Statistics in focus

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Capital goods and consumer durables continue their recent growth

Extract from Monthly Panorama of European Business 10/2000

Gunter Schäfer

The manufacturing and service sectors of the EU economy have performed well over recent months, with recent trends in industrial production, new orders and retail sales following an upward progression. Growth in industrial output has led to a positive effect on industrial employment, which began to increase in the summer of 2000 for the first time in over two years. There was however little indication of a slowing in the rate of increase of output prices, with the producer price index continuing to rise at a rapid pace (especially within the intermediate goods sector).

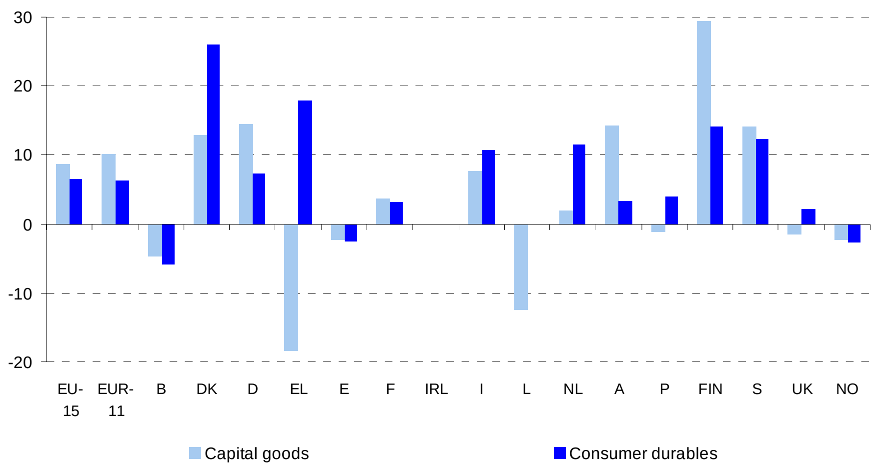

Figure 1: Production index, growth rates, compared to the same month of the previous year, September 2000 (%) [1]

1) EL, 8/2000; IRL, N/A; A, 7/2000.

Data extracted on: 27/11/2000

Industrial production trends in the Triad

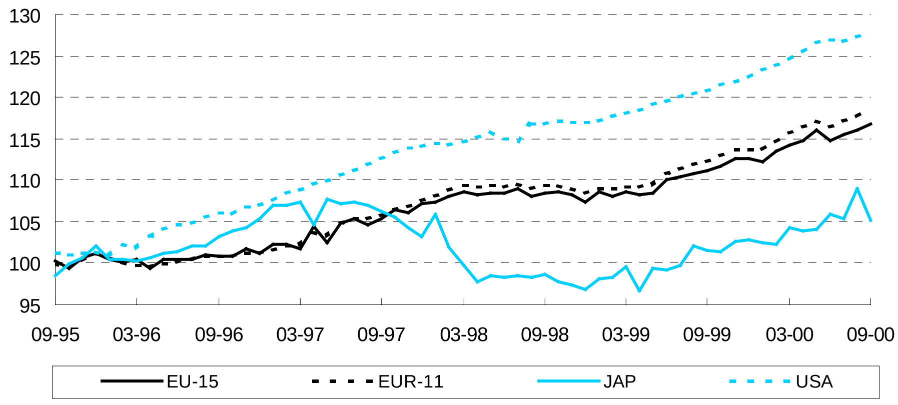

Figure 2: Production index for total industry (1995 = 100)

Recent growth (t/t-1)	EU-15	EUR-11	JAP	USA
06-00	-1.1	-0.5	1.8	0.4
07-00	0.7	0.5	-0.5	-0.2
08-00	0.5	0.5	3.3	0.5
09-00	0.7	0.8	-3.5	0.2

Table 1: Industrial production, latest growth rates (%)

There was a 0.7% increase in the seasonally adjusted figure for EU industrial production in September 2000 compared to the previous month, indicating a continuation of the upward trend that had been apparent since mid-1999.

Production was 0.8% higher in the euro-zone in September 2000 than in the previous month, maintaining a slightly stronger upward trend than in the EU as a whole.

Despite a decline of 3.5% in industrial output in Japan in September 2000, production rose by 3.9% in September 2000 on the basis of a comparison with the same month of the previous year. However, this was the lowest growth rate of the year using this measure, well below the rates of over 5% seen during the rest of 2000.

In the USA the production index for total industry continued to increase, with growth of 0.2% reported for September 2000; the second lowest increase during the year.

Producer price trends in the Triad

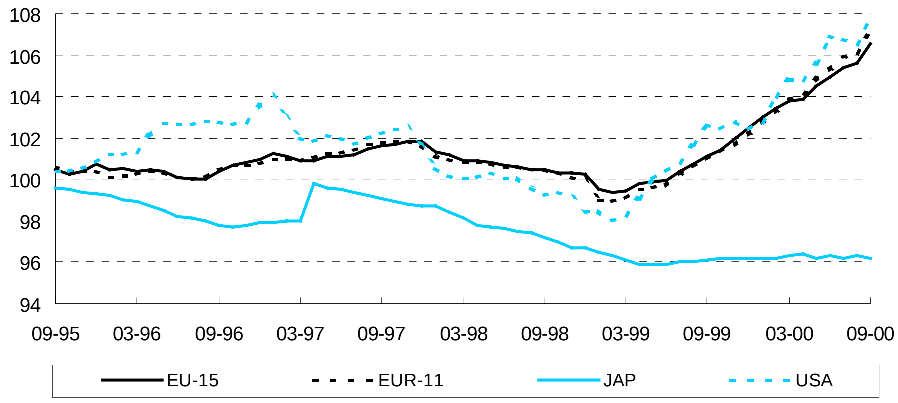

Figure 3: Producer price index for total industry (1995 = 100)

Recent growth (t/t-1)	EU-15	EUR-11	JAP	USA
06-00	0.4	0.4	0.1	1.3
07-00	0.5	0.6	-0.1	-0.1
08-00	0.2	0.2	0.1	-0.3
09-00	0.9	1.0	-0.1	1.2

Table 2: Industrial producer prices, latest growth rates (%)

There was little sign of the upward pressure on industrial producer prices abating in the EU. A month on month increase of 0.9% in September 2000 was the nineteenth consecutive positive figure. This helped to maintain the increase compared to the same month of the previous year at 5.4%.

There was a 1.2% month on month increase in producer prices recorded in the USA in September 2000, ending a two month period of moderately declining prices.

Japan reported a 0.1% month on month decline in output prices for September 2000, but the rate of change over the previous twelve month period was negligible at just 0.1% (following negative rates of change during much of 1999).

Industrial production trends in the EU

	10-99	11-99	12-99	01-00	02-00	03-00	04-00	05-00	06-00	07-00	08-00	09-00
EU-15	0.5	0.8	0.0	-0.4	1.2	0.7	0.4	1.1	-1.1	0.7	0.5	0.7
EUR-11	0.7	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.6	-0.5	0.5	0.5	0.8
B	0.7	1.0	-0.4	-0.6	2.0	-0.3	0.7	-0.3	-0.3	1.6	-0.6	-1.2
DK	-0.3	2.9	-0.3	-0.7	-0.7	0.4	5.4	3.4	-10.2	5.7	2.0	0.8
D	0.0	0.8	0.5	-0.2	2.1	-0.6	0.0	4.3	-3.8	1.9	0.3	0.8
EL	-0.2	0.0	3.9	0.8	1.9	0.7	0.8	-2.3	0.3	-0.7	-2.1	:
E	-1.3	1.9	0.5	-0.6	2.1	0.1	-1.0	1.9	-1.0	-0.4	2.5	-2.0
F	0.7	1.1	-0.8	0.3	0.7	0.4	-0.4	0.2	-0.1	1.3	0.0	0.1
IRL	2.2	-3.3	10.8	-14.0	-0.2	4.6	11.2	:	:	:	:	:
I	0.7	1.1	0.1	-1.0	1.7	0.2	-0.6	2.3	-0.9	-0.8	1.2	0.0
L	-3.1	-0.1	4.5	0.8	-1.0	-2.2	1.0	-0.2	1.6	-0.9	0.7	-1.3
NL	0.7	0.7	0.6	-3.8	3.9	1.4	-1.1	-0.3	2.3	-1.2	-0.4	0.5
A	2.5	4.0	-3.2	-1.5	3.9	1.6	0.2	2.1	-2.0	-0.9	:	:
P	1.5	1.9	-1.8	0.8	-3.5	-0.4	0.6	1.0	0.9	1.8	3.2	-0.7
FIN	-1.6	1.5	8.1	-2.0	-0.4	2.0	1.6	0.8	0.0	0.2	1.3	2.2
S	1.6	-0.2	-3.0	3.0	1.9	1.5	4.5	-2.9	4.2	-4.7	-1.0	4.9
UK	0.1	0.5	-0.6	-0.6	-0.4	0.8	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.4	-1.0
NO	1.9	3.3	0.9	-1.9	2.1	0.7	-3.6	3.2	-3.8	4.8	-2.6	-0.5

Table 3:Production index for total industry, latest growth rates, t/t-1 (%)

Both the capital goods and consumer durables industrial groupings had reported very strong month on month production growth during 2000, and in September 2000 there was a no change in this trend. For capital goods there was a 0.5% increase in the production index for September 2000 compared to the previous month. High month on month changes fed through into the growth rate comparing one month to the same month of the previous year, as capital goods output growth accelerated from 3.6% in January 2000 to 10.3% by May and 10.4% in August 2000. In the most recent month (September 2000), the rate of change moderated to 8.7% (the third highest growth rate of the year using this measure).

Similarly, a 1.0% month on month increase in consumer durables output growth in September 2000 represented a continuation of the generally positive rates of change reported in 2000. There were two months during 2000 when output of consumer durables declined, but these were counteracted by strong growth, most notably a 2.1% increase in February 2000. In the twelve months between September 1999 and 2000, output of consumer durables rose by 6.5%.

Industrial output rose by 0.8% in Germany in September 2000, whilst when compared to September 1999 the level of industrial output was considerably higher than that in the EU, with an expansion of 6.5% (somewhat lower than the peak of 10.7% reached in May 2000).

Industrial output grew by 0.1% in September 2000 in France (despite the fuel protests and lorry strikes). Compared to the same month of the previous year, output rose by 5.4%, which was close to the growth rates recorded during the first half of the year.

Italy reported no change in output during September 2000, following a series of fluctuating growth rates during the middle of 2000, such as growth of 2.3% in May and 1.2% in August 2000, and reductions of 0.9% and 0.8% in between these dates. Compared to the same month of the previous year, Italian industrial output rose by 5.1% in September 2000 (the fourth highest figure of the year).

A drop in output of 1.0% was reported for total industry in the United Kingdom in September 2000 (on the basis of a comparison with the previous month). As such, a period of six consecutive positive rates ended, following negative rates of change between December 1999 and February 2000. However, despite three large positive month on month increases in excess of 0.6% since February 2000, industrial output in the United Kingdom was 0.7% lower in September 2000 than it had been twelve months before.

Producer price trends in the EU

	11-99	12-99	01-00	02-00	03-00	04-00	05-00	06-00	07-00	08-00	09-00	10-00
EU-15	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.9	:
EUR-11	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.2	1.0	:
B	1.0	1.1	0.0	1.6	1.2	0.0	1.2	0.3	-0.3	0.3	1.1	:
DK	0.8	0.5	-0.1	0.7	0.5	0.6	1.0	0.4	-0.2	0.7	0.9	:
D	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.9	0.5
EL	0.7	0.7	0.2	1.1	1.2	-0.3	0.8	0.9	0.4	0.2	2.7	:
E	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	1.0	:
F	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	1.1	:
IRL	0.3	1.8	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.6	:
I	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.9	:
L	0.5	0.2	1.8	-0.4	1.1	1.6	0.3	0.9	-0.1	-0.1	-1.4	-0.2
NL	0.4	0.5	2.1	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.5	1.3	0.3	1.1	:
A	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
P	0.9	1.7	1.7	0.4	2.3	1.3	-0.1	2.1	1.5	-0.4	1.3	:
FIN	0.8	1.0	0.5	0.9	0.8	0.0	1.3	0.6	0.5	0.4	1.3	0.6
S	0.1	1.0	0.9	0.0	-0.1	-0.1	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.4	:
UK	1.3	0.6	0.0	0.0	-0.3	-0.9	-0.1	0.3	0.1	-0.1	0.5	0.4
NO	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.2	0.7	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.3

Table 4: Producer price index for total industry, latest growth rates, t/t-1 (%)

The rising cost of intermediate goods continued to fuel the overall increase. The price of intermediate goods rose by 12.3% over the twelve months to September 2000, which was the highest figure of the year (by 0.1 percentage point). Producer price increases in September 2000 (compared to the same month of the previous year) for the other main industrial groupings remained subdued, with the following rates of change in the EU: capital goods (0.3%), consumer durables (1.1%) and consumer non-durables (1.7%). The equivalent figures for the euro-zone indicated that the price of intermediate goods was rising at an even faster pace in the euro-zone, with a 13.0% increase between September 1999 and 2000.

Most EU Member States reported that producer prices were rising at a faster pace than the EU average. Only Germany (4.6%, October 2000), Spain (5.5%), Denmark (5.2%) and Luxembourg (5.7%) reported price increases for total industry within one percentage point of the EU average in September 2000. The highest price increases in September 2000 (compared to the same month of the previous year) were recorded in Portugal (13.8%), the Netherlands (10.7%) and Greece (9.0%).

Only two Member States reported significantly lower than average price increases. In the United Kingdom and Sweden, producer price increases abated slightly during the course of 2000. Price increases fell from 2.0% in February 2000 to 1.8% in October 2000 in the United Kingdom, and by 0.7 percentage points from the start of 2000 to reach 3.6% in Sweden by September 2000.

Employment trends in the Triad and Member States

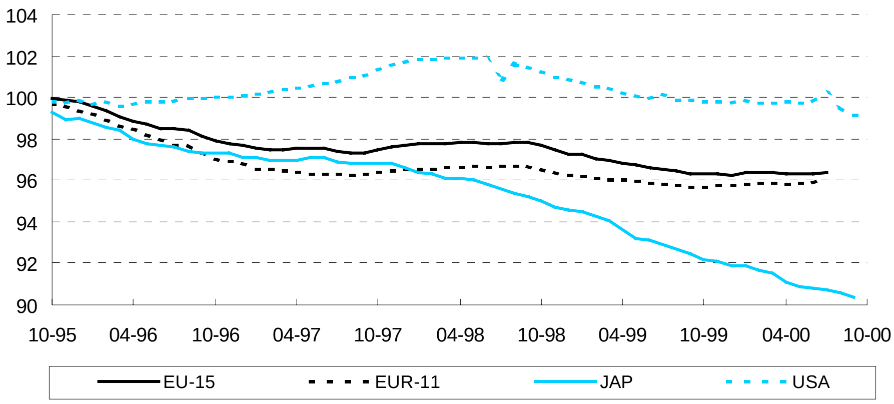

Figure 4: Employment index for total industry (1995 = 100)

Recent growth (t/t-1)	EU-15	EUR-11	JAP	USA
07-00	0.0	0.1	-0.1	0.3
08-00	:	:	-0.1	-0.6
09-00	:	:	-0.2	-0.4
10-00	:	:	:	0.0

Table 5: Industrial employment, latest growth rates (%)

There was no change (compared to the previous month) in the EU industrial workforce in July 2000, the third consecutive month when such a figure was reported. The decline in employment halted in October 1999 (when no change was reported), after which there was a period of ten months when there was stability in the industrial workforce except for a 0.1% increase in January 2000 and a 0.1% decline in April 2000.

Compared to the same month of the previous year, the reduction of the EU industrial workforce improved from -1.4% in October 1999 to -0.2% by July 2000.

	IV-99	I-00	II-00	III-00	04-00	05-00	06-00	07-00	08-00	09-00
EU-15	-1.2	-0.7	-0.4	:	-0.5	-0.5	-0.3	-0.2	:	:
EUR-11	-0.7	-0.2	0.0	:	-0.2	-0.1	0.0	0.2	:	:
B	-3.2	1.0	-5.8	-2.1	-6.1	-6.0	-5.7	-1.9	-3.0	-0.9
DK	-5.1	-1.8	0.6	-2.3	:	:	:	:	:	:
D	-1.0	-0.9	-0.1	0.2	-0.4	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
EL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
E	2.2	2.6	3.2	3.5	:	:	:	:	:	:
F	0.1	0.5	1.1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
IRL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
I	-2.3	-1.6	-2.2	:	-2.1	-2.0	-2.4	-2.6	-2.5	:
L	1.3	1.1	1.3	:	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.2	:
NL	0.5	0.2	0.2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
A	-1.7	-0.7	0.2	:	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.8	:	:
P	-3.5	-2.7	-2.2	-1.9	-2.4	-2.0	-2.1	-2.0	-1.9	-1.7
FIN	4.4	3.2	2.2	-0.2	:	:	:	:	:	:
S	-0.6	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
UK	-3.2	-2.8	-2.2	-2.3	-2.2	-2.1	-2.1	-2.2	-2.3	-2.4
NO	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

Table 6: Employment index for total industry, latest growth rates, compared to a year before (%)

Construction in the EU

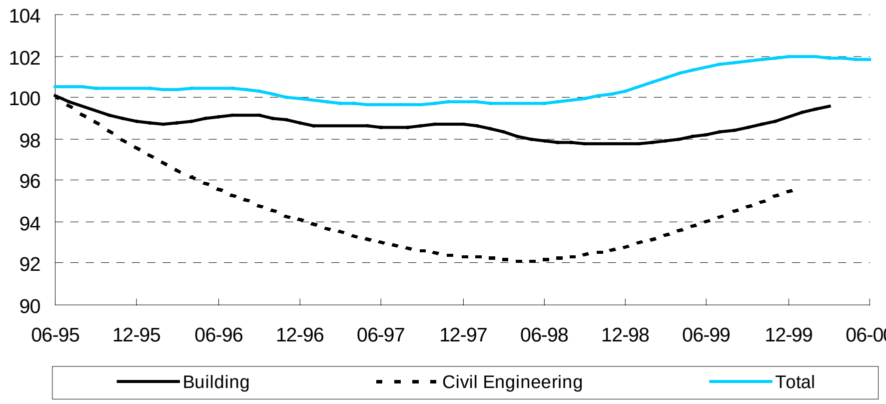

Figure 5: Construction output in the EU (1995 = 100)

Month on month rates of change for construction output in the euro-zone have followed a fluctuating pattern during 2000. The largest decline was recorded in June 2000 (-0.7%), which was preceded immediately by growth of 0.6%. The broad trend was for somewhat negative evolution in construction output in the euro-zone, as three out of five month on month rates of change were negative during the spring and summer of 2000 (March to July 2000).

The most recent figure available was for September 2000, when construction output fell by 0.2%. Compared to the same month of the previous year, construction output in the euro-zone was 0.2% higher in September 2000.

There were four very large month on month reductions in German construction output in 2000: 7.5% in January, 11.4% in March, 10.0% in June and 5.5% in September 2000. These negative rates have had a significant impact when looking at the rate of change compared to the same month of the previous year, with a reduction of 10.1% recorded in September.

Retail trade and new car registrations in the EU

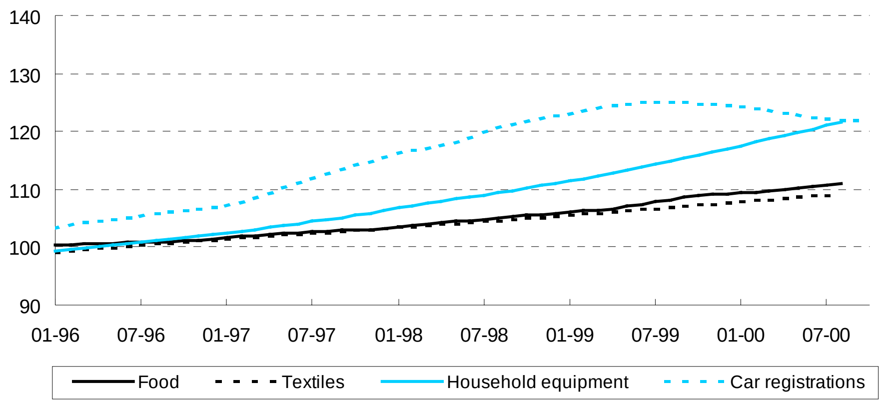

Figure 6: Retail sales turnover and new car registrations in the EU (1995 = 100)

Total turnover of the EU's retail sector was 2.9% higher in August 2000 than at the same point in 1999. There was a 0.4% change in the volume of retail sales compared to the previous month, with recent month on month growth rates being generally positive, for example growth of 0.4% was reported in July 2000.

There was a moderate expansion in the number of new car registrations within the EU during the late summer of 2000. New registrations rose by 2.0% in August and 0.8% in September 2000, only to fall by 0.5% in October 2000, all data on the basis of changes compared to the previous month. By September 2000 there were 1.23 million registrations of private and commercial cars.

These figures fed through to a 4.3% decline compared to the same month of the previous year in October 2000, the fifth consecutive negative rate of change. This stands in contrast to the first five months of 2000 when positive figures predominated.

Business cycle at a glance

	Industrial production	Industrial producer prices	Industrial new orders	Industrial employment	Construction	Building permits	Retail trade	Car regis-trations
EU-15	↗↗ 09-00	↗↗ 09-00	↗ 08-00	→ 07-00	→ 06-00	:	↗↗ 08-00	↘ 10-00
EUR-11	↗↗ 09-00	↗↗ 09-00	↗ 08-00	→ 07-00	→ 09-00	:	↗↗ 08-00	→ 10-00
B	↗ 09-00	↗ 09-00	↗ 09-00	↗ 09-00	→ 09-00	↘ 06-00	↗↗ 08-00	↘ 10-00
DK	↗ 09-00	↗↗ 09-00	↗↗ 09-00	↘↘ 09-00	:	:	↘↘ 08-00	↘ 10-00
D	↗↗ 09-00	↗↗ 10-00	→ 09-00	→ 09-00	↘↘ 09-00	→ 07-00	↘↘ 09-00	→ 10-00
EL	↘↘ 08-00	↗↗ 09-00	:	:	:	:	↗↗ 08-00	→ 10-00
E	↗ 09-00	↗↗ 09-00	:	↗ 09-00	↗ 06-00	:	↘ 09-00	↘ 10-00
F	↗↗ 09-00	↗↗ 09-00	:	↗↗ 06-00	→ 09-00	→ 05-00	:	↘↘ 10-00
IRL	→ 04-00	↗↗ 09-00	:	:	:	↗ 03-00	↗↗ 06-00	→ 10-00
I	→ 09-00	↗↗ 09-00	→ 08-00	↘↘ 08-00	:	:	→ 08-00	↗↗ 10-00
L	→ 09-00	→ 10-00	:	↗↗ 08-00	↘ 07-00	↗ 07-00	↗ 08-00	→ 10-00
NL	→ 09-00	↗↗ 09-00	↗↗ 09-00	↗↗ 06-00	↗ 06-00	:	↗ 08-00	↗ 10-00
A	↗ 07-00	:	↗↗ 07-00	↗ 07-00	↘ 07-00	:	↘↘ 08-00	↗ 10-00
P	↗↗ 09-00	↗↗ 09-00	:	↘↘ 09-00	:	→ 02-00	→ 08-00	→ 10-00
FIN	↗↗ 09-00	↗↗ 10-00	:	→ 09-00	:	↗ 05-00	↗↗ 08-00	↘ 10-00
S	↘↘ 09-00	↗ 09-00	:	:	:	:	↗ 09-00	↘ 10-00
UK	↗↗ 09-00	↗ 10-00	↗ 09-00	↘↘ 09-00	:	→ 08-00	↗↗ 10-00	↘↘ 10-00
NO	↗ 09-00	↗↗ 10-00	:	:	:	:	:	↘ 10-00

Table 7: Business cycle at a glance, seasonally adjusted series, latest month available (%)[1]

Growth rates[2]: ↗↗ High growth; ↗ Moderate growth; → No change; ↘ Moderate decline; ↘↘ Large decline

(1) Producer prices and building permits: gross data.

(2) The growth rates compare the last three months with the previous three months period in relation to the standard deviation of each individual series since January 1995: high growth: $>\sigma$; moderate growth: $0.3\sigma \rightarrow \sigma$; no change: $-0.3\sigma \rightarrow 0.3\sigma$; moderate decline: $-\sigma \rightarrow -0.3\sigma$; large decline: $<\sigma$.

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