce this publication, data are received annually from the Joint Arms Control Implementation Group (JACIG). The data supplier provides figures derived from the CFE Data Exchange, specifically Chart IIA, IIB, IIIA and IIIB. The tables within these Charts are compiled annually via a census, which is sponsored by JACIG. JACIG directs all UK Military Formations and Units to provide detailed information on their conventional armaments and equipment holdings on a regular basis. This information is sourced by JACIG primarily to meet the data requirements of the CFE Treaty, The Vienna Document 2011(VD11) and The Global Exchange of Military Information (GEMI).

Contact details

The Head of Defence Statistics (Web Development & Surveys) is the responsible statistician for this publication:

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Defence Statistics welcome feedback on this Background Quality Report or any of the statistics mentioned. Statistical outputs produced by Defence Statistics can now be found on the [Statistics at MOD page](#)¹ of GOV.UK.

2. Relevance

The information in this bulletin has a wide range of users including CFE participating states, the media, politicians, academic researchers and the general public who use the information to:

- understand the size and organisation of the UK's Armed Forces holdings in Europe under the scope of the CFE treaty;
- set the context for other information on Defence;
- assist in understanding the impact of changes in Defence policy.

This publication contributes to the public accountability of the MOD, and whilst internal systems may be sufficient for internal use, publication in report format makes this information available publicly, regularly and as a time series. It is the only place in the public domain where information on the holdings and ceilings of the UK Armed Forces, within the scope of the CFE Treaty, are brought together in a coherent document. Furthermore, definitions and other information have been included so that the data are set in context and can be understood by a lay audience as well as those with professional interests.

3. Accuracy

The figures are taken from a live Consolidated Matrix, which is updated by all UK Military Formations and Units throughout the year, in order to account for any changes to the number of conventional armaments and equipment during this period. This is to ensure that an accurate account of the armaments and equipment subject to the numerical limitations (and those subject to information exchange) as set out in the Treaty is given to participating states at the annual exchange of information in December of each year.

The data is error checked by the military Chain-of-Command and by the JACIG, who are responsible for the collation and dissemination of the data to signatory states of each Treaty / Agreement, and so is considered to be of good quality. It has also been subjected to manual validation by Government statisticians, to check for inconsistencies and trends in the data.

4. Timeliness and Punctuality

As a National Statistic, the release date for this publication was pre-announced on the [MOD's Calendar of Upcoming Releases](#)² section of GOV.UK.

Following guidance from an assessment carried out by the UK Statistics Authority on UKDS, the different chapters of UKDS were separated in 2013 and released as individual publications. This was to allow information on various topics to be published as soon as the data is available, rather than waiting for all the other chapters to be completed, as was the case with previous editions of UKDS. A key benefit of this change is that timeliness of the statistics is improved, reducing the amount of time between the reference date of the statistics and the time of release. Furthermore, the timeliness of this publication has improved for the second successive year, being published a month earlier, in April 2015, compared to 2014 when it was released in May.

Each year the tables in this bulletin are updated to include the latest annual data, as at 1 January each year.

5. Accessibility and Clarity

The report is published on the [Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Equipment Holdings Statistics page](#)³ on GOV.UK as a PDF document. The tables are available as an Excel file to enable the figures to be reused.

A brief introduction to the publication is provided on the front page, which also informs the user that this publication updates figures previously released in 2014. A summary of key points and trends, a link to the Background Quality Report and the contact details of the responsible statistician are also presented on the front page. This is followed by a key findings section which includes a graphical representation of some of the statistics, provides further detail about the trends in the data and draws attention to contextual information that has affected these trends. The background information section assists with the accessibility and clarity of this publication by setting out the context of the statistics, providing definitions and explanations of the terms used and the coverage of the CFE Treaty.

6. Coherence and Comparability

The tables that contain information on UK vehicle and aircraft holdings in the UK, Germany, Cyprus and Gibraltar within the scope of the CFE Treaty (4.02.01 to 4.02.03), provide a time series for years 2008 to

2015, as at 1 January each year. International comparisons of holdings and ceilings (Tables 4.02.04 to 4.02.08) are also provided as a time series as at 1 January each year for 2010 to 2015.

7. Trade-offs between Output Quality Components

None identified.

8. Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

The MOD has previously held regular consultation meetings with users of Defence Official Statistics, which provided a forum for user feedback on their needs and perceptions. Proposed changes were set out at the consultation meetings in order to gain feedback from both internal and external users. More recently in February 2015, a [public consultation](#)⁴ was held on the MOD's Draft Statistics Plan. The MOD invites users to provide feedback to the statistical output teams on any of their publications or reports using the contact information on the front of the publication.

9. Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

This output is produced from the administrative data provided by the MOD. The benefit of publishing these statistics is that outputs from these data are placed in the public domain and as National Statistics in a way that ensures their independence from political interference and adherence to quality standards. The small burden that this places on the data suppliers is considered to be worthwhile to achieve this and the consequent public accountability provided by their publication.

10. Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

All staff involved in the production process have signed the Data Protection Act and all MOD, Civil Service and data protection regulations are adhered to. All data are stored, accessed and analysed using the MOD's restricted network and IT systems.

We adhere to the principles and protocols laid out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#)⁵ and comply with pre-release access arrangements. The [Pre-Release Access List](#)⁶ is available online.

11. References

	Reference	Website Location
1	Statistics at MOD Homepage	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics
2	MOD's Timetable of Future Releases of National and Official Statistics	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mod-timetable-for-future-releases-of-national-and-official-statistics
3	Publication Homepage on GOV.UK	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/conventional-armed-forces-in-europe-equipment-holdings-statistics-index
4	Consultation on MOD's Draft Statistics Plan	https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ministry-of-defence-draft-statistics-plan
5	Code of Practice for Official Statistics	http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf
6	Pre-release Access List	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-statistics-pre-release-access-list

Last updated: 23 April 2015