Statistics in focus

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Contents

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EU-15 industrial production was 4.2% higher in December 1999 compared to a year earlier

Extract from Monthly Panorama of European Business 02/2000

Gunter Schäfer

This report is an extract from the Monthly Panorama of European Business. It aims to give information on the most recent short-term indicators from the European Business Trends database.

The production index for total industry in the EU grew at a faster rate in the second half of 1999. At the same time there was considerable growth in producer prices for intermediate goods in the EU (largely as a result of the influence of oil prices). This influenced American producer price data too - although the same effect was not seen in Japan.

There was a general downward trend observed for employment for total industry in all three members of the Triad in 1999. This was especially the case in Japan. However, the most recent data for the USA pointed to stability for industrial employment.

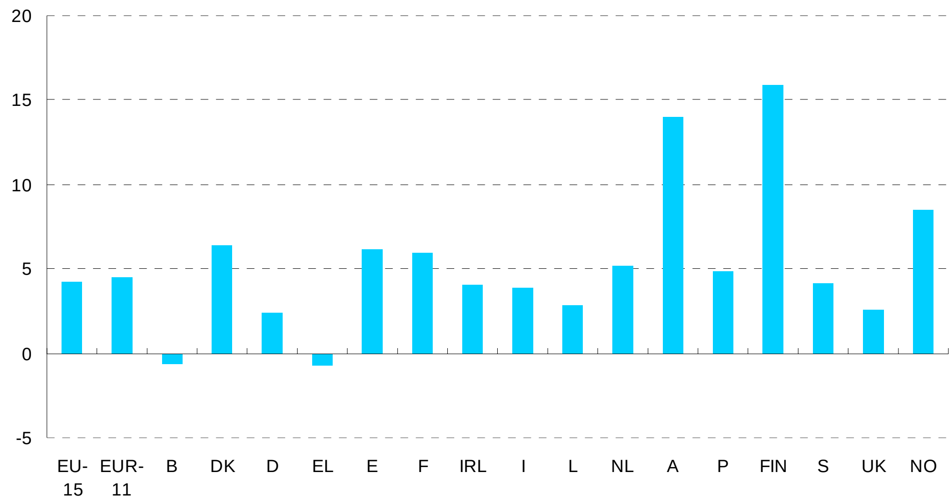

Figure 1: Production index for total industry, December 1998 to December 1999 (%) [1]

(1) EL: 11/99; IRL: 8/99; L: 11/99; A: 9/99; P: 11/99; S: 11/99.

Industrial production trends in the Triad

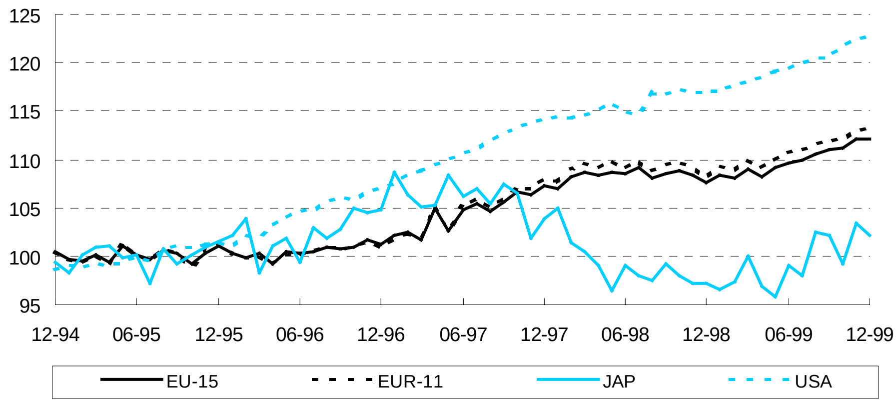

Figure 2: Production index for total industry (1995 = 100)

Recent growth (t/t-1)	EU-15	EUR-11	JAP	USA
09-99	0.4	0.3	-0.2	0.2
10-99	0.1	0.2	-2.9	0.9
11-99	0.9	0.9	4.2	0.4
12-99	0.0	0.0	-1.3	0.4

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

Following seven consecutive months of high positive growth rates for industrial production in the EU in the second half of 1999, there was no change in output between November 1999 and December 1999 - using a seasonally adjusted series.

Total Japanese industrial production was 1.3% lower in December 1999 than in the previous month. The increase of 0.4% in industrial production in the USA in December 1999 (compared to November 1999) represented a continuation of the positive growth rates recorded throughout 1999.

The rate of change of the production index for the euro-zone was also equal to 0.0% between November and December 1999.

Producer price trends in the Triad

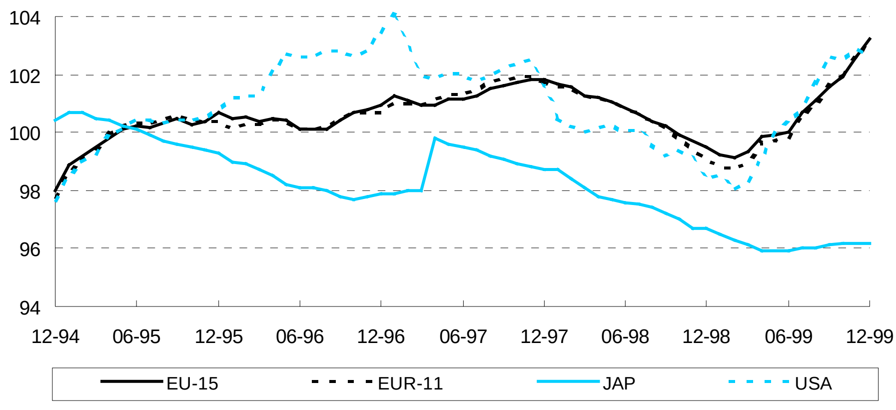

Figure 3: Producer price index for total industry (1995 = 100)

Recent growth (t/t-1)	EU-15	EUR-11	JAP	USA
09-99	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.9
10-99	0.4	0.4	0.1	-0.1
11-99	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.4
12-99	0.6	0.6	0.0	-0.3

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

Following substantial growth in EU producer prices since the spring of 1999, the December 1999 EU producer price index was 3.8% higher than the corresponding figure for December 1998. In terms of the month on month growth rate; increases of between 0.4% and 0.6% were commonplace through-out the second half of 1999. Indeed, the last negative change on the basis of a month on month comparison was recorded in February 1999. The latest growth rate was equal to 0.6% in December 1999.

Between May and December 1999, the month on month growth rates of the producer price index in Japan were stable. In December 1999, Japanese producer prices were 0.5% lower than in the same month of 1998. The USA producer price index rose strongly in the six months to December 1999, with the growth rate comparing one month with the same month of a year before rising from just 0.7% in July 1999 to 4.3% by December 1999. Hence, there appeared to be some evidence of inflationary pressures in the American economy.

Industrial production trends in the EU

	01-99	02-99	03-99	04-99	05-99	06-99	07-99	08-99	09-99	10-99	11-99	12-99
EU-15	0.7	-0.3	0.9	-0.7	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.9	0.0
EUR-11	1.0	-0.4	0.9	-0.6	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.0
B	0.7	-1.2	0.5	0.5	-0.2	-0.2	0.8	-0.3	0.4	0.2	1.2	-2.2
DK	2.1	-0.2	1.7	-0.9	3.0	-3.1	1.8	-1.8	3.1	-0.7	2.9	-1.0
D	0.0	-0.2	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.9	-1.8	2.6	-0.2	-1.1	0.5	0.3
EL	0.1	-0.1	-0.6	0.8	-0.1	1.2	3.4	-0.1	-4.9	1.5	-0.4	:
E	1.1	-1.0	1.4	-1.4	2.1	-0.5	1.2	1.4	-1.3	-0.4	1.7	1.3
F	0.0	-0.4	1.0	-0.1	0.5	1.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.7	0.0
IRL	0.8	-0.8	-2.0	2.3	-1.8	3.8	1.4	2.1	:	:	:	:
I	2.4	-0.8	1.5	-1.4	-0.4	1.5	0.6	0.9	-0.4	0.6	1.1	0.0
L	0.0	-1.2	3.7	1.5	0.9	-2.2	2.0	7.7	-2.0	-1.8	-0.7	:
NL	2.5	1.8	-0.2	-1.1	1.0	-0.6	2.3	-2.7	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.9
A	-0.8	1.0	2.7	0.5	0.2	1.4	0.0	1.5	0.3	2.5	4.4	:
P	2.4	-0.7	-0.2	1.0	0.4	-0.5	1.6	1.8	-3.0	1.2	1.9	:
FIN	6.1	-0.5	-1.2	3.3	-2.7	0.4	1.3	-1.3	2.3	-1.4	1.7	6.7
S	-2.0	2.3	0.2	-1.3	2.6	-0.6	-0.9	-2.9	7.1	0.0	0.1	:
UK	-0.5	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.5	-0.2	0.5	0.0	-0.5
NO	3.1	-0.3	-0.3	-2.9	2.2	-0.4	6.8	-1.2	-6.5	2.1	3.4	1.5

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

If we study the evolution of the month on month growth rates over the second half of 1999 we find that total industry figures for the EU were generally positive and rose at a rapid pace during the last six months of 1999, with rates of 0.3% or more being reported on four occasions. October 1999 saw a more modest increase (0.1%) only for the growth rate to rebound in November 1999 (0.9%). The high growth rates experienced in the second half of 1999 had a significant effect on the working day adjusted figures comparing one month with the same month of a year before. Industrial output was only 0.3% higher in May 1999 than it was in May 1998, but 4.2% higher in December 1999 when compared to December 1998. The equivalent euro-zone figures were 0.1% for May 1999 and 4.5% for December 1999.

Between November and December 1999, total industrial output in Germany increased by 0.3% (on the basis of seasonally adjusted figures). There was a mixed picture when looking at recent growth rates recorded within the German industrial economy. Whilst the general trend pointed to growth in German production, month on month growth rates fluctuated. Highs of 0.9% (June 1999) and 2.6% (August 1999) were interspersed with reductions of 1.8% (July 1999) and 1.1% (October 1999).

Compared to the previous month, the seasonally adjusted figure for total industry in France showed no change in December 1999. This could be compared to the figure recorded in November 1999, when output rose by 1.7% in November 1999. However, the overall trend showed positive developments in the French industrial economy. This was particularly the case from the summer of 1999 onwards, with month on month increases equal to 1.0% in June 1999 and 1.1% in July 1999.

Italian industrial output was also unchanged in December 1999 compared to the previous month. Despite a month on month reduction of 0.4% in September 1999, growth was generally positive over the second half of 1999, with increases of 0.6% recorded in July 1999, 0.9% in August 1999 and 1.1% in November 1999. This resulted in the figure for Italian total industrial production rising by 3.9% between December 1998 and December 1999.

Industrial production was 0.5% lower in December 1999 than it had been in November 1999 in the United Kingdom. This was only the second negative figure when studying the six most recent month on month growth rates recorded. Month on month rates of growth increased by 0.5% or more in three of the last six months. The only other negative rate was recorded in September 1999, when a decline of 0.2% was recorded.

Producer price trends in the EU

	02-99	03-99	04-99	05-99	06-99	07-99	08-99	09-99	10-99	11-99	12-99	01-00
EU-15	-0.1	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.6	:
EUR-11	-0.1	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.6	:
B	-0.1	0.4	1.1	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.1	1.0	0.9	:
DK	-0.1	0.0	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	-0.6	0.8	0.5	:
D	-0.1	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
EL	0.1	0.4	1.2	0.1	0.2	1.5	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.7	0.7	:
E	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.2	0.4	:
F	-0.1	1.0	1.1	0.0	0.2	1.5	0.9	1.0	0.7	1.3	1.3	:
IRL	0.1	-0.1	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	1.8	:
I	-0.2	-0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	:
L	-0.6	-1.1	-1.2	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	1.3	0.5	0.2	:
NL	-0.1	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.9	0.5	0.4	1.2	0.5	0.3	:
A	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
P	0.0	0.9	2.0	2.3	1.1	0.5	2.3	1.7	0.2	0.9	1.7	:
FIN	-0.2	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.8	1.0	0.5
S	-0.5	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.0	:	:	:	:
UK	-0.3	-0.3	-0.1	-0.1	-0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	1.3	0.7	0.1
NO	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

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

The effect of oil price increases on the index for intermediate goods contributed largely to the increase in producer prices for intermediate goods, up by 5.9% in December 1999 compared to December 1998. The index for intermediate goods was the principal motor behind the increase in the general index for total industry (3.8%). Towards the end of 1999, there was not yet evidence that the price increases being observed for intermediate goods were filtering through to the other main industrial groupings. The other main industrial groupings had significantly more subdued rates of change, between 0.2% and 0.7% over the same period.

In all four of the largest Member States, the most recent indices for producer prices confirmed the upward trend seen for the EU.

In Germany, industrial producer prices were 2.0% higher in January 2000 than in the same month of the previous year, with intermediate goods 4.1% higher during the same period. In contrast, the other three main industrial groupings had relatively subdued rates of change over this period, ranging from 0.7% for consumer durables to -0.4% for consumer non-durables. The change in producer prices since the summer of 1999 was marked, as the growth rate for July 1999 was -1.0% for total industry, and -1.7% for intermediate goods.

There was a similar set of circumstances for the total industry figure in Italy (up 2.8% in December 1999, compared to December 1998) and the United Kingdom (up 1.9% between January 1999 and January 2000).

An even more striking contrast was visible in France, where in December 1999 the total industry index was 9.2% higher than in the same month of 1998 (this could be compared with a growth rate of just 1.7% for the period July 1998 to July 1999). Again, intermediate goods were the principal cause of this change, with an increase of 11.4% in the twelve months to December 1999, whilst the other industrial groupings continued to report negative rates of change.

Employment trends in the Triad and Member States

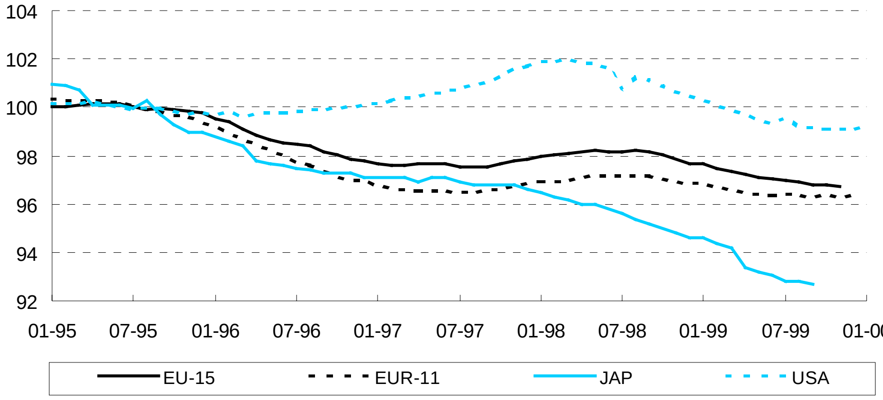

Figure 4: Employment index for total industry (1995 = 100)

Recent growth (t/t-1)	EU-15	EUR-11	JAP	USA
10-99	0.0	0.0	:	-0.1
11-99	-0.1	0.0	:	0.0
12-99	:	0.0	:	0.0
01-00	:	:	:	0.1

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

Total industrial employment in the EU was down between November 1998 and November 1999 (1.2%). Employment in the capital goods industrial grouping fell by 0.7% during the twelve-month period to October 1999, whilst in consumer durables the index fell by 0.6%, in intermediate goods by 1.5% and in consumer non-durables by 1.9%.

The most recent data available for the Member States underlined the slow downward trend of industrial employment in the majority of countries. Using a growth rate comparing one month with the same month of a year before, German industrial employment fell by 1.0% in December 1999. Corresponding figures (and the latest period available) for other large Member States were: Italy (-2.9%, October 1999), the United Kingdom (-3.4%, October 1999) and France (0.2%, quarterly data for the final quarter of 1999 compared to the same quarter of 1998).

	I-99	II-99	III-99	IV-99	07-99	08-99	09-99	10-99	11-99	12-99
EU-15	-0.5	-1.2	-1.3	:	-1.2	-1.3	-1.4	-1.3	-1.2	:
EUR-11	-0.2	-0.8	-0.9	-0.8	-0.8	-0.9	-0.9	-0.8	-0.6	-0.5
B	-5.6	-7.2	-6.7	:	-6.7	-6.6	-6.5	-6.7	-6.2	:
DK	1.5	1.4	-2.5	-5.6	:	:	:	:	:	:
D	0.0	-0.8	-1.1	-1.0	-0.9	-1.0	-1.1	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0
EL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
E	4.7	2.6	2.0	2.1	:	:	:	:	:	:
F	0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.2	:	:	:	:	:	:
IRL	0.9	0.2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
I	-4.1	-3.0	-3.0	:	-2.6	-2.9	-3.4	-2.9	:	:
L	1.7	1.5	1.3	:	0.9	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.3	:
NL	0.7	0.4	0.4	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
A	:	:	:	:	-1.9	-2.0	-1.9	-2.1	:	:
P	-1.8	-2.5	-2.8	:	-2.9	-2.7	-2.9	-3.0	-3.1	:
FIN	0.5	2.8	3.1	4.4	:	:	:	:	:	:
S	0.9	0.0	-0.1	-0.6	:	:	:	:	:	:
UK	-2.4	-3.3	-3.6	:	-3.5	-3.6	-3.8	-3.4	:	:
NO	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

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

Construction in the EU

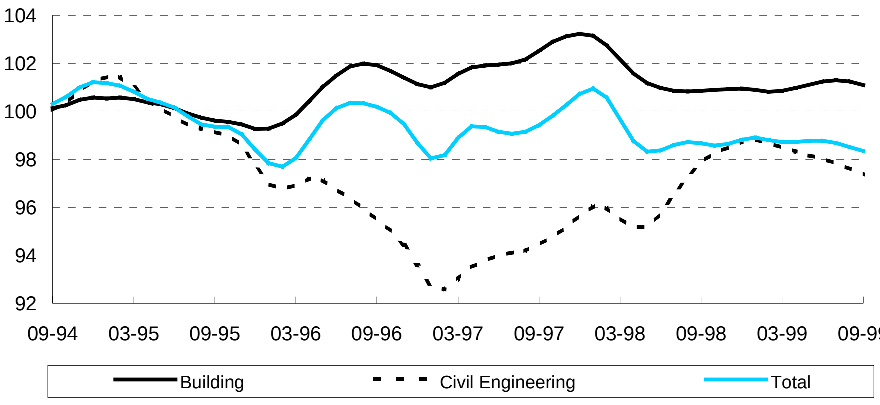

Figure 5: Construction output in the EU (1995 = 100)

The most recent month on month growth rates for the production index of the EU construction industry (seasonally adjusted) indicated general stability, with the latest monthly figure showing a -0.3% rate of change in September 1999 compared to the previous month. Month on month rates of change had been more vigorous during the earlier part of 1999, with a 0.8% increase recorded in June 1999.

Construction output was down by 0.4% in the euro-zone when comparing October 1999 with data from a month before. Between September 1998 and September 1999, production was 0.7% lower in the EU, but 1.0% higher in the euro-zone (comparing data for October 1998 and 1999).

Comparing December 1999 with the previous month, construction output in Germany was up 1.1%, whilst in France it fell by 0.1%. The respective growth rates using the working day adjusted series comparing one month to the same month of a year before showed that in December 1999 growth was mixed: up by 6.7% in Germany and 1.4% in France.

Retail trade and new car registrations in the EU

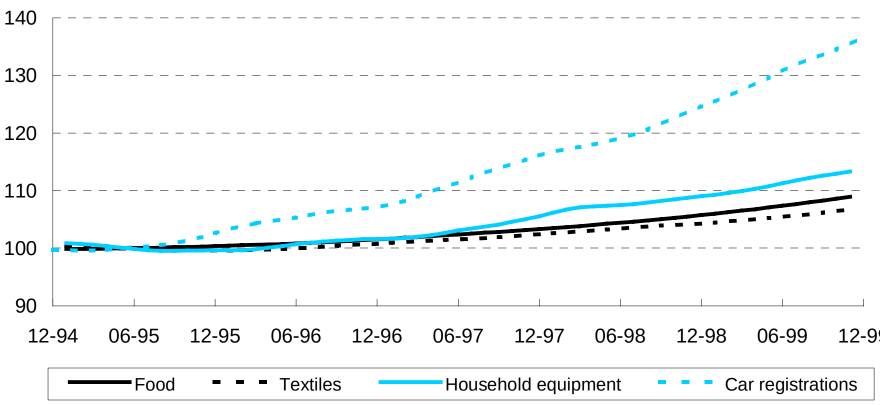

Figure 6: Retail sales turnover and new car registrations in the EU (1995 = 100)

The volume of retail sales did not change in the EU between October 1999 and November 1999. However, during the twelve-month period between November 1998 and November 1999 retail sales turnover increased by 2.8%. The equivalent growth rates for the euro-zone were 0.0% (month on month) and 2.4% (one month compared to the same month of a year before).

There were over 1.33 million new car registrations in June 1999 in the EU, of which some 1.06 million were within the euro-zone. There were an estimated 1.5% more cars newly registered in December 1999 than in the previous month in the EU. However, if we compare the data for December 1998 and 1999, we find that the number of new car registrations was 4.4% higher.

Similarly, in the euro-zone, the respective figures to December 1999 showed increases of 1.8% (when using a month on month comparison) and 3.4% (when comparing data to the same month of a year before). Sweden and France had the highest increases in December 1999 (subject to data availability) with growth of 15.8% and 5.4% (compared to the previous month). In Germany, an increase of 3.2% in December 1999 followed four successive months of decline of over 1.5% per month. The latest data was more positive in Italy, with 1.9% growth recorded in December 1999. This was the fourth consecutive month that a positive growth rate was recorded (all on the basis of a month on month comparison).

Business cycle at a glance

	Production	Producer prices	New orders	Employment	Construction	Building permits	Retail trade	Car regis-trations
EU-15	↗↗ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	↘ 11-99	→ 09-99	→ 08-99	↗↗ 11-99	↗↗ 12-99
EUR-11	↗↗ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	→ 12-99	→ 10-99	→ 08-99	↗↗ 11-99	↘ 12-99
B	→ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	→ 12-99	→ 11-99	↗↗ 12-99	↗ 07-99	↗↗ 10-99	↘ 12-99
DK	↗ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	↗ 12-99	↘ 12-99	↘↘ 09-99	→ 09-99	→ 10-99	↘ 11-99
D	→ 12-99	↗↗ 01-00	↗↗ 12-99	↘ 12-99	→ 12-99	→ 08-99	↘ 12-99	↘↘ 12-99
EL	↘↘ 11-99	↗↗ 12-99	:	↘↘ 12-98	:	→ 04-99	↘ 10-99	→ 12-99
E	↗ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	:	↗ 12-99	→ 09-99	↗↗ 06-99	↗↗ 12-99	↗ 06-99
F	↗↗ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	:	↗ 12-99	↘ 12-99	→ 09-99	↗↗ 11-99	→ 12-99
IRL	↗↗ 08-99	↗↗ 12-99	:	→ 06-99	:	↗ 09-99	↗↗ 08-99	↗ 10-99
I	↗ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	↗↗ 09-99	↘↘ 10-99	↘↘ 06-98	↗ 06-99	↗ 12-99	↗ 12-99
L	↗ 11-99	↗↗ 12-99	↘ 12-98	↗ 11-99	→ 11-99	→ 09-99	↘ 10-99	→ 12-99
NL	↗ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	↗ 09-99	→ 10-99	↘↘ 10-99	↗↗ 11-99	↘ 10-99
A	↗↗ 11-99	:	:	↘ 10-99	↗ 09-99	:	↘ 11-99	↗ 08-99
P	→ 11-99	↗↗ 12-99	:	↘↘ 11-99	:	→ 11-99	:	↘↘ 12-99
FIN	↗↗ 12-99	↗↗ 01-00	:	↘ 12-99	↘ 09-99	→ 10-99	→ 11-99	↘ 12-99
S	↗↗ 11-99	↗↗ 09-99	↘↘ 12-98	↘ 12-99	:	:	↗↗ 12-99	↗↗ 01-00
UK	↗ 12-99	↗↗ 01-00	↗↗ 12-99	↘↘ 10-99	↗ 09-98	↗ 09-99	↗↗ 01-00	↗↗ 09-99
NO	→ 12-99	:	:	:	↘ 09-99	↘ 02-99	→ 10-99	↗ 11-99

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: >σ; moderate growth: 0.3σ → σ; no change: -0.3s → 0.3σ; moderate decline: -σ → -0.3σ; large decline: <σ.

Further information:

➢ **Reference publications**

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Catalogue No KS-AM-00-002-EN-C Price EUR 17

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