

## SHARE OF TRADE IN GDP

International trade in goods and services is a principal channel of economic integration. A convenient way to measure the importance of international trade is to calculate the share of trade in GDP.

International trade tends to be more important for countries that are small (in terms of geographic size or population) and surrounded by neighboring countries with open trade regimes than for large, relatively self-sufficient countries or those that are geographically isolated and thus penalised by high transport costs. Other factors also play a role and help explain differences in trade-to-GDP ratios across countries, such as history, culture, trade policy, the structure of the economy (especially the weight of non-tradable services in GDP), re-exports and the presence of multinational firms, which leads to much intra-firm trade.

### Definition

The rates shown in this table correspond to the average of imports and exports (of both goods and services) at current prices as a percentage of GDP. The data are taken from national accounts statistics compiled according to the 1993 System of National Accounts. Goods consist of merchandise imports and exports. Services cover transport, travel, communications, construction, IT, financial, other business, personal and government services, as well as royalties and license fees.

### Long-term trends

In 2007, the trade-to-GDP ratio for OECD countries was 28%, while the rate for the EU27 was 40%. For the reasons noted above, there were large differences in these ratios across countries. The ratios exceeded 50% for small countries – Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic and Switzerland – but were under 20% for the two largest OECD countries – Japan and the United States.

Between 1994 and 2007, trade-to-GDP ratios for the OECD as a whole increased by 9 percentage points. Substantial increases in trade-to-GDP ratios were recorded for Luxembourg, Hungary and the Slovak Republic. Interestingly, ratios in Anglo-Saxon countries remained broadly stable, ranging from -2 to 4% over the period.

### Comparability

The ratios shown in this table are compiled using common standards and definitions.

The trade-to-GDP ratio is often called the “trade openness ratio”. However, the term openness may be somewhat misleading. In fact, a low ratio for a country does not necessarily imply high tariff or non-tariff obstacles to foreign trade, but may be due to the factors mentioned above, especially size and geographic remoteness from potential trading partners.

Please note that the trade-to-GDP ratio shown by WTO, IMF and OECD trade indicators refers to the sum of the imports and exports and not to the average, as is the case here.

Note that for Australia and New Zealand data refer to fiscal year.

### Source

- OECD (2008), *National Accounts of OECD Countries*, OECD, Paris.

### Further information

#### Statistical publications

- OECD (2008), *Main Economic Indicators*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2008), *International Trade by Commodity Statistics*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2008), *Monthly Statistics of International Trade*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2008), *Statistics on International Trade in Services*, OECD, Paris.

#### Methodological publications

- Lindner, A., et al. (2001), “Trade in Goods and Services: Statistical Trends and Measurement Challenges”, OECD Statistics Brief, No. 1, October, OECD, Paris, [www.oecd.org/std/statisticsbrief](http://www.oecd.org/std/statisticsbrief).
- UN, EC, IMF, OECD, UNCTAD and the WTO (2002), *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services*, United Nations, New York.


#### Websites

- OECD International Trade Statistics, [www.oecd.org/std/its](http://www.oecd.org/std/its).

## Trade in goods and services

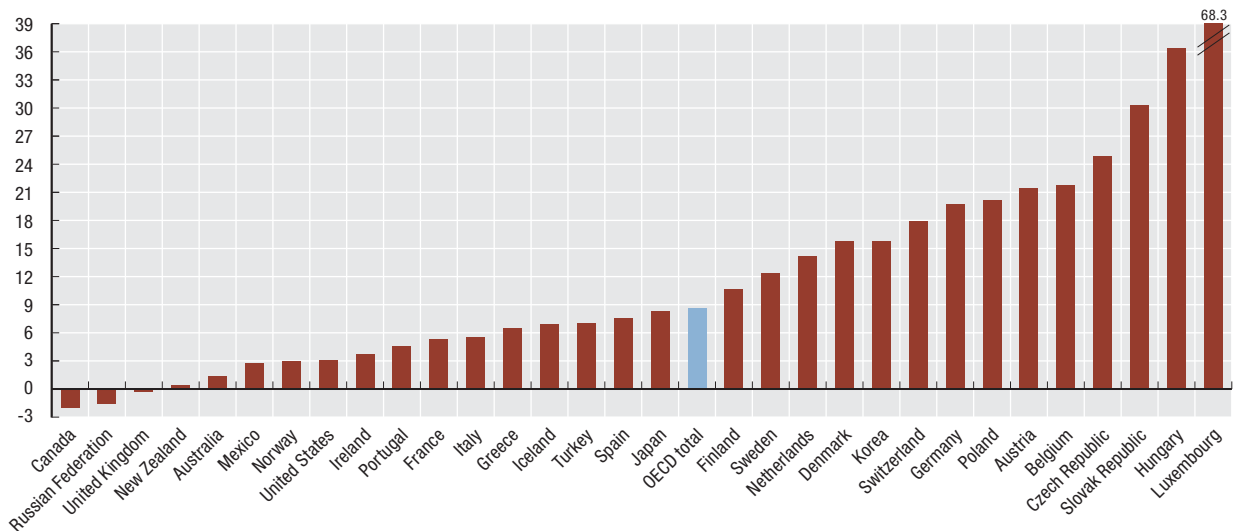

As a percentage of GDP

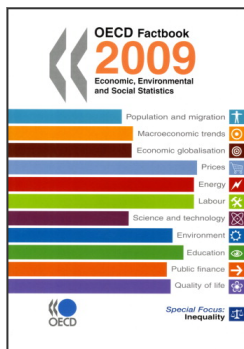
|                    | 1994 | 1995 | 1996  | 1997  | 1998  | 1999  | 2000  | 2001  | 2002  | 2003  | 2004  | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  |
|--------------------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Australia          | 19.1 | 19.4 | 19.3  | 20.3  | 19.9  | 20.9  | 22.5  | 21.1  | 20.4  | 18.8  | 19.9  | 21.0  | 21.2  | 20.7  |
| Austria            | 34.0 | 35.3 | 36.3  | 39.7  | 40.8  | 41.7  | 45.5  | 47.4  | 46.7  | 46.8  | 50.0  | 52.0  | 54.2  | 56.7  |
| Belgium            | 63.8 | 65.6 | 67.7  | 71.8  | 72.5  | 73.2  | 83.2  | 83.0  | 80.2  | 78.8  | 81.7  | 84.8  | 85.7  | 87.3  |
| Canada             | 33.4 | 35.7 | 36.4  | 38.5  | 40.4  | 41.4  | 42.7  | 40.7  | 39.4  | 36.2  | 36.3  | 35.9  | 34.8  | 33.7  |
| Czech Republic     | 48.9 | 52.9 | 51.8  | 54.7  | 54.8  | 56.0  | 64.9  | 66.6  | 61.3  | 62.9  | 70.1  | 70.6  | 74.8  | 77.7  |
| Denmark            | 35.1 | 35.5 | 35.4  | 36.9  | 37.2  | 38.2  | 43.5  | 43.9  | 44.3  | 42.2  | 42.9  | 46.5  | 50.5  | 51.2  |
| Finland            | 31.9 | 32.6 | 33.4  | 34.7  | 34.0  | 33.7  | 38.7  | 36.6  | 35.7  | 35.0  | 36.5  | 39.6  | 42.7  | 43.2  |
| France             | 21.4 | 22.2 | 22.4  | 24.3  | 25.0  | 25.1  | 28.1  | 27.5  | 26.3  | 25.1  | 25.7  | 26.5  | 27.4  | 27.5  |
| Germany            | 23.0 | 23.7 | 24.4  | 26.8  | 28.0  | 29.0  | 33.2  | 33.8  | 33.4  | 33.7  | 35.9  | 38.4  | 42.5  | 43.4  |
| Greece             | 21.3 | 21.8 | 22.1  | 24.0  | 24.6  | 27.4  | 31.6  | 30.6  | 27.8  | 26.7  | 27.0  | 26.4  | 28.0  | 28.3  |
| Hungary            | 31.1 | 43.1 | 46.6  | 52.8  | 60.5  | 63.4  | 73.9  | 71.7  | 64.1  | 62.7  | 64.9  | 66.9  | 77.4  | 79.5  |
| Iceland            | 33.2 | 33.7 | 36.0  | 36.0  | 36.9  | 35.9  | 37.2  | 39.3  | 36.6  | 35.8  | 36.9  | 37.8  | 41.0  | 40.6  |
| Ireland            | 65.4 | 70.4 | 71.3  | 72.9  | 80.9  | 82.1  | 91.4  | 92.2  | 85.4  | 75.8  | 76.3  | 75.6  | 74.5  | 74.1  |
| Italy              | 21.1 | 23.8 | 22.4  | 23.3  | 23.6  | 23.5  | 26.6  | 26.4  | 25.2  | 24.3  | 25.0  | 26.0  | 28.2  | 29.3  |
| Japan              | 8.1  | 8.5  | 9.6   | 10.3  | 10.0  | 9.5   | 10.3  | 10.2  | 10.7  | 11.2  | 12.3  | 13.6  | 15.4  | 16.8  |
| Korea              | 27.0 | 29.4 | 29.6  | 32.7  | 39.7  | 35.7  | 39.2  | 36.7  | 34.6  | 36.8  | 41.9  | 41.1  | 42.5  | 45.2  |
| Luxembourg         | 93.9 | 95.8 | 101.0 | 112.2 | 119.3 | 124.6 | 139.5 | 137.8 | 130.9 | 125.1 | 140.2 | 145.8 | 159.7 | 164.1 |
| Mexico             | 17.5 | 26.5 | 28.3  | 27.7  | 28.9  | 28.8  | 29.1  | 26.1  | 25.3  | 26.1  | 27.5  | 28.0  | 28.8  | 29.2  |
| Netherlands        | 54.0 | 56.5 | 57.0  | 60.5  | 60.2  | 60.9  | 67.3  | 64.4  | 60.9  | 59.9  | 62.7  | 65.4  | 69.0  | 70.6  |
| New Zealand        | 29.7 | 28.6 | 27.8  | 27.9  | 29.3  | 31.0  | 34.7  | 33.9  | 31.6  | 28.9  | 29.5  | 29.1  | 29.8  | 29.0  |
| Norway             | 35.1 | 34.9 | 36.3  | 37.3  | 36.7  | 35.7  | 38.0  | 37.3  | 34.4  | 33.8  | 35.3  | 36.4  | 37.4  | 37.8  |
| Poland             | 20.6 | 22.1 | 23.0  | 25.4  | 28.4  | 27.1  | 30.3  | 28.9  | 30.4  | 34.7  | 38.7  | 37.5  | 41.3  | 42.2  |
| Portugal           | 30.3 | 31.8 | 31.7  | 32.6  | 33.4  | 33.0  | 35.2  | 33.9  | 32.1  | 31.3  | 32.3  | 33.0  | 35.1  | 36.3  |
| Slovak Republic    | 56.7 | 56.7 | 58.7  | 61.2  | 64.6  | 63.4  | 71.7  | 76.8  | 74.7  | 76.8  | 75.8  | 78.5  | 86.3  | 87.0  |
| Spain              | 20.8 | 22.4 | 23.4  | 25.9  | 26.8  | 27.6  | 30.6  | 29.8  | 28.4  | 27.5  | 27.9  | 28.3  | 29.6  | 29.9  |
| Sweden             | 33.9 | 36.4 | 35.3  | 38.4  | 39.8  | 39.9  | 43.4  | 43.2  | 41.2  | 40.4  | 42.2  | 44.9  | 47.4  | 48.7  |
| Switzerland        | 33.5 | 33.4 | 34.1  | 37.5  | 38.2  | 39.3  | 43.6  | 43.5  | 41.1  | 40.8  | 42.9  | 45.6  | 48.6  | 51.3  |
| Turkey             | 16.7 | 17.5 | 19.5  | 21.8  | 20.8  | 19.4  | 21.6  | 25.4  | 24.4  | 23.5  | 24.9  | 23.6  | 25.1  | 24.5  |
| United Kingdom     | 26.7 | 28.3 | 29.3  | 28.3  | 26.9  | 26.9  | 28.6  | 28.3  | 27.4  | 26.6  | 26.6  | 28.1  | 30.1  | 28.0  |
| United States      | 10.9 | 11.7 | 11.8  | 12.2  | 11.9  | 12.2  | 13.2  | 12.1  | 11.7  | 11.8  | 12.8  | 13.5  | 14.2  | 14.7  |
| EU27 total         | ..   | 28.9 | 29.2  | 31.0  | 31.6  | 32.1  | 35.9  | 35.8  | 34.6  | 34.1  | 35.4  | 37.0  | 39.6  | 40.0  |
| OECD total         | ..   | 19.2 | 19.9  | 20.8  | 21.1  | 21.0  | 22.4  | 22.0  | 21.8  | 22.3  | 23.9  | 25.0  | 26.7  | 27.8  |
| Russian Federation | ..   | 27.6 | 24.0  | 23.6  | 27.9  | 34.7  | 34.0  | 30.6  | 29.8  | 29.5  | 28.3  | 28.3  | 27.4  | 26.1  |

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/541400507862>

## Trade to GDP ratios

Difference between 2007 and 1995 ratios in percentage points

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/535428614188>



From:  
**OECD Factbook 2009**  
Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics

Access the complete publication at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/factbook-2009-en>

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2009), "Share of trade in GDP", in *OECD Factbook 2009: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/factbook-2009-24-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to [rights@oecd.org](mailto:rights@oecd.org). Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at [info@copyright.com](mailto:info@copyright.com) or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at [contact@cfcopies.com](mailto:contact@cfcopies.com).