Industrial production and retail sales growing again in November 2000

Extract from Monthly Panorama of European Business 01/2001

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There has been increasing concern over a slowdown in the American industrial economy towards the end of 2000. It is too early however to say if the same situation will arise in the EU, as following negative rates of change for the production and retail sales indices in October 2000 (-0.3% and -0.1%), there was a sharp turnaround with high positive month on month growth in November 2000 (0.8% and 0.3%).

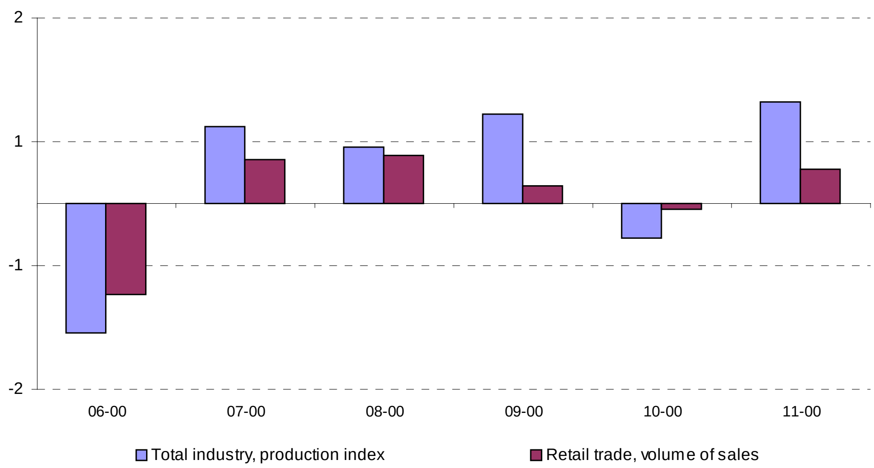

Figure 1: EU production index for total industry and volume of retail sales, growth rates, compared to the previous month (%)

Data extracted on: 28.01.2001

Statistics in focus

INDUSTRY, TRADE AND SERVICES

THEME 4 – 9/2001

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Manuscript completed on: 30.01.2001
ISSN 1561-4840
Catalogue number: KS-NP-01-009-EN-I

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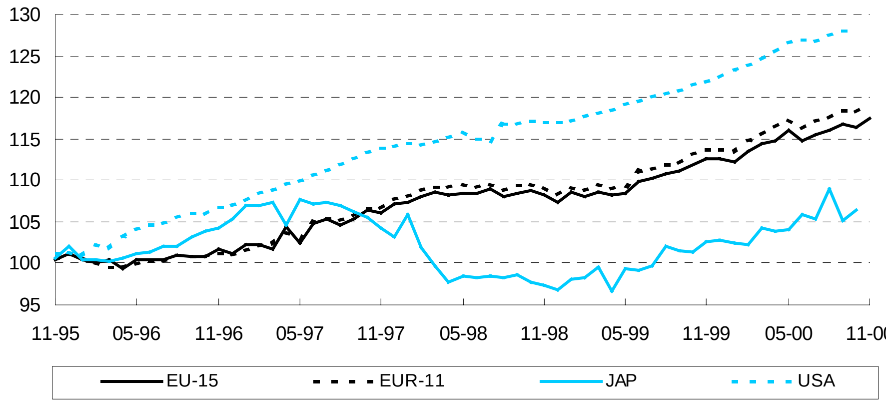

Figure 2: Production index for total industry (1995 = 100)

Recent growth (t/t-1)	EU-15	EUR-11	JAP	USA
08-00	0.5	0.2	3.3	0.6
09-00	0.7	0.8	-3.5	0.4
10-00	-0.3	-0.2	1.3	-0.1
11-00	0.8	0.8	:	:

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

During the first eight months of 2000, six month on month growth rates for industrial output were equal to 0.4% or more. Indeed, on two occasions growth even exceeded 1%. October 2000 saw a slow down in activity, with a month on month rate of change for the production index equal to -0.3%, but growth returned in November 2000 (0.8%).

There appeared to be indications of a slow down in the rate of industrial production growth in the two other members of the Triad. In the USA there was a reduction of 0.1% in output in October 2000, one of the lowest figures reported during the year.

In Japan, month on month rates of change for industrial output tended to display no fixed pattern, with the most recent data showing growth of 1.3% in October 2000 following a decline of 3.5% the month before.

Producer price trends in the Triad

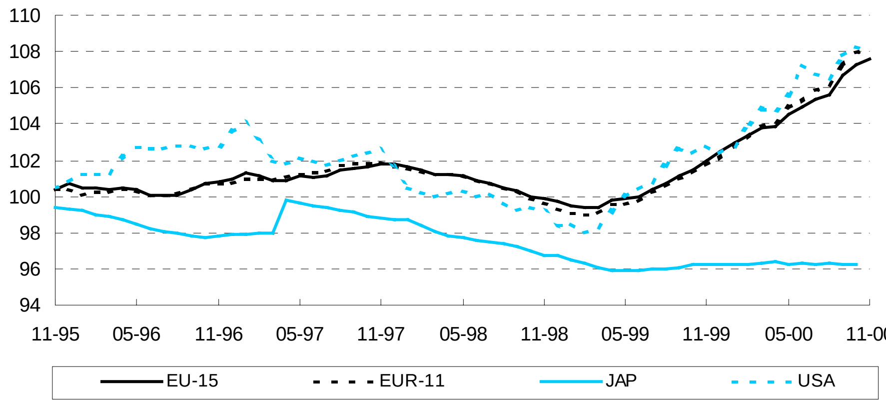

Figure 3: Producer price index for total industry (1995 = 100)

Recent growth (t/t-1)	EU-15	EUR-11	JAP	USA
08-00	0.2	0.3	0.1	-0.3
09-00	1.0	1.0	-0.1	1.2
10-00	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.5
11-00	0.3	0.1	:	-0.4

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

In November 2000, EU producer prices for total industry rose by 5.5% compared to the same month in 1999, a figure just 0.3 points less than the high for the year which was recorded in October 2000. The highest month on month increase recorded in 2000 was equal to 1.0% in September.

Month on month price increases only once changed by more than +/-0.1% in Japan during 2000. This pattern of modest changes was sustained in October 2000, when no change was reported in industrial producer prices.

In the USA, producer price increases for total industry recorded their highest increases in June 2000, when prices rose by 6.9%.

Industrial production trends in the EU

	12-99	01-00	02-00	03-00	04-00	05-00	06-00	07-00	08-00	09-00	10-00	11-00
EU-15	0.1	-0.4	1.1	0.7	0.4	1.1	-1.0	0.6	0.5	0.7	-0.3	0.8
EUR-11	0.1	-0.2	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.8	-0.9	0.8	0.2	0.8	-0.2	0.8
B	-0.6	-0.6	1.9	-0.3	0.6	-0.3	-0.3	0.8	-0.7	0.9	-0.8	-0.4
DK	-0.7	0.1	-0.3	-1.3	4.4	1.9	-5.5	3.4	1.2	1.4	-2.1	-0.6
D	0.5	-0.1	2.0	-0.6	0.1	4.1	-3.7	2.2	0.1	0.8	-0.1	0.8
EL	4.0	0.7	1.9	0.8	0.8	-2.4	0.4	-0.6	-0.4	-0.8	0.8	:
E	0.8	-0.6	2.1	0.1	-1.0	1.8	-1.0	-0.4	2.5	-1.9	-0.9	2.5
F	-0.8	0.3	0.7	0.4	-0.4	0.2	-0.1	1.3	0.0	-0.1	0.8	0.1
IRL	10.8	-14.0	-0.2	4.6	11.2	-3.0	2.6	-1.0	:	:	:	:
I	0.3	-1.1	1.6	0.3	-0.7	2.3	-0.9	-0.8	1.2	0.1	-0.7	1.0
L	4.4	0.8	-1.1	-2.3	0.9	-0.3	1.5	-0.7	0.4	-3.2	-0.9	2.8
NL	0.6	-3.8	3.9	1.4	-1.1	-0.2	2.2	-0.8	-0.5	0.0	-2.5	2.8
A	-2.9	-1.7	3.8	1.8	0.0	2.2	-2.1	-0.7	2.7	-1.1	2.4	:
P	-2.0	0.7	-3.7	-0.4	0.5	1.1	0.8	1.8	3.5	-1.1	-0.6	-0.7
FIN	7.9	-2.1	-0.5	2.0	1.6	0.7	0.0	0.4	1.5	2.5	1.8	0.9
S	-1.3	2.1	2.2	1.7	3.0	-2.5	4.0	-3.0	-1.7	3.3	1.6	1.0
UK	-0.6	-0.4	-0.5	0.8	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	-1.0	-0.2	0.1
NO	0.6	-2.1	2.1	0.8	-3.7	3.2	-3.9	4.7	-2.3	-0.4	3.0	-3.1

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

In France, three of the most recent month on month figures were either at or very close to zero. Consequently the change in industrial output compared with the same month of the year before was reduced from 5.8% in May 2000 to 4.3% by November 2000.

Similarly in Italy, the three most recent month on month figures for industrial output between September and November 2000 reported no change, a reduction of 0.7% and growth of 1.0%. As a result, the comparison with the same month of the previous year dropped (over the same period) from 5.1% to 2.3%.

Industrial output growth was fairly subdued during much of 2000 in the United Kingdom. The highest growth rate compared to the same month of the previous year was recorded in June 2000 (3.3%). A month on month reduction of 1.0% in September 2000 was in part responsible for the slow down, such that by November 2000 output was only 0.8% higher than it had been in November 1999.

One of the largest declines in recent months was reported in Denmark, where output had been rising by 8.9% over the twelve months to September 2000, whilst just two months later this figure had fallen to 1.3%.

Output growth in Germany followed an upward trend, despite the fact that month on month rates of change of 0.1% in August and -0.1% in October suggested that there might be a slowing down in the German industrial economy. Spain reported a month on month increase in industrial output of 2.5% in November 2000, which followed large reductions during the autumn of 2000, with declines of 1.9% in September and 0.9% in October. These changes resulted in the growth rate compared to the same month of the previous year falling from 6.6% in August 2000 to 0.9% by October 2000 but recovering to 4.1% by November 2000.

In Finland, the latest growth rate for November 2000 (compared to the same month of the previous year) was one of the highest recorded in 2000 at 17.3%. Indeed, this was the seventh consecutive two-digit growth rate using this measure. In November 2000, the month on month rate of increase for Finnish industrial production was equal to 0.9%.

Recent month on month growth for industrial output in Sweden consolidated upon the high increases reported during the summer months. Production rose by 1.0% in November 2000 compared to the previous month, whilst compared to the same month of 1999 output increased by 9.9%. This latter figure was the fifth highest of the year.

Producer price trends in the EU

	01-00	02-00	03-00	04-00	05-00	06-00	07-00	08-00	09-00	10-00	11-00	12-00
EU-15	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.2	1.0	0.6	0.3	:
EUR-11	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.3	1.0	0.6	0.1	:
B	0.0	1.6	1.2	0.0	1.2	0.3	-0.3	2.3	1.8	1.2	-0.7	:
DK	-0.1	0.7	0.5	0.6	1.0	0.4	-0.2	0.7	0.9	0.3	-0.1	:
D	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.9	0.5	0.2	:
EL	0.2	1.1	1.2	-0.3	0.8	0.9	0.4	0.2	2.7	0.7	-0.1	:
E	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	1.0	0.5	-0.1	:
F	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.3	1.2	0.5	-0.1	:
IRL	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.7	-0.2	0.1
I	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.9	0.6	0.4	:
L	1.8	-0.4	1.1	1.6	0.3	0.9	-0.1	-0.1	-1.4	0.2	-0.3	:
NL	2.1	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.5	1.3	0.3	1.2	1.0	0.3	:
A	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
P	1.7	0.4	2.3	1.3	-0.1	2.1	1.5	-0.4	1.3	2.9	0.7	:
FIN	0.5	0.9	0.8	0.0	1.3	0.6	0.5	0.4	1.3	0.6	0.2	-0.6
S	0.9	0.0	-0.1	-0.1	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.5	:
UK	0.0	0.0	-0.3	-0.9	-0.1	0.3	0.1	-0.1	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.2
NO	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 main driving force behind higher industrial prices was the intermediate goods sector, where producer price increases slowed from 13.0% in October 2000 (compared to the same month of the previous year) to 12.0% by November 2000.

Germany (4.7%), France (5.9%), Italy (6.7%) and Spain (5.7%) all reported similar price increases during the twelve months to November 2000. In most cases these figures were slightly below the maxima recorded during the year. However, this was not the case in Germany where large month on month increases in the latter half of 2000 were recorded. There were price increase of 0.7% in July 2000 and 0.9% in September 2000 in Germany. These increases fed through to the comparison with the same month of a year before and resulted in this growth rate quickening from 2.9% in June 2000 to the latest figure of 4.7% in November 2000.

The United Kingdom had a different pattern of price developments for total industry. Compared to the same month of the previous year, price increases rose by 2.0% in March 2000, and fell somewhat towards the end of the year to 1.1%. However, the last four month on month increases were quite high, varying between 0.2% and 1.1%.

Most of the remaining Member States reported price increases above the EU average (5.5%), with the fastest growth in Portugal (16.7%) in November 2000.

Employment trends in the Triad and Member States

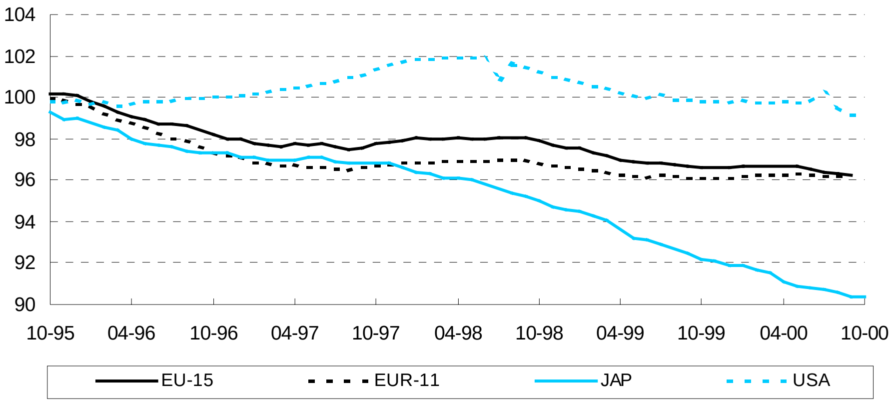

Figure 4: Employment index for total industry (1995 = 100)

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

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

Between June and September 2000, month on month changes in the employment index for the EU industrial workforce equalled -0.1%, with the exception of July 2000 (-0.2%).

There were higher growth rates for industrial employment in Germany, where fresher data for the second half of 2000 showed that there was modest growth, for example an increase of 0.4% over the twelve months to November 2000. In France, there were 0.5% more persons employed in the industrial sector in the third quarter of 2000 than there had been in the previous quarter (and 1.4% more persons than in the same quarter of 1999). In Spain, the comparison between the third quarter of 1999 and 2000 indicated a 3.5% increase in the number of persons employed in the industrial workforce. However, both Italy (-2.1%, September 2000) and the United Kingdom (-2.7%, November 2000) both experienced a decline in their respective industrial workforces (when compared to the same month of the previous year).

Following month-on-month growth of 0.3% for industrial employment in the USA in July 2000, there were reductions of 0.6% in August and 0.4% in September, which contributed in part to a decline of 0.7% between October 1999 and 2000. In Japan, the rate of decline moderated from -2.8% over the twelve months to January 2000 to -2.0% by October 2000.

	IV-99	I-00	II-00	III-00	06-00	07-00	08-00	09-00	10-00	11-00
EU-15	-1.1	-0.7	-0.3	-0.5	-0.3	-0.5	-0.5	-0.4	:	:
EUR-11	-0.6	-0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.2	:	:
B	0.7	1.1	1.3	-6.1	1.2	-6.2	-7.1	-5.0	-5.1	:
DK	-5.1	-1.8	1.0	-2.3	:	:	:	:	:	:
D	-1.0	-0.9	-0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4
EL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
E	2.2	2.6	3.2	3.5	:	:	:	:	:	:
F	0.0	0.6	1.0	1.4	:	:	:	:	:	:
IRL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
I	-2.3	-1.6	-2.2	-2.4	-2.4	-2.6	-2.5	-2.1	:	:
L	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.3	1.8	:
NL	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.3	:	:	:	:	:	:
A	-1.7	-0.7	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.7	:	:
P	-3.5	-2.7	-2.3	-2.1	-2.2	-2.0	-2.1	-2.1	-2.0	-1.3
FIN	4.4	3.2	2.2	-0.2	:	:	:	:	:	:
S	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
UK	-3.2	-2.8	-2.2	-2.4	-2.1	-2.3	-2.5	-2.5	-2.6	-2.7
NO	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

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

Construction in the EU

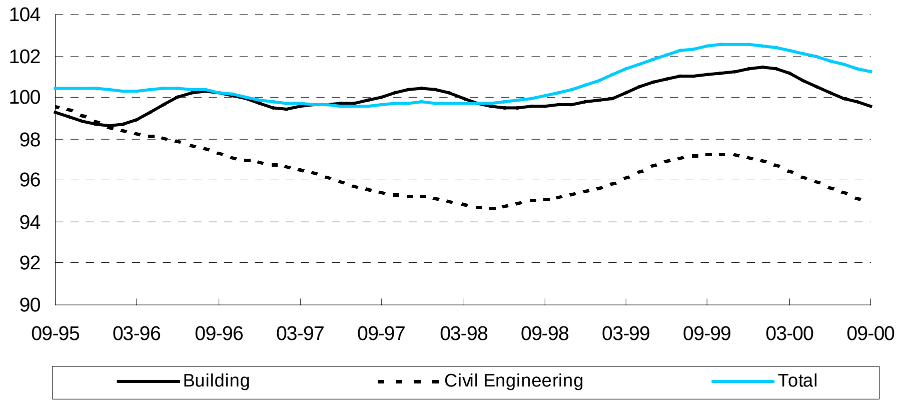

Figure 5: Construction output in the EU (1995 = 100)

Of the last six month on month construction output rates of change in the EU through to the month of September 2000, three were negative. In general the largest movement was in a downward direction. Reductions of 0.9% in June and 0.6% in September 2000 came either side of no change in output in July (0.0%) and August 2000 (up by 0.1%). Compared to the same month of the previous year construction output in the EU declined by 3.4% in September 2000.

There was more recent data available for France and Belgium. In France, month on month increases of 1.4% in October 2000 and 0.8% in November 2000 meant that the rate of decline on the basis of a comparison with the same month of the previous year moderated somewhat from-3.4% in September 2000 to -2.7% by November 2000. In Belgium there were some large month on month declines in September and October 2000 (down by 1.0% and 0.8% respectively), followed by a month on month increase of 0.9% in November 2000. In comparison with the same month of the previous year, two of the four largest rates of decline for 2000 were recorded, with losses of 5.1% in October and 4.2% in November 2000.

Retail trade and new car registrations in the EU

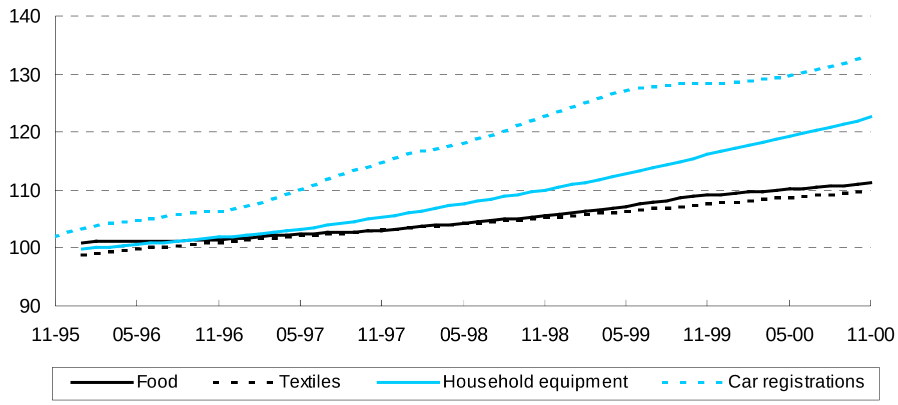

Figure 6: Retail sales turnover and new car registrations in the EU (1995 = 100)

In 2000, EU retail turnover has fallen in comparison with the previous month on three occasions (March, -1.0%, June, -0.7% and October, -0.05%). Compared with the same month of the previous year, the volume of retail sales was consistently higher than in 1999.

Retail sales in Germany saw a more rapid slow down in activity. Sales volumes fell by 0.4% in November 2000 (compared to the same month in 1999). This figure could be contrasted with growth of 3.9% recorded just two months earlier in September 2000 and a 5.9% increase back in May 2000.

Negative rates of change compared to the same month of the previous year tended to predominate in Italy during 2000, where the latest figure saw retail sales fall by 0.9% in November 2000. This was the seventh decline recorded during 2000, with three of the decreases equal to or in excess of 2.0%.

Since June 2000, the number of new cars registered in the EU has been lower than in the same month of 1999. However, the November 2000 figure (-1.3%) was not as pronounced as many seen in the second half of 2000 and was less than the reduction registered in September 2000 (-5.9%). Only August (-0.5%) saw less of a reduction in the second half of the year.

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	↗↗ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	↗↗ 10-00	↘↘ 09-00	→ 09-00	↘ 07-00	↗↗ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00
EUR-11	↗↗ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	↗↗ 10-00	→ 09-00	→ 09-00	↘ 07-00	↗↗ 11-00	→ 11-00
B	→ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	→ 11-00	↘↘ 10-00	→ 11-00	→ 10-00	↗↗ 10-00	→ 11-00
DK	↗ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	↗ 11-00	↘↘ 09-00	↘↘ 01-00	→ 09-00	↗ 10-00	↘ 11-00
D	↗↗ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	→ 11-00	↘↘ 09-00	↘↘ 07-00	↘ 11-00	↗ 11-00
EL	↘ 10-00	↗↗ 11-00	:	↘↘ 01-00	:	→ 01-00	↗ 10-00	↘ 11-00
E	→ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	:	↗ 09-00	↗ 09-00	↗↗ 01-00	→ 11-00	↘ 11-00
F	↗↗ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	:	↗↗ 09-00	→ 11-00	→ 11-00	↗↗ 01-00	↘↘ 11-00
IRL	↗↗ 07-00	↗↗ 12-00	:	→ 01-00	:	↗ 03-00	↗ 09-00	↘ 11-00
I	↗ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	↗ 10-00	↘↘ 09-00	↗ 06-00	↗↗ 01-00	→ 11-00	↗ 11-00
L	↘↘ 11-00	↘ 11-00	↘ 01-00	↗↗ 10-00	→ 10-00	↗ 11-00	→ 10-00	↗ 11-00
NL	↘↘ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	↗ 11-00	↗↗ 09-00	↘ 09-00	↘↘ 08-00	↗↗ 11-00	↗ 11-00
A	↗ 10-00	:	↗↗ 10-00	↗ 09-00	→ 10-00	:	↘ 10-00	→ 11-00
P	↗ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	:	↘↘ 11-00	:	→ 09-00	↗ 10-00	↘ 11-00
FIN	↗↗ 11-00	↗↗ 12-00	:	→ 09-00	↘↘ 09-00	↘ 10-00	↗ 11-00	↘ 11-00
S	↗↗ 11-00	↗↗ 11-00	↘↘ 01-00	:	:	:	→ 11-00	↘↘ 11-00
UK	↘↘ 11-00	↗↗ 12-00	↗↗ 11-00	↘↘ 11-00	↗↗ 01-00	→ 05-00	↗↗ 11-00	↘↘ 11-00
NO	↗ 11-00	↗↗ 10-00	:	:	↘ 01-00	↘ 01-00	→ 01-00	↘ 11-00

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: 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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