



**STATISTICAL OFFICE OF
MONTENEGRO**

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN GOODS OF MONTENEGRO

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Guidelines

The purpose of these methodological guidelines is to enable users to correctly understand and use statistical data on Montenegro's trade in goods with foreign countries, produced and published by the Statistical Office of Montenegro.

The guidelines provide an overview of the methodology for data collection, processing and dissemination, the roles of institutions involved in the process, as well as the data sources available to users.

1.2 Importance of International Trade in Goods Statistics

Statistics on international trade in goods belong to the domain of economic statistics and represent an essential source of data for national accounts, the balance of payments and short-term economic analyses. They are of great importance for monitoring the competitiveness of the country in order to successfully design and implement economic policies, prepare trade negotiations and monitoring activities, as well as trade agreements.

Based on these statistics, the following are determined: general economic policy, development of trade policy, market analyses for exporters and importers aimed at defining their commercial strategies, establishment of material balances for strategic products in order to control markets in agriculture and energy, etc.

2. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND LEGAL BASIS

2.1 Institutional Framework

The Statistical Office of Montenegro is responsible for the production, processing and dissemination of international trade in goods statistics.

The Customs Administration of Montenegro is responsible for collecting and validating customs declarations and delivers data from the Single Administrative Document (SAD) to the Statistical Office, which constitutes the main data source for international trade in goods statistics.

2.2 Legal Basis

International trade statistics in Montenegro are conducted in accordance with the [Law on Official Statistics and Official Statistical System of Montenegro](#) (Official Gazette of Montenegro No 18/12, 47/19 and 23/25), the Agreement on Mutual Cooperation between the Statistical Office and the Customs Administration of 22 June 2004 (Annex II of 20 January 2009), as well as regulations governing customs procedures, including the Rulebook on the form, content, method of submission and completion of customs declarations and summary declarations ("Official Gazette of Montenegro", No. 03/2003 and 08/2007), and the Law on Customs Tariff, adopted and published for each applicable year.

2.3 Regulatory Framework

Statistics on Montenegro's international trade in goods are methodologically aligned with the **United Nations recommendations for International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS)**, as well as with European Union regulations and methodological guidelines related to statistics on trade in goods with non-EU countries (Extrastat).

The methodological framework is based, inter alia, on the following EU legal acts, which served as the basis for the development and harmonisation of statistics on trade in goods with non-member countries:

- Regulation (EC) No 471/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council,
- Regulation of the European Commission no. 92/2010,
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 113/2010.

In addition, international trade in goods statistics are aligned with the newer European methodological framework for business statistics, including regulations adopted within the European Business Statistics (EBS) system, in the part related to international trade in goods.

Furthermore, the implementation of international trade in goods statistics is based on the **Compilers' Guide on European Statistics on International Trade in Goods**, which provides detailed methodological and practical guidance for the consistent application of international and European standards.

3. DATA COLLECTION AND COVERAGE

3.1 Data Source and Coverage

3.1.1 Data Source

The data source for international trade statistics is the customs declaration. Since the data are collected from customs declarations, international trade in goods statistics are based on the Rulebook on the form, content, method of submission and completion of customs declarations and summary customs declarations, the Customs Law and the Law on Customs Tariff.

A customs declaration is a document by which a person, in a prescribed form and manner, requests that goods be placed under a specific customs procedure; it consists of a set of eight sheets.

The Customs Tariff is a coded product classification according to a nomenclature.

A nomenclature is a structured list of names used in specific subject areas.

The customs procedure in the customs declaration is recorded in "Box 37", consisting of four digits: a two-digit code of the requested procedure and a two-digit code of the previous procedure from the Code List.

The alignment of the Customs Tariff with the **Harmonized Commodity**. Description and Coding System is carried out at the level of the first six digits of the tariff code. The World Customs Organization revises the nomenclature every five years. As Montenegro is a member

of the World Customs Organization, it is obliged to harmonize its nomenclature every five years.

3.1.2 Statistical Territory

The statistical territory for international trade in goods statistics covers the customs territory of Montenegro.

Data are based on all customs declarations accepted by the Customs Administration of Montenegro, except for goods and procedures excluded in accordance with international standards (e.g. transit, diplomatic consignments, goods for repair).

3.1.3 Reference Period

Statistics on Montenegro's international trade in goods are collected on a monthly basis.

In theory, the reference period is the calendar month in which the physical export or import of goods takes place.

In practice, the reference period is determined by the month in which the Customs Administration of Montenegro accepts and records the Single Administrative Document (SAD).

This approach is in line with Eurostat methodology for International Trade in Goods Statistics (ITGS).

3.1.4 Coverage of the Survey

Statistics on international trade in goods cover all goods exported from Montenegro and goods imported from abroad and released for free circulation.

Exports include goods leaving the statistical territory of Montenegro under the following customs procedures: export, outward processing, and re-export of goods previously placed under inward processing and processing under customs control.

Imports include all goods entering the statistical territory of Montenegro under the following customs procedures: release for free circulation, inward processing, re-importation and processing under customs control.

4. DATA PRODUCTION

4.1 Statistical Concepts and Classifications

4.1.1 Available Statistical Data

The Statistical Office produces data according to the following variables: trade flow (import/export), year, month, partner country, product, statistical value, net mass, supplementary units of measure, statistical procedure, invoiced currency, type of transaction and mode of transport.

The partner country refers to the country with which the international trade transaction is carried out. In exports, the partner country is the country of final destination of the goods, while

in imports it is the country of origin of the goods, in accordance with international statistical standards.

The product refers to the goods that are the subject of the international trade transaction and is classified according to the Combined Nomenclature (CN), based on the Harmonized System (HS), and for analytical purposes also according to the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC).

The statistical value represents the value of goods at the moment of crossing the border of the statistical territory. Imports are expressed at CIF value, while exports are expressed at FOB value.

Net mass represents the mass of goods excluding packaging and is expressed in kilograms. This variable is mandatory for all products in international trade in goods statistics.

Supplementary units of measure are used for certain products where net mass alone is not sufficient for proper quantity measurement (e.g. litres, pieces, metres, kilowatt-hours) and are defined by the Combined Nomenclature.

The statistical procedure indicates the customs procedure under which the goods are declared and determines whether the goods are included in international trade statistics, in accordance with the special trade system applied in Montenegro.

The currency refers to the invoiced currency in which the value of the goods is expressed on the commercial invoice and is used for analysing the currency structure of international trade.

The type of transaction indicates the nature of the international trade transaction (e.g. purchase/sale, return of goods, processing, donation) and enables the distinction between commercial and non-commercial flows.

The mode of transport indicates the means by which the goods cross the border of the statistical territory (e.g. road, rail, maritime, air) and is used for analysing logistics and transport flows.

4.1.2 Trade System

In international trade in goods statistics, two trade systems are used for data collection, processing and dissemination: **the general trade system and the special trade system**.

The general trade system represents a broader statistical concept and includes all goods entering or leaving the economic territory of a country, except goods in transit.

The statistical territory includes:

- customs warehouses,
- all types of free zones,
- areas for inward processing and processing of goods,
- areas of free movement of goods, as well as other areas which, according to customs regulations, form part of the economic territory of the country.

The special trade system represents a narrower statistical concept compared to the general trade system. Under this system, statistical coverage is limited only to goods entering free circulation or goods leaving the free circulation of the economic territory of the country.

Under the special trade system:

In imports, the following are statistically covered:

- only goods released for free circulation (customs procedure: import),
- goods that thereby become available on the domestic market,
- goods for which all customs duties and charges have been calculated and paid.

In exports, the following are statistically covered:

- goods of domestic origin,
- goods that are in free circulation and leave it for export purposes,
- goods after completion of inward processing when they become export products.

Under the special trade system, the following goods are not covered:

- goods in customs warehouses,
- goods in free zones,
- goods under temporary storage,
- goods under inward processing procedures (while processing is ongoing),
- goods in transit,
- temporary imports of a non-commercial nature,
- goods under special customs procedures without release into free circulation.

Such goods are included in statistics only when they are released for free circulation (in imports) or when they leave free circulation (in exports).

Under the general trade system, goods are included in statistics as soon as they enter the customs territory, regardless of whether they are released for free circulation, stored, temporarily stored or processed under special procedures.

This concept is broader than the special trade system, which includes exclusively goods released for free circulation (in imports) or goods of national origin / goods from free circulation (in exports).

The special trade system implies that goods arriving from another country and intended for customs warehousing are not recorded in international trade statistics unless they are subsequently released for free circulation in Montenegro (or placed under an inward processing procedure). Likewise, goods leaving a customs warehouse and exiting the territory of Montenegro are not recorded as exports.

4.1.3 Special Trade System

Montenegro applies the special trade system, meaning that statistics cover only goods in free circulation, while goods in customs warehouses or under special procedures are not recorded until they become available for domestic use.

The special trade system is a narrower concept used in cases where the statistical territory of a country corresponds to a specific part of its economic territory. This system does not record as imports goods received from abroad into a customs warehouse until they are released for

free circulation (or placed under inward processing or processing under customs control), nor does it record goods leaving a customs warehouse.

By definition, the special trade system covers only goods in free circulation in the importing country, where they are available without customs restrictions, meaning that they have completed customs procedures and are intended for domestic use.

4.1.4 CIF and FOB

Imports are recorded at CIF value, while exports are recorded at FOB value, in accordance with international statistical standards.

CIF (Cost, Insurance and Freight) value includes the transaction value of goods and the value of services required to deliver the goods from the border of the exporting country to the border of the importing country.

Under CIF terms, the seller is responsible for paying the freight costs for transporting the goods to the agreed destination, in accordance with the contract with the buyer. The seller is also responsible for insuring the goods at minimum coverage against the risk of loss or damage during transport.

FOB (Free on Board) value includes the transaction value of goods up to the border of the exporting country. It is understood that distribution services such as transport and handling of goods up to the customs border of the exporting economy are included in the price.

Montenegro records imports at CIF value, meaning that transport costs up to the border of the importing country are included in the import value.

On the other hand, Montenegro records exports at FOB value, meaning that transport costs beyond the border are not included and only the transaction value of the goods is recorded.

Montenegro publishes data according to **statistical value**.

4.1.5 Classifications Used in International Trade in Goods Statistics

In international trade in goods statistics of Montenegro, the following internationally recognised nomenclatures and classifications are used:

4.1.6 Customs Tariff – Combined Nomenclature

The Combined Nomenclature (CN) is the official eight-digit classification of goods of the European Union, based on the Harmonized System (HS).

Montenegro applies the Combined Nomenclature for customs procedures and statistical classification of goods in imports and exports.

The Combined Nomenclature is used for:

- Classification of goods in customs declarations for imports and exports,
- International data exchange with Eurostat,
- Calculation of customs duties,
- Production of official international trade statistics.

The European Union revises and amends its nomenclature annually, which means that Montenegro's Customs Tariff must adopt the same amendments each year. Alignment of Montenegro's Customs Tariff with the EU nomenclature is one of the fundamental prerequisites for the proper implementation of international trade with EU Member States, as well as for Montenegro's accession to the European Union.

4.1.7 Standard International Trade Classification – SITC Rev. 4

The Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) is a United Nations classification that groups goods according to economic criteria and end use.

In Montenegro's statistics, SITC Rev. 4 is used for:

- International comparisons of trade flows,
- Long-term structural analyses,
- Preparation of analytical publications,
- Economic and sectoral research.

4.1.8 Country Classifications

ISO Standard – Country Nomenclature (ISO 3166)

For identifying partner countries in trade flows, Montenegro applies the ISO 3166 standard (alpha-2 and alpha-3 codes).

ISO codes are mandatory in customs declarations and are compatible with international statistical standards.

GEO Nomenclature (Eurostat GEO)

For reporting to Eurostat and generating data in accordance with SDMX requirements, the Eurostat GEO nomenclature is used. It defines:

- countries and territories,
- regional economic groupings,
- geographical groups (e.g. EU-27, CEFTA, Western Balkans),
- special territorial aggregates.

The GEO nomenclature ensures full harmonisation of Montenegro's data with Eurostat standards.

4.1.9 Revision Policy

The Statistical Office has adopted a revision policy, which is available on its website:

[Revision policy.](#)

Routine monthly revisions are carried out each month. Data relating to the current year are revised. Monthly data received from the Customs Administration include data from the beginning of the year up to the latest month of the current year.

Regular monthly revisions cover the current year. Preliminary data become final in April of the following year.

5. DATA QUALITY

Data quality is ensured through a system of basic and advanced validation checks of customs declarations, as well as through analyses of data comparability and compliance with international standards.

5.1 Accuracy of Data

With regard to Single Administrative Documents (customs declarations), validation checks can broadly be classified as follows:

Validation checks of Single Administrative Documents are divided into basic and advanced checks.

Basic checks verify the validity of data, such as incorrect or missing codes, alphabetical characters in numeric fields, and similar errors. Errors of this type must be corrected or eliminated, as they hinder statistical processing.

Advanced checks verify the accuracy of data and detect residual errors through inconsistencies between variables or through comparisons with data from previous months.

5.2 Comparability of Data

Data on Montenegro's international trade in goods can be compared with mirror statistics of other countries trading with Montenegro. However, certain discrepancies may occur (exports of one country do not necessarily correspond to imports of another country, and vice versa).

Such discrepancies may arise due to the following reasons:

- Trade system applied (general trade system, special trade system – extended definition, or special trade system),
- Quasi-transit in trade with European Union countries,
- Definition of the partner country (country of origin or country of export),
- CIF/FOB valuation,
- Misclassification of goods,
- Data confidentiality,
- Time lag in recording transactions,
- Data revisions,
- Currency conversion.

5.3 Compliance with International Recommendations

International trade in goods statistics are based on an appropriate methodological framework provided by the recommendations of the United Nations Statistics Division (UN), the customs regulations of the European Union (EU), and the methodological materials of the Statistical Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT).

These recommendations, regulations and materials provide methodological guidance and serve as a basis for aligning international trade statistics with international standards, complemented by national regulations governing trade in goods with foreign countries.

The compilation of international trade in goods statistics is based on UN and EU recommendations contained in the following publications:

- International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions,
- Statistics on International Trade in Goods – User Guide.

6. DISSEMINATION

Statistics on international trade in goods are disseminated through regular monthly and annual publications, dissemination databases and the official website of the Statistical Office, in compliance with the principles of confidentiality and equal access for all users.

6.1 Data Users

The most important national users of international trade in goods statistics in Montenegro include: the Central Bank, ministries and other public administration bodies, local governments, the Chamber of Commerce, embassies, non-governmental organizations, students, researchers and the media.

The most important international users of the data include: Eurostat, the World Bank, United Nations organizations, the International Monetary Fund, and the International Trade Centre.

6.2 Publications

Publications containing data on international trade in goods include the monthly release (International Trade in Goods of Montenegro) and the annual release (International Trade in Goods of Montenegro).

The Statistical Office publishes the following regular publications: Statistical Yearbook, Montenegro in Figures, and Monthly Statistical Review.

In addition to regular publications, the Statistical Office also publishes ad hoc publications. Some of the most significant ad hoc publications include: *Women and Men in Montenegro*, and *Most Frequently Used Statistical Data*.

All publications issued by the Statistical Office are available at the following link:

[Publications.](#)

Data on Montenegro's international trade in goods, i.e. imports and exports, are available in dissemination databases on the website of the Statistical Office of Montenegro:

Monthly international trade in goods data – dissemination database:

[Foreign trade-Monthly data.](#)

Annual international trade in goods data – dissemination database:

[Foreign trade-Annual data.](#)

6.3 Data Release Calendar

The Law on Official Statistics and the Official Statistical System of Montenegro (Official Gazette of Montenegro No 18/12, 47/19 and 23/25) stipulates that producers of official statistics shall prepare, update and publish a Data Release Calendar

The Data Release Calendar is published on the website of the Statistical Office no later than 20 December for the following year and includes the release dates of statistical data for all producers of official statistics. Any change to the release dates specified in the Calendar is announced in advance, in accordance with the Procedure on Unplanned Revisions.

The Data Release Calendar for international trade in goods statistics of Montenegro is available on the Statistical Office's website at the following link:

[Statistical Release Calendar](#).

6.4 Confidentiality and Protection of Individual Data

Confidentiality of international trade in goods statistics is guaranteed by the Law on Official Statistics of Montenegro. Data are considered confidential when they allow for direct or indirect identification of individual business entities.

In international trade in goods statistics, two types of confidentiality are distinguished: active and passive confidentiality.

Active confidentiality applies when statistical authorities themselves take the initiative to protect data, either for reasons of state interest or to protect the interests of individual entities. Passive confidentiality applies when state authorities or importers/exporters request that statistical authorities do not publish data that could cause harm to their interests or to state interests.

In Montenegro's international trade in goods statistics, passive confidentiality is applied. Customs declarations and other documents containing information on individual transactions, as well as on individual importers/exporters, are considered confidential.

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