

Statistics in focus

INDUSTRY, TRADE AND SERVICES

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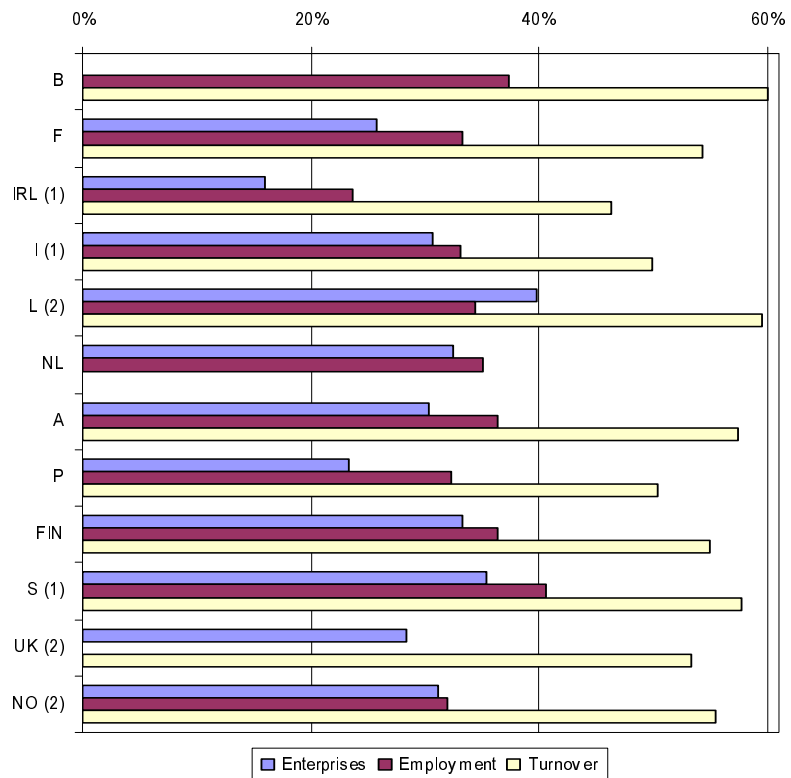
Distributive trades statistics

Wholesale trade in Europe

Joachim Hubertus

- Wholesale trade accounts for more than **half of the turnover generated in total distributive trades** in most EU countries
- Employment: persons employed in wholesale are mainly **male full-time workers in large enterprises**
- Both **labour productivity** and **unit labour cost** are higher in wholesale than in other distributive trade activities
- Wholesale of **non-agricultural intermediate products** (NACE group 51.5) and **machinery** (NACE group 51.6) are the most important activities.

Figure 1: Wholesale trade as a proportion of total distributive trade, 1998



(1) 1997 data (2) 1996 data

Source: Eurostat SBS database

This publication covers the following NACE activities

- 51: wholesale and commission trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles
- 51.1: wholesale on a fee or contract basis
- 51.2: wholesale of agricultural raw materials and live animals
- 51.3: wholesale of food, beverages and tobacco
- 51.4: wholesale of household goods
- 51.5: wholesale of non-agricultural intermediate products, waste and scrap
- 51.6: wholesale of machinery, equipment and supplies
- 51.7: other wholesale



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Wholesale trade as a proportion of total distributive trades

Wholesale trade records highest turnover figures in the distributive trade sector

Wholesale trade is the most important component in the distributive trade sector.

All the countries that provided data recorded figures of more than 50% of total distributive trade (except for

Ireland with 46%). Belgium and Luxembourg had the highest figures (both with 60%).

The situation was different in terms of the number of enterprises – the figures recorded in 1996 varied from 16% (again Ireland with the lowest) to 40% (Luxembourg – 1996).

Employment was again higher in wholesale trade.

All the countries observed, except Ireland, recorded values of more than 30%, with Sweden (41%) and Belgium (37%) ranking highest. Again, Ireland was at the bottom of the scale, with 24%.

Wholesale trade and total distributive trades

Wholesale shows higher productivity than total distributive trades...

Wholesale is more capital intensive and automated than retail.

Since these two factors help increase productivity, turnover and value added per person employed (*apparent labour productivity*) are **higher in wholesale** than in distributive trades as a whole throughout the EU, as Figures 2 and 3 illustrate.

Belgium and Luxembourg record the highest turnover per person employed in absolute figures (ECU 601 000 and ECU 579 000 respectively), so it is not surprising that their wholesale turnover also accounts for the lion's share of total distributive trades.

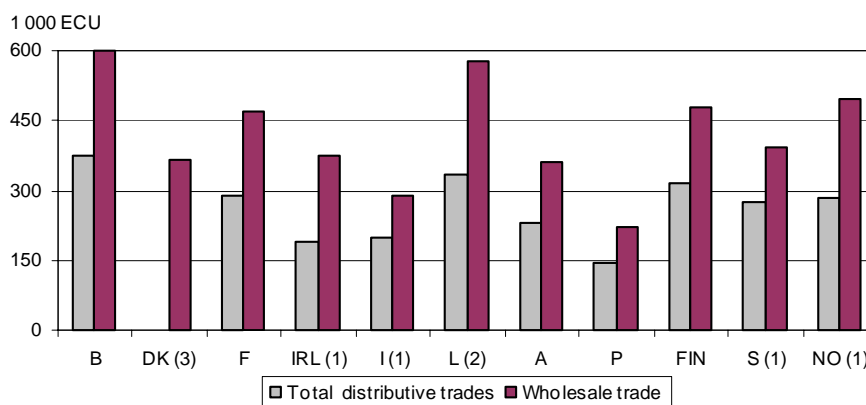
Belgium and Luxembourg, together with **Finland and Norway**, also have the highest *apparent labour productivity* (Figure 3).

Portugal, on the other hand, is at the bottom of the scale, with figures of ECU 221 500 for turnover per person employed and ECU 24 000 for apparent labour productivity.

....but also higher unit labour cost...

Figure 4 shows, on the other hand, that unit labour cost for wholesale businesses are higher than the average for total distributive trades.

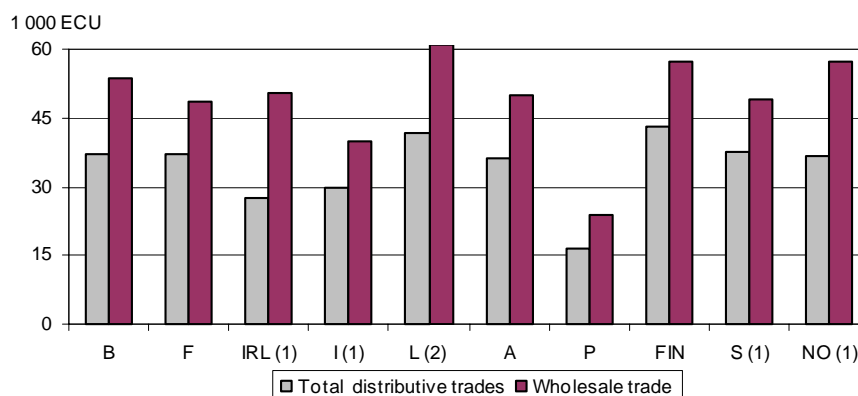
Figure 2: Wholesale trade and total distributive trades
Turnover per person employed, 1998



(1) 1997 data (2) 1996 data (3) 1995 data

Source: Eurostat SBS database

Figure 3: Wholesale trade and total distributive trades
Apparent labour productivity, 1998



(1) 1997 data (2) 1996 data

Source: Eurostat SBS database

However, the figures for total distributive trades need to be looked at with caution: the retail sector includes a large number of small family-run businesses, which operate with low labour costs because the proprietor's income is partly included in the operating result.

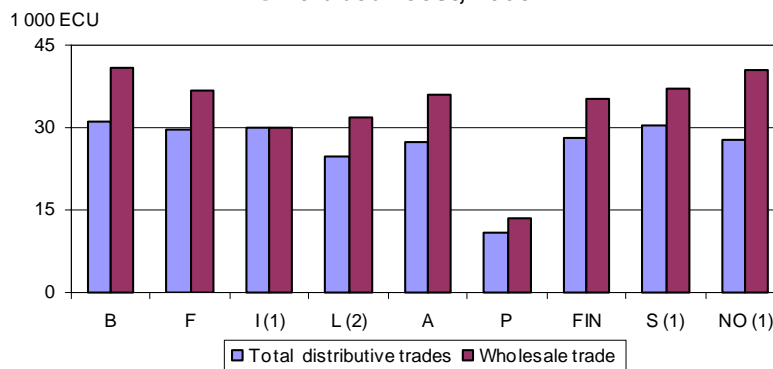
.... which makes a lower operating result.

Another characteristic of wholesale is a higher capital rotation than in retail, which allows wholesale businesses to reduce their margins. As a result, the gross operating rates (gross operating surplus as a proportion of turnover - see Figure 5) in wholesale are lower than in distributive trades as a whole. The only **exceptions** to this rule are **Portugal** and **Italy**.

Italy is also the only country where the unit labour cost for wholesale are in line with those for distributive trades as a whole.

This may be due to the **large number of small businesses** operating in wholesale on a fee or contract basis (NACE 51.1). These are mostly businesses with self-employed workers, low labour cost and high operating rates, but they are classified as trade intermediaries and thus affect the average for the sector in Italy.

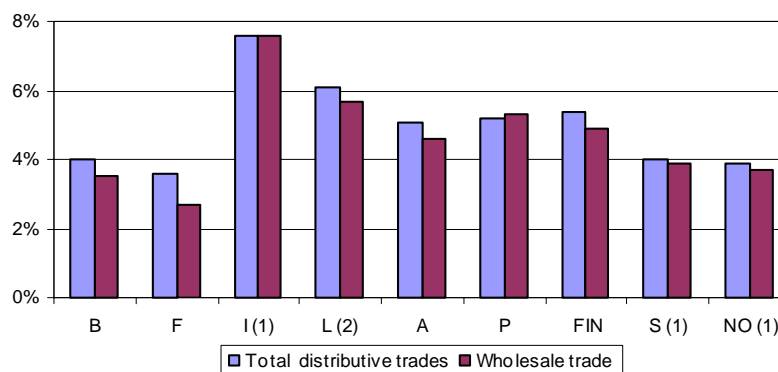
**Figure 4: Wholesale trade and total distributive trades
Unit labour cost, 1998**



(1) 1997 data (2) 1996 data

Source: Eurostat SBS database

**Figure 5: Wholesale trade and total distributive trades
Gross operating rate, 1998**



(1) 1997 data (2) 1996 data

Source: Eurostat SBS database

Main aspects of employment

Large enterprises predominate – except in Italy

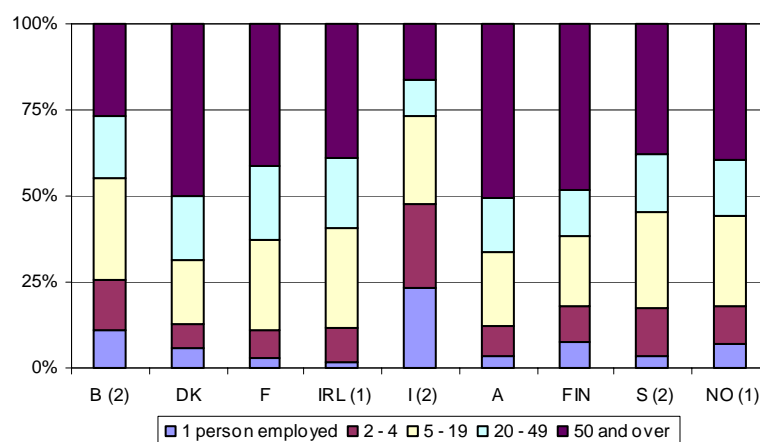
Figure 6 shows that, in the countries providing data, a large proportion of persons employed in wholesale work in **large businesses** (with at least 50 employees).

In **Denmark, Austria** and **Finland**, large businesses account for **about 50%** of employment in wholesale and they also predominate in the other countries observed apart from Italy.

Enterprises with between 5 and 19 persons employed are the largest group in **Belgium** (about 30%) and rank second in most other countries.

Italy is an **exception**. The figures are similar for all the size-classes and it has the largest proportion of persons employed in small enterprises of all the countries observed (businesses employing up to 4 persons account for 47.4%).

**Figure 6: Number of persons employed in enterprises
broken down by employment size-class, 1998**



(1) 1997 data (2) 1996 data

Source: Eurostat SBS database

Employees predominate in wholesale - self-employment important only in Southern Europe

Figure 7 shows the relative importance of employed and self-employed persons in the wholesale sector. Self-employed persons account for a relatively small proportion of the total in most of the countries observed (the EU-15 average was 16% in 1999), except in Southern Europe.

Greece and **Portugal** recorded proportions of more than 25% accounted for by self-employed persons in the wholesale sector.

Italy again is an **exception** with 42%. This confirms the particular structure of the Italian trade sector, characterised by a large number of small self-run businesses.

France and the Netherlands are at the other end of the scale with 7.6% and 7.5% respectively. In Norway the proportion was even less than 3%.

Most persons employed in wholesale are male and work full-time

Figure 8 shows that **men account for about two-thirds of the employed workforce** in the wholesale sector throughout Europe. Women account for between 24% in Portugal, Luxembourg and Iceland and 39% in Austria.

Part-time employment, shown in Figure 9, is **not very common** in the wholesale sector. The EU-15 figure for 1999 was slightly more than 10%.

The proportions accounted for by part-time employment, on the other hand, differ considerably from one country to another.

Southern Europe had the **lowest proportions** of part-time employment (with around 5% in Italy, Spain and Portugal and less than 3% in Greece), whereas it accounted for a large part of the total in the Nordic countries in particular and the Netherlands (with 19.5% in Iceland and almost 18% in the Netherlands).

This may be because wholesale does **not generally permit much flexibility in working hours**.

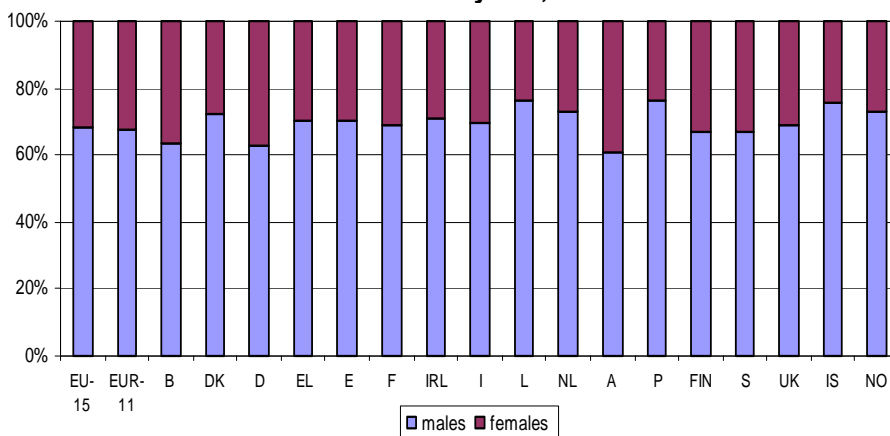
Another reason may be that many women still work part-time for **family reasons** and, since they already account for only a small proportion of employment in wholesale, part-time working is not widespread in that sector.

Figure 7: Employment in wholesale trade: breakdown by employment status, 1999



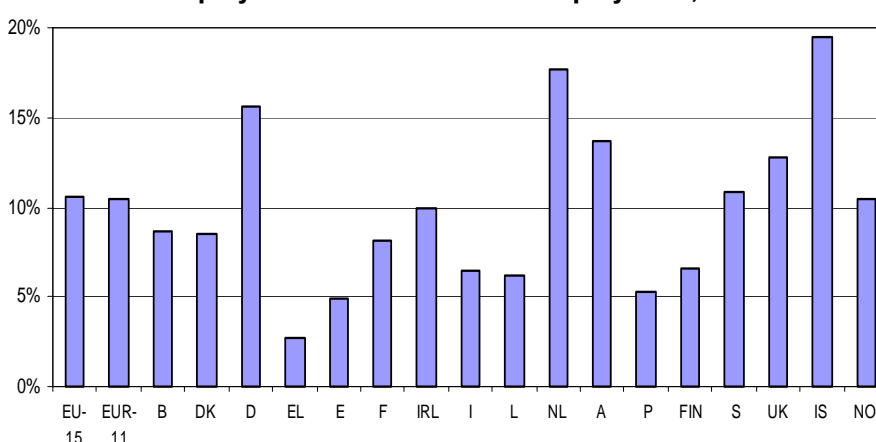
Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

Figure 8: Employment in wholesale trade: breakdown by sex, 1999



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

Figure 9: Employment in wholesale trade: proportion of part-time employees in total wholesale employment, 1999



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

The various wholesale activities

Wholesale trade is made up of **seven groups of activity**, according to the statistical classification NACE (see methodology on page 7).

Wholesale trade in food (NACE group 51.3), household goods (51.4), non-agricultural intermediate products (51.5) and machinery (51.6) are generally the most important activities for many variables, with exceptions in certain countries (Table 1).

In **Italy**, for example, more than 60% of wholesale enterprises come under

NACE 51.1 (wholesale on a fee or contract basis). This activity employs about 30% of the total Italian workforce in the wholesale sector, but accounts for on 6% of its turnover.

Turnover on the wholesale of machinery, equipment and supplies (NACE 51.6), on the other hand, accounts for the largest proportion of the total in eight countries (including Italy) and the second largest in three other countries.

This activity also accounts for the

highest proportion of employment in the majority of the countries - the exceptions being **Italy** and **Portugal**.

In **Portugal** the highest level of employment is in wholesale of household goods (NACE 51.4) and, as in Italy, the largest number of enterprises are in NACE 51.1.

These two activities are predominant in Portugal and Italy, and have the highest operating surpluses and personnel costs, while in other countries NACE 51.6 or 51.5 predominates for these variables.

Table 1: Wholesale trade: main enterprise variables by NACE group, 1998

	B	DK (3)	D (4)	EL	E	F	IRL (1)	I (1)	L (5)	NL	A	P	FIN	S (1)	UK (2)	IS (3)	NO (1)
Number of enterprises (units)																	
51	:	28 286	:	:	:	161 287	4 914	385 128	2 642	54 300	19 409	49 308	17 358	42 295	110 107	1 469	17 521
51.1	:	2 238	:	:	:	38 538	510	232 763	400	4 060	4 251	15 071	4 478	3 373	12 846	:	1 992
51.2	:	1 552	6 441	:	:	7 979	200	9 222	105	4 880	1 038	2 415	337	907	1 857	:	383
51.3	:	3 800	11 619	:	:	20 579	1 016	37 405	314	6 380	1 781	8 134	1 211	3 818	14 914	:	1 646
51.4	:	7 815	20 954	:	:	36 303	850	47 677	504	14 755	4 132	9 661	3 871	12 130	25 421	:	4 140
51.5	:	4 207	17 552	:	:	17 628	766	30 665	475	8 190	3 093	5 930	2 855	11 053	15 353	:	2 687
51.6	:	6 672	13 204	:	:	34 460	813	15 328	613	11 470	4 642	4 402	4 073	10 546	11 758	:	5 491
51.7	:	2 002	1 583	:	:	5 800	759	12 068	231	4 565	472	3 695	533	468	27 958	:	1 182
Number of persons employed (units)																	
51	215 167	168 957	:	:	:	946 523	50 157	980 846	12 113	431 243	199 258	266 317	82 974	209 556	:	7 018	105 576
51.1	12 971	5 886	:	:	:	61 477	1 931	290 441	642	10 117	8 871	31 919	5 418	10 079	:	:	3 592
51.2	7 732	10 530	52 666	:	:	54 821	1 617	26 359	396	32 521	16 708	9 827	2 220	6 549	:	:	3 417
51.3	35 049	22 383	225 566	:	:	170 389	11 045	161 481	2 815	66 900	36 322	56 219	7 099	25 673	:	:	16 330
51.4	55 149	33 785	329 139	:	:	181 076	9 627	213 245	1 893	92 779	44 896	68 038	14 930	49 966	:	:	21 682
51.5	45 294	37 413	354 120	:	:	194 586	10 017	156 165	2 795	77 490	43 448	41 890	16 928	54 298	:	:	21 457
51.6	52 155	53 166	203 802	:	:	277 079	11 032	85 455	3 169	128 761	46 363	38 006	27 824	61 352	:	:	36 098
51.7	6 817	5 794	84 545	:	:	7 095	4 888	47 700	402	22 675	2 650	20 418	8 555	1 639	:	:	3 000
Turnover (million ECU)																	
51	129 294	61 988	:	:	:	445 429	18 732	287 914	7 018	:	71 595	58 982	39 560	82 415	422 521	1 610	52 289
51.1	3 499	1 948	:	:	:	58 323	102	16 659	368	:	739	5 238	573	3 526	9 233	:	411
51.2	5 746	5 272	31 918	:	:	47 591	850	11 658	193	21 757	5 477	3 016	1 410	2 971	8 882	:	1 901
51.3	22 158	11 842	118 036	:	:	93 955	5 468	61 923	1 821	40 416	12 192	13 804	4 207	15 176	73 818	:	15 145
51.4	30 239	11 450	116 877	:	:	71 719	3 067	68 641	706	39 090	15 654	15 059	5 180	16 727	62 320	:	8 905
51.5	44 549	17 117	191 542	:	:	82 340	5 280	91 530	2 657	38 556	22 034	10 819	10 307	24 471	167 146	:	13 163
51.6	20 226	13 028	66 722	:	:	88 606	2 943	23 727	1 094	50 664	13 493	7 012	9 455	19 065	61 213	:	11 938
51.7	2 878	1 331	40 811	:	:	2 895	1 023	13 776	179	7 164	2 007	4 033	8 429	479	39 909	:	826
Value added at factor cost (million ECU)																	
51	11 556	:	:	:	:	45 848	2 517	36 741	735	:	9 947	6 403	4 749	10 263	:	278	6 053
51.1	622	:	:	:	:	3 509	61	7 827	42	:	335	553	264	502	:	:	153
51.2	291	:	:	:	:	2 503	105	865	19	1 450	557	152	99	253	:	:	160
51.3	1 351	:	:	:	:	7 446	485	5 120	150	3 097	1 452	1 085	329	1 029	:	:	857
51.4	3 083	:	:	:	:	8 882	508	9 542	110	5 345	2 398	1 909	831	2 383	:	:	1 254
51.5	2 572	:	:	:	:	9 353	593	7 155	225	4 485	2 405	1 218	1 060	2 809	:	:	1 295
51.6	3 353	:	:	:	:	13 880	565	4 238	171	7 191	2 698	1 034	1 672	3 217	:	:	2 186
51.7	285	:	:	:	:	275	200	1 995	20	1 060	103	453	495	70	:	:	148
Gross operating surplus (million ECU)																	
51	4 514	:	:	:	:	11 809	:	21 938	401	:	3 306	3 153	1 950	3 227	:	:	1 960
51.1	372	:	:	:	:	1 119	:	7 081	25	:	158	294	123	199	:	:	60
51.2	167	:	:	:	:	727	:	528	10	616	134	71	36	57	:	:	34
51.3	513	:	:	:	:	2 049	:	2 455	80	1 449	448	526	113	235	:	:	286
51.4	1 168	:	:	:	:	2 371	:	5 117	61	2 629	777	968	357	785	:	:	467
51.5	1 000	:	:	:	:	2 491	:	3 793	145	1 942	863	677	484	1 016	:	:	444
51.6	1 186	:	:	:	:	2 993	:	1 954	69	3 092	897	429	626	910	:	:	633
51.7	106	:	:	:	:	60	:	1 010	11	513	29	188	211	25	:	:	36
Personnel costs (million ECU)																	
51	7 043	:	:	:	:	34 039	:	14 804	334	:	6 641	3 250	2 799	7 036	21 774	:	4 093
51.1	250	:	:	:	:	2 390	:	746	17	:	176	258	140	303	897	:	93
51.2	123	:	:	:	:	1 776	:	337	9	833	423	81	62	196	258	:	126
51.3	838	:	:	:	:	5 398	:	2 666	70	1 647	1 004	558	216	794	3 143	:	571
51.4	1 914	:	:	:	:	6 511	:	4 424	48	2 716	1 621	941	474	1 598	4 387	:	787
51.5	1 572	:	:	:	:	6 861	:	3 362	80	2 542	1 541	541	576	1 793	4 901	:	850
51.6	2 167	:	:	:	:	10 888	:	2 283	102	4 099	1 801	605	1 046	2 307	5 986	:	1 554
51.7	179	:	:	:	:	215	:	985	9	547	75	265	284	46	2 203	:	112
Gross investment in tangible goods (million ECU)																	
51	1 882	:	:	:	:	4 697	316	5 584	79	:	1 213	1 341	624	1 853	4 727	:	847
51.1	139.9	:	:	:	:	309.8	2.0	1 083.7	1.6	:	22.0	91.4	31.0	108.0	162.2	:	14.6
51.2	97.2	:	325.3	:	:	521.6	15.8	142.8	5.7	323.1	115.4	36.3	6.3	44.0	65.1	:	29.1
51.3	268.2	:	1 075.7	:	:	880.1	65.6	852.7	11.1	522.0	202.1	251.6	47.1	323.5	761.9	:	199.5
51.4	401.3	:	1 058.3	:	:	701.8	45.9	1 319.0	12.9	642.6	177.3	264.8	76.0	297.2	741.0	:	129.5
51.5	405.8	:	2 830.9	:	:	1 008.9	125.1	1 445.9	33.4	633.1	379.1	391.3	175.8	604.6	1 364.0	:	209.3
51.6	528.7	:	840.0	:	:	1 241.6	41.8	504.9	13.6	725.9	306.0	215.9	197.0	451.6	1 185.8	:	253.9
51.7	40.5	:	407.8	:	:	33.5	20.2	235.0	0.7	151.0	10.8	89.6	90.4	24.1	447.3	:	10.7

(1) 1997 data; (2) 1996 data; (3) 1995 data

(4) 1997 data for investment

(5) 1995 data for investment; 1996 data for other variables

Source: Eurostat, SBS database

Productivity and operating result for wholesale activities

Except in most of the Nordic countries, where wholesale trade in food (NACE 51.3) recorded the highest values, turnover per person employed varies widely throughout Europe (Table 2).

However, once again, wholesale of non-agricultural intermediate products (NACE 51.5) and wholesale of machinery (NACE 51.6), appear to be the most important activities for apparent labour productivity.

As these businesses mainly supply industry sector, they deal either in bulk products or 'high unit value'

goods - two factors that help to increase labour productivity.

The highest values for non-agricultural intermediate products were recorded in Finland and Norway (both with more than ECU 60 000 per person employed) and in Luxembourg (more than ECU 80 000). Belgium and, once again, Finland and Norway, were on top in the case of wholesale trade in machinery (NACE 51.6), also with more than ECU 60 000 per person employed. The figures for both activities were lowest in Portugal (less than ECU 30 000).

The different types of product characteristic of the two activities are

also reflected in the gross operating rates (gross operating surplus as a proportion of turnover).

In the case of NACE 51.5 (wholesale of intermediate products) this indicator ranges between 2% and 6% (large quantities sold with 'low margins'), while the operating rates for wholesale trade in machinery (NACE 51.6) are on average higher at around 6% (lowest in France with 3.4% and highest in Italy with 8.2%).

Wholesale on a fee or contract basis (NACE 51.1) is the most striking activity with operating rates of 42.5% in Italy, more than 20% in Austria and Finland and more than 10% in Belgium and Norway.

Table 2: Wholesale trade: main productivity variables by NACE group, 1998

	B	DK (2)	D (3)	EL	E	F	IRL (1)	I (1)	L (4)	NL	A	P	FIN	S (1)	UK	IS	NO (1)
Number of persons employed per enterprise (units)																	
51	:	6	:	:	:	6	10	3	5	8	10	5	5	5	:	:	6
51.1	:	3	:	:	:	2	4	1	2	2	2	2	1	3	:	:	2
51.2	:	7	8	:	:	7	8	3	4	7	16	4	7	7	:	:	9
51.3	:	6	19	:	:	8	11	4	9	10	20	7	6	7	:	:	10
51.4	:	4	16	:	:	5	11	4	4	6	11	7	4	4	:	:	5
51.5	:	9	20	:	:	11	13	5	6	9	14	7	6	5	:	:	8
51.6	:	8	15	:	:	8	14	6	5	11	10	9	7	6	:	:	7
51.7	:	3	53	:	:	1	6	4	2	5	6	6	16	4	:	:	3
Turnover per person employed (thousand ECU)																	
51	600.9	366.9	:	:	:	470.6	373.5	290.0	579.4	:	359.3	221.5	476.8	393.3	:	:	495.3
51.1	269.7	330.9	:	:	:	948.7	52.6	60.0	572.8	:	83.3	164.1	105.7	349.8	:	:	114.4
51.2	743.1	500.6	606.1	:	:	868.1	525.8	440.0	486.9	669.0	327.8	306.9	635.1	453.6	:	:	556.4
51.3	632.2	529.1	523.3	:	:	551.4	495.1	380.0	646.8	604.1	335.7	245.5	592.6	591.1	:	:	927.4
51.4	548.3	338.9	355.1	:	:	396.1	318.6	320.0	373.1	421.3	348.7	221.3	347.0	334.8	:	:	410.7
51.5	983.6	457.5	540.9	:	:	423.2	527.1	590.0	950.5	497.6	507.1	258.3	608.9	450.7	:	:	613.5
51.6	387.8	245.1	327.4	:	:	319.8	266.8	280.0	345.3	393.5	291.0	184.5	339.8	310.8	:	:	330.7
51.7	422.2	229.7	482.7	:	:	408.1	209.2	290.0	446.3	316.0	757.3	197.5	985.2	292.3	:	:	275.4
Apparent labour productivity (thousand ECU)																	
51	53.7	:	:	:	:	48.4	50.2	40.0	60.7	:	49.9	24.0	57.2	49.0	:	:	57.3
51.1	47.9	:	:	:	:	57.1	31.6	30.0	65.2	:	37.7	17.3	48.7	49.8	:	:	42.7
51.2	37.6	:	:	:	:	45.7	65.2	30.0	46.9	44.6	33.3	15.5	44.5	38.6	:	:	46.9
51.3	38.6	:	:	:	:	43.7	43.9	30.0	53.3	46.3	40.0	19.3	46.3	40.1	:	:	52.5
51.4	55.9	:	:	:	:	49.1	52.8	40.0	57.9	57.6	53.4	28.1	55.7	47.7	:	:	57.8
51.5	56.8	:	:	:	:	48.1	59.2	50.0	80.4	57.9	55.3	29.1	62.6	51.7	:	:	60.3
51.6	64.3	:	:	:	:	50.1	51.2	50.0	53.8	55.9	58.2	27.2	60.1	52.4	:	:	60.6
51.7	41.8	:	:	:	:	38.7	40.9	40.0	48.8	46.7	39.0	22.2	57.9	42.8	:	:	49.5
Unit labour cost (thousand ECU)																	
51	41.0	:	:	:	:	36.6	:	30.0	31.9	:	36.1	13.5	35.3	37.3	:	:	40.6
51.1	61.5	:	:	:	:	40.9	:	30.0	45.8	:	35.9	12.9	34.2	36.6	:	:	35.2
51.2	30.9	:	:	:	:	34.0	:	30.0	29.2	30.4	27.0	9.9	29.6	32.3	:	:	38.4
51.3	30.0	:	:	:	:	32.2	:	20.0	26.7	27.0	28.9	10.6	31.4	33.8	:	:	35.9
51.4	42.0	:	:	:	:	36.6	:	30.0	30.9	32.1	38.7	14.6	33.5	37.0	:	:	38.2
51.5	40.3	:	:	:	:	35.6	:	30.0	31.7	34.5	37.2	13.6	34.9	36.5	:	:	40.8
51.6	47.7	:	:	:	:	39.7	:	40.0	35.6	33.7	41.8	16.3	38.6	40.5	:	:	44.5
51.7	31.5	:	:	:	:	32.3	:	30.0	34.8	26.3	32.6	13.9	33.6	32.8	:	:	42.5
Gross operating rate (%)																	
51	3.5	:	:	:	:	2.7	:	7.6	5.7	:	4.6	5.3	4.9	3.9	:	:	3.7
51.1	10.6	:	:	:	:	1.9	:	42.5	6.8	:	21.4	5.6	21.5	5.7	:	:	14.6
51.2	2.9	:	:	:	:	1.5	:	4.5	5.1	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.6	1.9	:	:	1.8
51.3	2.3	:	:	:	:	2.2	:	4.0	4.4	3.6	3.7	3.8	2.7	1.5	:	:	1.9
51.4	3.9	:	:	:	:	3.3	:	7.5	8.7	6.7	5.0	6.4	6.9	4.7	:	:	5.2
51.5	2.2	:	:	:	:	3.0	:	4.1	5.4	5.0	3.9	6.3	4.7	4.2	:	:	3.4
51.6	5.9	:	:	:	:	3.4	:	8.2	6.3	6.1	6.6	6.1	6.6	4.8	:	:	5.3
51.7	3.7	:	:	:	:	2.1	:	7.3	5.8	7.2	1.4	4.6	2.5	5.1	:	:	4.4
Investment per person employed (thousand ECU)																	
51	8.7	:	:	:	:	5.0	6.3	10.0	6.7	:	6.1	5.0	7.5	8.8	:	:	8.0
51.1	10.8	:	:	:	:	5.0	1.0	0.0	2.6	:	2.5	2.9	5.7	10.7	:	:	4.1
51.2	12.6	:	6.3	:	:	9.5	9.8	10.0	14.7	9.9	6.9	3.7	2.9	6.7	:	:	8.5
51.3	7.7	:	4.8	:	:	5.2	5.9	10.0	3.9	7.8	5.6	4.5	6.6	12.6	:	:	12.2
51.4	7.3	:	3.2	:	:	3.9	4.8	10.0	6.8	6.9	4.0	3.9	5.1	6.0	:	:	6.0
51.5	9.0	:	8.0	:	:	5.2	12.5	10.0	12.2	8.2	8.7	9.3	10.4	11.1	:	:	9.8
51.6	10.1	:	4.2	:	:	4.5	3.8	10.0	4.5	5.6	6.6	5.7	7.1	7.4	:	:	7.0
51.7	5.9	:	4.9	:	:	4.7	4.1	0.0	1.8	6.7	4.1	4.4	10.6	14.7	:	:	3.6

(1) 1997 data; (2) 1995 data

(3) 1997 data for investment per person employed

(4) 1995 data for investment per person employed; 1996 data for other indicators

Source: Eurostat, SBS database

➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Database

This Statistics in Focus (SiF) is based on structural business statistics collected under the terms of Council Regulation (EC, EURATOM) No 58/97 of 20 December 1996. The reference data are stored in Eurostat's reference database *New Cronos* (theme 4 - domain SBS – collection enterpr: annual enterprise statistics – dft file *enter* and collection sizclass: annual enterprise statistics broken down by size-class - dft file *tradeempl*). *The figures presented reflect the situation of the database as at 13 October 2000.*

It also presents data on employment taken from the LFS (Labour Force Survey). These data are collected in accordance with Council Regulation N° 577/98 adopted in 1998, which replaced the previous Regulation to take account of new statistical requirements. The methodological basis and the contents of this new series of surveys are described in the publication entitled "Labour Force Survey - Methods and Definitions - 1998 edition".

No data are available for those countries or EU aggregates that are not shown in the graphs or tables.

Statistical classification

The data were collected mainly on the basis of the *Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE Rev. 1)*. This SiF deals with NACE Division **51 (Wholesale trade and commission trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles)**, which breaks down into the following groups:

51.1: wholesale on a fee or contract basis; **51.2:** wholesale of agricultural raw materials and live animals; **51.3:** wholesale of food, beverages and tobacco; **51.4:** wholesale of household goods; **51.5:** wholesale of non-agricultural intermediate products, waste and scrap; **51.6:** wholesale of machinery, equipment and supplies; **51.7:** other wholesale.

SBS variables

Number of enterprises

A count of the number of enterprises registered to the population concerned in the business register corrected for errors, in particular frame errors. Dormant units are excluded.

Number of persons employed

The total number of persons who work in the observation unit (employees receiving remuneration, working proprietors and unpaid family workers) as well as outside working persons who belong to the unit and are paid by it. It includes all persons who are on the payroll of the enterprise, whether they are temporarily absent (excluding long-term absences), part-time, seasonal or home workers, apprentices etc. The number of persons employed excludes manpower supplied to the unit by other enterprises and persons carrying out repair and maintenance work in the enquiry unit on behalf of other enterprises.

Turnover

Turnover comprises the totals invoiced by the observation unit during the reference period, which corresponds to market sales of goods or services supplied to third parties. It includes all duties and taxes on the goods and services invoiced by the unit, with the exception of the VAT invoiced by the unit vis-à-vis its customers and other similar deductible taxes directly linked to turnover.

Value added at factor cost

Value added at factor cost is the gross income from operating activities after adjusting for operating subsidies and indirect taxes. It can be calculated from turnover, plus capitalised production, plus other operating income, plus or minus the changes in stocks, minus the purchases of goods and services, minus other taxes on products which are linked to turnover but not deductible, minus the duties and taxes linked to production.

Personnel costs

Personnel costs are defined as the total remuneration, in cash or in kind, payable by an employer to an employee in return for work done by the latter during the

reference period. Personnel costs also include taxes and employees' social security contributions retained by the unit as well as the employer's compulsory and voluntary social contributions.

Gross operating surplus

Gross operating surplus is the surplus generated by operating activities after the labour factor input has been recompensed. It can be calculated from the value added at factor cost less the personnel costs. It is the balance available to the unit which allows it to recompense the providers of own funds and debt, to pay taxes and eventually to finance all or a part of its investment.

Gross investment in tangible goods

Investment during the reference period in all tangible goods. Included are new and existing tangible capital goods, whether bought from third parties or produced for own use (i.e. capitalised production of tangible capital goods), having a useful life of more than one year including non-produced tangible goods such as land.

Apparent labour productivity

Apparent labour productivity is defined as value added per person employed.

Unit labour cost

Unit labour cost is defined as personnel costs per employee.

Gross operating rate

Gross operating rate is defined as gross operating surplus/ turnover.

The above SBS variables are laid down in Commission Regulation (EC) No 2700/98 of 17 December 1998.

More information on business statistics methodology can be found at:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/ramon/>

or

http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/bmethods/info/data/new/main_en.html

The above-mentioned Regulations and statistical classification can be downloaded under 'legal texts'

Further information:

➤ Databases

New Cronos, Domain SBS, LFS

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