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2017 UK VAT Registered Importer and Exporter Population – Trade in Goods (Final)

Summary

This article breaks down the UK's Value Added Tax (VAT) registered business population for 2017, explaining the numbers of VAT registered businesses who have declared import or export trade in goods to HMRC with EU and Non-EU countries, and the combination therein. These business counts are the final figures for 2017 data, following provisional release in April 2018.

Data sources

The unique business count for UK VAT registered businesses trading in goods with EU countries has been collected from VAT data and the Intrastat survey. All VAT registered businesses must submit VAT returns, which include values of EU trade. Businesses whose annual value of imports and exports of goods from/to EU countries exceed a given value threshold (EU imports: £1.5 million, EU exports: £250,000) are required to provide a more detailed Intrastat declaration each month.

The business count for UK VAT registered businesses trading in goods with Non-EU countries has been collected from customs declarations presented to HMRC using the Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system.

These counts do not include businesses trading below the VAT registration threshold.

Table 1: UK's VAT registered importer and exporter population for trade in goods in 2017 by partner country

Trade Pattern	No. of Businesses
With EU Member States Only	144,000
With Non-EU Countries Only	77,000
With Both EU & Non-EU	72,000
Total EU	217,000
Total Non-EU	150,000
Total	294,000

Source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics

Notes:

1. Values rounded to nearest thousand

Table 2: UK's VAT registered importer and exporter population for trade in goods in 2017 by flow of trade

Trade Pattern	No. of Businesses
Only Importing	139,000
Only Exporting	58,000
Importing and Exporting	96,000
Total Importers	236,000
Total Exporters	155,000
Total	294,000

Source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics

Notes:

1. Values rounded to nearest thousand

2. Importing refers to both EU and Non EU imports and Exporting refers to both EU and Non EU exports

Explanatory Notes

1. The business count is derived from trade declarations and is a count of all VAT Registered businesses importing and exporting. The Non-EU and Total figures will not include businesses whose Non-EU trade is made up entirely of consignments below the statistical threshold (£873 and 1000kg for 2017)
2. Intrastat and CHIEF data has been compiled on a special trade basis, excluding trade that enters a customs warehouse but does not enter free circulation in the UK
3. The data presented will differ to that in HMRC's Regional Trade Statistics (RTS) which presents business counts compiled on a quarterly basis and uses different methodology
4. EU trader counts have fallen slightly from the provisional release due to Intrastat register and declaration amendments prior to closure of the 2017 account as well as the impact of rounding to nearest thousand