

Statistics in focus

INDUSTRY, TRADE AND SERVICES

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Developments for the construction sector in the fourth quarter of 2003

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Latest trends

In the final quarter of 2003, the working day adjusted production index for construction posted its third consecutive increase, as compared to the same period of the previous year. Output rose by 1.8 % in the EU-15 and by 0.5 % in the euro-zone. Both of these values were higher than the growth rates registered in the third quarter of 2003.

Compared to the previous quarter, the seasonally adjusted production index for construction rose by 0.9 % in the EU-15 and by 0.4 % in the euro-zone. These rates were considerably higher than those recorded in the third quarter, when there had been no growth in the EU-15 and a fall of 0.3 % in the euro-zone.

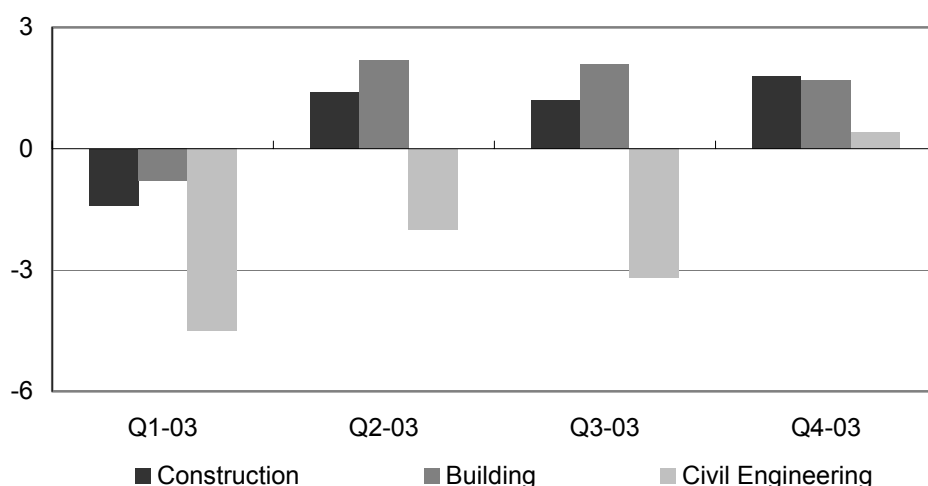


Figure 1: Production index for EU-15 construction, building and civil engineering, growth rates, compared to the same quarter of the previous year (%)

Quarter on quarter growth rates, seasonally adjusted series				Year on year growth rates, working day adjusted series			
EU-15		Euro-zone		EU-15		Euro-zone	
Q1-03	-0.6	Q1-03	-0.5	Q1-03	-1.4	Q1-03	-1.9
Q2-03	1.6	Q2-03	1.0	Q2-03	1.4	Q2-03	0.8
Q3-03	0.0	Q3-03	-0.3	Q3-03	1.2	Q3-03	0.4
Q4-03	0.9	Q4-03	0.4	Q4-03	1.8	Q4-03	0.5

Table 1: Production index for construction, growth rates (%)

Data extracted: 21.04.2004

Production indices for construction

Among the Member States for which data were available, the highest growth rates, on the basis of a quarter on quarter comparison, were reported in Luxembourg, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Austria and Germany. In each of these countries production rose by at least 1 % and growth was considerably higher in Luxembourg (9.0 %) and Denmark (4.7 %). In Finland and France, the production index for construction posted its third consecutive quarter on quarter gain in the final quarter of 2003, as output rose by 0.5 % and 0.3 %, respectively.

On the other hand, Portugal (-6.7 %), Belgium (-2.1 %), Spain (-0.3 %), Sweden (-0.2 %) and the Netherlands (-0.1 %) all reported a

contraction in their level of production for construction in the final quarter of 2003. This marked the first time since the second quarter of 2002 that Spain posted a fall.

Growth rates based on an annual comparison confirmed the strength of growth in Luxembourg and in Denmark, as production increased by 9.3 % and by 6.2 %, respectively, between the final quarters of 2002 and 2003. Over the same period there was growth of 12.0 % in Austria (continuing a pattern of four high growth rates), 7.1 % in the United Kingdom (where growth rates accelerated from the second quarter of 2003 onwards), 4.9 % in Finland, 3 % in Spain and 1.2 % in France.

With the exception of Spain, the other four countries posting negative quarter on quarter rates also reported that production fell between the final quarters of 2002 and 2003. Reductions in activity were again registered in Portugal (-8.5 %), Belgium (-3.8 %), Sweden (-1.9 %) and in the Netherlands (-1.6 %). The only other Member State to record a reduction in production between the final quarters of 2002 and 2003 was Germany, where output fell by 0.7 %.

	Quarter on quarter growth rates, seasonally adjusted series						Year on year growth rates, working day adjusted series					
	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03
EU-15	0.3	0.3	-0.6	1.6	0.0	0.9	1.2	-0.2	-1.4	1.4	1.2	1.8
Euro-zone	0.0	0.3	-0.5	1.0	-0.3	0.4	0.3	-1.0	-1.9	0.8	0.4	0.5
BE	-4.0	3.4	0.6	-4.7	2.3	-2.1	-4.2	-5.0	-3.5	-4.2	1.4	-3.8
DK	-2.1	-6.5	1.3	1.9	0.3	4.7	-0.7	-6.8	-9.7	-5.6	-2.4	6.2
DE	-1.4	-1.0	-2.5	1.4	-0.7	1.0	-4.6	-7.0	-12.3	-3.2	-2.4	-0.7
EL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
ES	1.7	0.3	0.9	1.7	0.8	-0.3	7.7	3.6	2.3	4.9	4.2	3.0
FR	-0.5	-0.3	-0.1	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.8	-0.9	-1.6	-0.6	0.8	1.2
IE	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
IT (1)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
LU	-7.3	3.8	1.9	-5.1	3.4	9.0	-4.1	-1.9	-5.8	-5.8	3.4	9.3
NL	-0.2	-2.5	-0.2	0.1	-1.4	-0.1	-3.9	-7.8	-5.1	-1.2	-4.4	-1.6
AT	-1.5	2.0	7.6	-1.0	4.1	1.4	0.0	-0.5	16.5	6.7	10.5	12.0
PT	-4.7	-1.0	-3.7	-1.0	2.9	-6.7	-2.0	-5.6	-9.5	-10.0	-3.2	-8.5
FI	0.3	0.0	-1.0	1.9	3.6	0.5	1.5	3.6	2.1	1.1	4.6	4.9
SE	3.1	-2.6	-1.4	1.8	-2.0	-0.2	7.0	-1.3	0.1	-0.1	-4.2	-1.9
UK	2.0	1.6	-2.7	4.5	2.7	1.5	4.2	4.0	1.0	5.3	5.4	7.1

Table 2: Production index for construction, growth rates (%)

¹ Confidential, but taken into account to compute European aggregates.

Production indices for building

In the final quarter of 2003, the EU-15 production index for building rose by 0.5 %. This rate was higher than that recorded in the third quarter when output rose by 0.1 %. The growth of production for building was below that registered for civil engineering for the first time since the third quarter of 2002.

	Quarter on quarter growth rates, seasonally adjusted series						Year on year growth rates, working day adjusted series					
	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03
EU-15	0.2	0.9	-0.5	1.6	0.1	0.5	1.1	0.5	-0.8	2.2	2.1	1.7
Euro-zone	0.1	0.7	-0.3	0.9	-0.4	0.0	0.3	-0.5	-1.1	1.5	0.9	0.1
BE	-4.0	2.7	6.2	-1.3	5.9	2.6	-6.2	-6.7	-2.1	-3.4	2.1	-3.7
DK	-1.9	-6.4	-2.1	1.6	2.3	3.9	1.8	-5.8	-9.8	-8.7	-4.8	5.8
DE	-1.7	-0.8	-2.4	2.0	-0.7	0.1	-5.2	-7.4	-12.1	-2.7	-1.7	-0.8
EL	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
ES	1.9	2.0	0.4	1.5	0.2	-0.8	8.0	5.7	3.8	6.1	4.5	1.2
FR	-0.2	0.0	-0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	1.9	0.1	-1.5	-0.1	0.5	0.5
IE	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
IT (1)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
LU	-5.0	-4.4	-2.3	1.2	3.8	4.1	-1.9	-4.3	-12.2	-11.1	-2.2	11.2
NL	-0.3	-1.6	-0.7	0.5	-1.1	-0.2	-3.9	-7.4	-3.5	-0.5	-4.9	-2.5
AT	-0.5	-1.3	10.3	-2.3	2.4	1.9	0.3	-3.9	15.9	5.3	8.7	12.3
PT	-4.3	-0.3	-3.6	-0.7	3.8	-7.4	-1.7	-4.5	-8.2	-8.8	-1.3	-8.0
FI	-0.8	0.5	-0.5	2.1	3.1	0.4	0.9	3.5	2.7	1.3	5.2	5.3
SE	1.9	-2.7	-2.0	2.2	-1.8	0.7	6.2	1.5	-3.2	-1.1	-4.4	0.5
UK	1.1	2.3	-0.7	4.0	2.3	1.4	3.4	5.0	1.6	7.1	8.4	7.3

Table 3: Production index for building, growth rates (%)

Production indices for civil engineering

The quarter on quarter growth of production for civil engineering followed an alternating pattern of falls and rises throughout 2003. As such, the 0.4 % contraction in output that was recorded in the third quarter in the EU-15 was more than compensated for by growth of 0.8 % in the final quarter of 2003. On the other hand, in the euro-zone there were three consecutive quarter on quarter increases in production through to the final quarter of 2003, when output rose by 0.4 %.

	Quarter on quarter growth rates, seasonally adjusted series						Year on year growth rates, working day adjusted series					
	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03
EU-15	0.5	-2.4	-0.8	0.4	-0.4	0.8	2.2	-2.4	-4.5	-2.0	-3.2	0.4
Euro-zone	0.5	-1.4	-0.4	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.3	-2.8	-3.2	-0.3	-0.4	1.3
BE	-1.4	3.2	19.3	-4.1	7.0	0.0	-13.8	-11.9	11.8	6.7	12.9	3.0
DK	-0.2	-0.6	6.3	5.2	-2.1	5.8	-13.1	-11.5	-9.5	11.9	11.5	8.3
DE	-1.0	-1.2	-2.7	0.3	-0.9	2.6	-3.6	-6.5	-12.7	-4.0	-3.6	-0.6
EL	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
ES	3.2	-3.8	1.4	2.7	2.3	-1.6	9.1	-2.6	0.7	3.4	2.6	4.8
FR	-1.4	-0.8	0.2	0.3	1.4	0.7	-1.5	-3.2	-1.8	-1.8	1.4	2.9
IE	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
IT (1)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
LU	-6.4	7.2	-1.1	1.5	0.6	6.5	-6.7	0.7	-0.2	0.2	9.9	7.3
NL	-1.4	-2.8	-1.1	1.2	0.1	0.4	-2.2	-7.0	-12.4	-4.5	-2.9	1.1
AT	-0.9	9.6	4.5	-2.4	5.1	2.8	-0.9	11.1	18.8	11.0	15.7	11.4
PT	-5.4	-2.3	-4.0	-1.6	0.7	-5.3	-3.4	-7.9	-12.4	-12.8	-7.2	-9.8
FI	4.0	-1.9	-2.9	1.0	5.8	0.5	3.8	4.1	-1.5	-0.4	2.9	3.2
SE	1.1	2.8	-0.5	-0.7	1.1	-3.6	5.8	-8.3	9.8	2.7	-3.5	-6.7
UK	3.3	-9.5	-5.4	1.5	-1.7	2.8	11.0	1.2	-9.9	-10.3	-14.7	-3.0

Table 4: Production index for civil engineering, growth rates (%)

¹ Data estimated by Eurostat and taken into account to compute European aggregates.

New orders

New orders in construction followed a largely negative trend during 2003, as three of the four periods registered a fall in the quarter on quarter growth rate, the most pronounced of which was in the final quarter of 2003, when new orders were reduced by 3.2 %. This was largely a result of losses of more than 5.0 % in Spain and the United Kingdom.

	Quarter on quarter growth rates, seasonally adjusted series						Year on year growth rates, gross series					
	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03
EU-15	1.3	1.5	-2.1	-1.8	1.5	-3.2	4.0	8.6	1.7	-1.2	-1.0	-5.6
Euro-zone	-1.9	2.8	-1.2	-2.6	2.2	-0.6	3.5	7.4	2.1	-3.2	0.7	-3.3
BE	-3.3	5.9	-1.8	-8.9	0.2	5.0	-7.3	5.8	6.4	-8.8	-5.5	-5.7
DK	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
DE	-2.9	-2.0	-7.0	-0.1	1.1	-3.2	-5.8	-6.1	-17.0	-12.1	-7.3	-8.7
EL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
ES	-4.1	0.8	10.8	-4.8	3.5	-5.6	14.6	17.8	28.6	2.0	10.5	2.2
FR	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.5	1.3	0.5	9.3	6.0	3.0	2.3	4.8	3.4
IE	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
IT	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
LU	-3.2	4.6	-10.4	-10.4	-3.0	4.7	-12.5	36.4	13.1	-20.2	-20.3	-16.0
NL	0.2	0.8	0.6	:	:	:	4.7	19.7	-10.9	:	:	:
AT	-1.4	4.2	3.7	-2.9	9.7	1.0	-0.8	9.2	9.8	3.6	15.2	11.6
PT	9.0	-5.2	-5.6	0.3	-2.0	8.0	-7.0	-7.9	-3.8	-2.7	-12.9	1.1
FI	8.1	13.2	2.7	-31.5	6.0	43.6	14.4	66.2	63.7	-9.7	-11.5	11.7
SE	0.4	0.7	-1.8	-1.9	0.7	-3.3	3.9	1.3	27.7	14.0	11.7	-3.6
UK	20.4	-6.1	2.1	-8.5	2.3	-5.5	5.8	14.0	-1.6	4.4	-7.9	-13.6

Table 5: New orders index for construction, growth rates (%)

Employment

There was no change in the level of employment between the final quarter of 2002 and the final quarter of 2003 in the EU-15's construction sector. On the basis of a comparison with the quarter before, the number of persons employed in the EU-15 rose by 0.2 % in the final quarter of 2002 (while the corresponding rate of change in the euro-zone was -0.5 %, in the main due to a reduction of 1.4 % in Germany).

	Quarter on quarter growth rates, seasonally adjusted series						Year on year growth rates, gross series					
	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03
EU-15	0.0	-0.3	0.3	0.4	-0.5	0.2	-1.2	-1.2	-1.4	0.5	0.2	0.0
Euro-zone	-0.3	-0.2	0.3	0.3	-0.8	-0.5	-1.1	-1.4	-1.5	0.2	-0.4	-0.7
BE	-0.5	-0.8	-0.7	-0.7	-0.9	-0.7	-1.0	-2.2	-2.6	-2.5	-3.2	-3.0
DK	-1.0	-1.0	-0.4	-0.7	-0.7	0.9	-2.8	-2.6	-3.2	-3.1	-2.7	-0.8
DE	-1.5	-3.3	-2.2	-0.8	-1.5	-1.4	-7.8	-7.9	-11.0	-7.6	-6.6	-6.9
EL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
ES	-0.9	0.8	2.5	1.5	-0.6	0.8	1.9	1.0	2.2	4.1	4.3	4.3
FR	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	1.2	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.7	1.1
IE	-0.4	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.1	-0.1	-2.8	-0.9	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.5
IT	1.9	1.2	0.6	1.4	-0.4	-0.4	2.2	2.8	4.3	6.5	2.6	0.7
LU	0.2	0.3	0.3	-0.1	0.2	-0.1	2.2	1.7	1.2	0.6	0.9	0.3
NL (1)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
AT	-0.2	0.3	0.8	1.1	1.0	1.1	-3.5	-2.9	0.0	3.1	3.5	3.7
PT	-1.2	-2.2	-2.8	-1.7	-1.8	-0.3	-1.1	-4.0	-6.9	-7.7	-8.2	-6.4
FI	-0.5	2.5	0.2	0.7	-1.6	-0.4	-1.9	3.3	3.0	4.2	1.1	-0.3
SE (2)	:	:	:	:	:	:	-1.3	1.2	-0.3	2.7	2.3	-0.6
UK	0.0	1.0	0.4	1.6	1.6	1.6	-2.4	-0.5	-0.6	2.9	4.6	5.3

Table 6: Employment index for construction, growth rates (%)

¹ Data not published due to unreliable quality. ² Series too short for seasonal adjustment.

Hours worked

Despite there being no change in employment, the index of the number of hours worked rose by 1.3 % between the final quarters of 2002 and 2003 in the EU-15. On the basis of a quarter on quarter comparison, the number of hours worked rose by 0.2 % in the final quarter of 2003, following growth of 0.5 % in the third quarter.

	Quarter on quarter growth rates, seasonally adjusted series						Year on year growth rates, gross series					
	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03
EU-15	-1.4	-0.2	1.0	-0.1	0.5	0.2	-3.5	-3.8	-0.6	-0.6	1.3	1.3
Euro-zone	-1.3	-0.6	1.2	-0.2	0.4	0.1	-3.8	-4.8	-0.8	-0.7	0.8	1.1
BE	-1.2	-0.1	0.6	-3.2	1.4	-2.4	-1.2	-5.4	-3.3	-3.7	-0.6	-2.7
DK	-4.2	-0.5	0.7	-1.1	-3.2	3.7	-2.5	-1.1	-0.8	-5.0	-4.0	0.1
DE	-2.0	-6.1	-2.1	3.1	-1.3	0.5	-8.3	-11.2	-16.6	-6.8	-4.4	-2.9
EL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
ES	-1.5	2.5	3.6	1.4	3.7	2.5	-4.6	-4.6	12.8	6.7	8.3	8.6
FR	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.3	-0.1	0.4	0.7	0.9
IE	1.8	-1.6	0.3	:	:	:	0.9	-0.9	-0.7	:	:	:
IT	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
LU	-5.0	-0.4	0.9	0.1	3.1	2.3	-1.8	-2.9	-4.1	-6.0	4.4	8.9
NL (1)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
AT	-0.4	1.1	0.9	1.5	1.6	1.1	-3.3	-1.5	0.0	3.8	6.7	5.1
PT	-2.4	-1.0	-2.5	-1.9	-0.4	-3.1	-0.5	-4.5	-8.0	-9.0	-2.9	-8.1
FI	-2.7	2.1	1.1	1.6	1.3	1.0	-2.7	-1.1	-0.1	2.5	6.0	5.2
SE (2)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
UK	-3.0	1.5	-0.1	:	:	:	-3.3	-0.3	0.0	:	:	:

Table 7: Hours worked index for construction, growth rates (%)

Wages and salaries

The gradual acceleration of wage growth in the construction sector stabilised in the final quarter of 2003, as the wages and salaries index rose by 0.3 % in the EU-15 (compared to the quarter before), thus confirming the rate of change that had been registered in the third quarter and surpassing the rates registered in the first half of 2003. Indeed, the latest growth rates for the EU-15 were the highest since the final quarter of 2001.

	Quarter on quarter growth rates, seasonally adjusted series						Year on year growth rates, gross series					
	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03
EU-15	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.9	-0.1	0.0	0.5	1.6	0.6
Euro-zone	-0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.2	-1.0	-0.9	0.2	1.4	-0.4
BE	-0.2	12.5	3.6	1.1	-0.4	-1.1	-0.1	15.3	18.0	18.0	19.8	-1.8
DK	-0.9	-0.8	-0.4	0.9	0.6	0.7	-3.2	-2.6	-1.8	-5.6	1.1	3.6
DE	-1.2	-2.3	-2.6	0.4	-1.9	-1.6	-5.1	-7.0	-10.0	-5.1	-5.9	-6.3
EL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
ES	0.8	0.0	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.0	3.9	-1.8	2.1	4.3	6.3	4.0
FR	1.1	0.6	-0.1	0.8	1.2	0.9	5.1	4.2	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.8
IE	2.3	-1.6	1.9	:	:	:	11.6	5.4	5.4	:	:	:
IT	1.0	0.4	-0.4	:	:	:	-0.9	-0.2	0.6	:	:	:
LU	-0.9	4.2	-2.4	0.3	2.8	0.9	4.5	13.3	3.6	0.6	5.1	1.8
NL (1)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
AT	0.2	1.1	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.5	-0.3	0.4	4.0	5.0	5.8	5.7
PT	-0.6	-1.0	-1.6	-0.7	-0.5	1.3	2.4	-0.4	-2.4	-3.9	-4.2	-1.6
FI	-1.3	-0.4	2.1	0.8	1.8	1.3	1.2	0.6	1.8	1.0	4.4	6.3
SE (2)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
UK	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.4	0.1	1.9	3.7	3.7	2.8	1.8	1.8	3.6

Table 8: Wages and salaries index for construction, growth rates (%)

¹ Data not published due to unreliable quality. ² Data confidential, but taken into account to compute EU-15 aggregate.

Construction costs

Construction costs in the EU-15 increased by 0.5 % in the final quarter of 2003 (compared to the quarter before). As such, the lowest quarterly cost increase since the third quarter of 2000 was recorded. On the basis of a year on year comparison, construction costs in the EU-15 rose by 4.6 % in the final quarter of 2003, in keeping with the rates that were recorded throughout the whole of the year.

	Quarter on quarter growth rates, gross series						Year on year growth rates, gross series					
	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03
EU-15	1.0	0.5	1.3	0.7	2.0	0.5	4.8	4.7	4.8	3.6	4.6	4.6
Euro-zone	0.6	0.1	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.2	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.1	1.8	1.8
BE	1.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	2.9	2.5	1.9	0.9	0.9
DK	0.3	0.7	0.7	1.2	0.0	0.1	2.0	2.4	2.1	2.9	2.6	2.0
DE (1)	0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1
EL	0.8	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.2	0.5	2.4	2.2	2.7	3.1	2.5	2.5
ES (2)	0.6	0.4	1.0	0.2	0.5	-0.1	1.6	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.2	1.7
FR	1.0	0.3	1.4	0.7	0.3	0.6	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.5	2.8	3.1
IE (3)	2.5	0.1	0.2	1.7	-0.1	0.0	5.8	2.8	2.7	4.6	1.9	1.8
IT	0.6	0.2	2.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	3.9	3.9	3.2	3.2	2.8	2.7
LU (1)	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.4	2.5	2.8	2.8	2.2	1.7	1.8
NL	1.1	-0.1	0.7	0.2	0.7	-0.1	3.2	3.0	2.2	1.9	1.5	1.5
AT	0.2	0.1	0.9	1.1	0.6	0.6	1.5	1.8	2.2	2.2	2.7	3.2
PT	0.4	0.2	1.0	0.3	-0.3	0.2	3.0	3.0	2.4	1.9	1.3	1.2
FI	0.3	0.0	0.9	0.7	0.3	-0.3	0.6	1.4	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.6
SE	0.9	0.2	1.5	0.6	0.7	0.5	3.2	3.4	4.0	3.2	3.0	3.4
UK (1) (4)	2.5	1.8	2.4	1.6	7.9	1.6	14.5	13.1	14.4	8.5	14.2	14.0

Table 9: Construction costs index for residential buildings, growth rates (%)

Building permits

The number of building permits issued for dwellings in the EU-15 grew by 3.6 % in the final quarter of 2003, reversing the 0.3 % decline that was recorded in the third quarter. There was an 8.6 % increase in the number of permits issued for dwellings in the EU-15 between the final quarters of 2002 and 2003.

	Quarter on quarter growth rates, seasonally adjusted series						Year on year growth rates, gross series					
	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03
EU-15	4.5	1.2	3.5	-1.4	-0.3	3.6	2.3	7.6	13.1	5.8	2.5	8.6
Euro-zone	3.7	3.0	4.7	-3.3	1.3	4.8	1.3	10.0	17.6	6.6	4.7	10.5
BE	6.0	-5.3	3.2	4.9	-0.1	12.5	12.7	1.5	6.9	8.8	2.0	22.1
DK	2.2	-25.0	-6.5	-2.3	-4.1	2.8	29.5	7.1	-29.7	-30.0	-34.2	-9.9
DE	-0.1	3.0	17.7	-17.7	-2.0	8.7	-10.3	6.3	39.1	-1.9	-5.2	3.4
EL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
ES	7.5	6.4	7.0	5.6	-3.7	8.3	-1.2	13.4	21.0	29.7	17.8	12.8
FR	2.2	-2.0	3.3	-0.2	10.2	5.5	-1.2	0.3	7.1	3.1	9.8	15.5
IE	-14.5	-10.7	-1.5	33.9	10.1	-5.9	1.4	-15.6	-17.0	1.0	33.9	37.8
IT (5)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
LU	-29.0	27.8	-2.5	-11.6	11.3	:	-28.0	17.5	40.2	-20.3	30.8	:
NL	1.5	30.7	-9.5	-0.9	-14.5	21.1	-12.9	53.1	38.7	11.2	1.9	6.1
AT	17.0	-29.1	-21.2	40.7	-2.1	37.3	40.8	-12.3	-36.6	-9.2	-25.7	44.8
PT	4.4	-22.5	7.4	-2.0	-0.8	13.0	-8.4	-20.3	-7.2	-14.9	-19.1	18.0
FI	5.3	-0.1	-2.0	15.6	1.1	10.4	1.4	9.1	-0.4	20.2	14.6	23.5
SE	-2.9	-5.4	29.4	-10.8	4.0	-1.7	6.0	4.5	39.0	21.4	4.5	17.6
UK (6)	5.4	-0.5	2.2	1.3	:	:	1.9	-1.5	3.3	8.5	:	:

Table 10: Building permits - number of dwellings in residential buildings, growth rates (%)

¹ Output prices for new residential buildings are used as a proxy for construction costs. ² Input prices for building construction. ³ Input prices for 1-dwelling residential buildings. ⁴ New deflation method. ⁵ Data confidential, but taken into account to compute European aggregates. ⁶ Building starts for houses.

Building permits in square metres

The increase recorded in the number of permits issued was replicated in terms of the area for which residential building permits were granted. In the EU-15 the area for which permits were granted rose by 9.9 % (and by 10.7 % in the euro-zone) between the final quarters of 2002 and 2003. This was largely due to strong quarter on quarter gains at either end of the year, as the area for which permits were issued rose by 6.4 % and 6.1 % respectively in the first and final quarters of 2003 in the EU-15.

	Quarter on quarter growth rates, seasonally adjusted series						Year on year growth rates, gross series					
	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03	Q3-02	Q4-02	Q1-03	Q2-03	Q3-03	Q4-03
EU-15	-1.7	3.6	6.4	-4.2	2.0	6.1	-0.4	11.1	19.5	4.9	3.6	9.9
Euro-zone	1.4	3.5	4.0	-0.3	2.3	3.7	-1.7	12.0	21.5	6.2	5.4	10.7
BE	3.6	-6.8	9.4	1.0	0.8	9.9	2.7	-4.9	5.3	6.5	4.2	22.3
DK	3.8	-23.1	-12.1	0.7	-4.3	2.9	27.8	-9.4	-28.6	-32.3	-33.9	-11.7
DE	0.5	6.9	16.4	-18.9	-1.8	11.0	-10.1	16.8	46.8	-1.0	-4.8	3.7
EL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
ES	13.1	6.9	1.3	5.2	4.7	0.9	-1.9	13.7	20.1	28.9	19.2	12.5
FR	-1.6	0.1	2.9	0.8	5.6	7.8	-1.7	1.9	5.3	1.0	8.8	19.6
IE	-16.3	-1.7	-4.2	28.7	6.4	-5.1	-7.4	-18.1	-14.3	0.1	21.7	33.4
IT (1)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
LU	-32.2	37.4	-1.3	-20.3	24.6	:	-33.6	26.8	48.4	-26.4	51.6	:
NL	2.7	30.4	-4.3	-5.2	-16.4	24.4	-13.9	42.8	45.9	11.4	-0.3	-2.7
AT	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
PT	1.4	-13.0	-2.1	-1.5	-4.1	6.1	0.7	-16.0	-10.4	-15.1	-23.7	1.1
FI	2.9	0.3	0.5	9.9	8.1	8.9	5.2	9.7	8.8	15.1	18.7	28.6
SE	-1.7	2.1	11.8	-2.2	3.7	-4.8	9.0	4.0	28.5	26.2	6.7	5.7
UK	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

Table 11: Total area for which residential building permits were granted, growth rates (%)

¹ Data confidential, but taken into account to compute European aggregates.

Definitions

Production index: shows output volume through the trend in value added at factor costs at constant prices.

Building and civil engineering: the two main Sections in the classification of types of construction (CC).

New orders: an indication of future production. An order is the value of a contract linking a producer and a third party for the provision of goods and services. The order is accepted if there is sufficient evidence for a valid agreement.

Employment: number of persons employed is the total number of persons working within and outside the observation unit (including working proprietors, sales representatives and so on). It also includes persons absent for a short, definite period or persons on strike. Part time, trainee and seasonal workers are also included.

Hours worked: total number of hours worked, excluding hours paid but not actually worked such as for meals, holidays and sick leave.

Wages and salaries: total remuneration, in cash or in kind, payable to all persons counted on the payroll, in return for work done during the reference period. Includes taxes and social contributions paid by the employee.

Construction costs: measure the evolution of the costs of the factors employed in the activity of construction and incurred by the contractor. These factors include, amongst others, materials, wages and salaries, plant and equipment hire; **output prices:** show the evolution of prices paid by the client to the contractor.

Building permits: show the future development of construction activity. A building permit is an authorisation to start work on a building project.

For more information please consult the STS methodology manual at the following web address (note that this is a PDF):

http://forum.europa.eu.int/irc/dsis/bmethods/info/data/new/embs/MM_Eurostat%202002-0507%20vo.2.pdf

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