



About this release

This article breaks down the registered business population for 2018, explaining the numbers of businesses who have declared to HMRC trade in goods with EU and Non-EU countries, and the combination therein.

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An Official Statistics release

Summary

In 2018, there was a total of 306,000 businesses who traded goods:

- 223,000 businesses traded with EU Member States and 156,000 businesses traded with Non-EU countries.
- 150,000 businesses traded only with EU Member States, whilst 83,000 traded only with Non-EU countries and 73,000 businesses traded with both.
- 247,000 businesses imported goods and 158,000 businesses exported goods.
- 148,000 businesses only imported, 60,000 only exported and 99,000 businesses both imported and exported.

Data sources

The unique business count for UK businesses trading 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. These counts therefore do not include businesses only trading with the EU below the VAT registration threshold.

The unique business count for UK businesses trading 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.

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Data tables

Table 1: UK's importer and exporter population for trade in goods in 2018 by partner country

Trade Pattern	No. of Businesses
With EU Member States Only	150,000
With Non-EU Countries Only	83,000
With Both EU & Non-EU	73,000
Total EU	223,000
Total Non-EU	156,000
Total	306,000

Source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics

Notes:

1. Values rounded to nearest thousand
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

Table 2: UK's importer and exporter population for trade in goods in 2018 by flow of trade

Trade Pattern	No. of Businesses
Only Importing	148,000
Only Exporting	60,000
Importing and Exporting	99,000
Total Importers	247,000
Total Exporters	158,000
Total	306,000

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
3. 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

Explanatory notes

1. The business count is derived from trade declarations and is a count of businesses importing and Exporting trade in goods. 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 2018).
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 trade data is only collected from VAT registered businesses. In contrast, Non-EU trade data is collected from both VAT and Non-VAT registered businesses.
5. This data is provisional and may be subject to change.

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