EXTERNAL TRADE IN GOODS

Reference Metadata in Euro SDMX Metadata Structure

(ESMS)

INSTAT

Reference Metadata

1. Contact	
1.1. Contact organisation	INSTAT, Institute of Statistics
1.2. Contact organisation unit	External Trade Unit, Directory of Real Sector Statistics
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2. Metadata update	
2.1. Metadata last certified	17.01.2024
2.2. Metadata last posted	17.01.2024
2.3. Metadata last update	17.01.2024
3. Statistical presentation	
3.1. Data description	External Trade Statistics in goods are a very important instrument for decision makers in the public's and private sectors. The statistical information is mainly used in the preparation of bilateral and multilateral negotiations in the context of trade policy and for the assessment of market economies, market research and in determining their trading strategies. These statistics are important not only for these relationships, but at the same time is an important instrument for other statistics. They have an important role in the national accounts statistics, are an important element in the Balance of Payments (BOP), etc.

External trade statistics of goods are intended to provide data on trade goods, export/import of goods in Albania. The main source of statistical data providing of foreign trade of goods is the General Authority of Customs. Information collected each month, through the Customs Declarations. This declaration provides necessary data for customs and statistical purposes and also collects statistical data for the period of the transaction, for the type of |

	goods, net weight, gross weight, the statistical value of the goods, country of destination, country of exporter, origin country, type of transaction, type of concession etc.
3.2. Classification system	External trade statistics in goods are published at the national level, by country/group of states, at 2-digit level and grouped by sections 21 and 9 commodity groups of the Combined Nomenclature (CN): External trade statistics unit process the data of import and export by 9 groups of Trade International Standard Classification (SITC). External trade statistics unit process the data of import and export by enterprise characteristics using other classifications, e.g. Nomenclature of Economic Activities, Products Nomenclature. These statistics are processed by other classifications used for the needs of other sectors in INSTAT and various institutions, e.g Classification by Broad Economic Categories.
3.3. Sector coverage	All sectors producing physical commercial goods are covered.
3.4. Statistical concepts and definitons	Key definitions of indicators used and published in foreign trade statistics are: **Exports:** These in general are goods destined to be send to a third country, subject to customs regime or outside processing arrangements, or re-exported after inside processing. **Imports:** These in general are goods coming from a third country and are directly unloaded or placed to a warehouse according to the customs procedures to accomplish free zones processing, active or customs processing. **F.O.B (Free on board):** It's the delivery condition of goods, indicating that the price of goods includes transport and handling cost to a specified port for shipment. **C.I.F. (Cost, Insurance, Freight):** It's the delivery condition of goods indicating that the price includes insurance and freight to an agreed port of destination. **The general trade system** records all goods entering or leaving the economic territory of a country with the exception of simple transit trade. So in this case are recorded as imports of all goods entering the customs warehouse of a country, even if they do not appear in free circulation in this country. At the same time, outgoing goods from customs warehouse country recorded as exports of the country. **The special trade system** is a narrower concept. In this case all goods from a foreign country that are received into customs warehouses, are not recorded in the special trade aggregates unless they subsequently go into free circulation in the country of receipt or are placed under the customs procedures for inward processing. Similarly, outgoing for goods from customs warehouses are not recorded as exports.
3.5. Statistical unit	Any physical and juridical person lodging a customs declaration.
3.6. Statistical population	The External Trade in Goods register all goods which add or subtract from the

	stock of material resources of Albania by entering (imports) or leaving (exports) its economic territory including goods for processing. Information on the goods is provided by physical and juridical person.
3.7. Reference area	External trade statistics in goods cover trade flows entering or living the statistical territory of Albania (country level).
3.8. Time coverage	Time series of annual trade data on a consistent basis for most aggregates are available electronically from year 1991. Time series of monthly trade data on a consistent basis for most aggregates are available electronically as from year 2005.
3.9. Base period	Data of External Trade in goods have been published since year 2005.
4. Unit of measure	The value of trade is expressed in ALL, Million ALL. The net mass in kg and the quantity in supplementary unit (e.g. m, m^2, number of items) are used to measure the volume of the trade.
5. Reference period	This report refers to the data of 2023. The reference period for the information on external trade data is the calendar month of export/import of the goods. In practice the reference period is in general the calendar month during which the customs declaration is registered (the date when the goods cross the border) by customs authorities.
6. Institutional mandate	
6.1. Legal acts and other agreements	At national level External Trade Statistics in Goods are based on: • National Statistical Law; • Official Statistics National Program 2022-2026; • Memorandum of Understanding with General Directorate of Customs. At European level External Trade Statistics are based on: • Regulation (EC) No 471/2009 of the European Parliament; • Council Commission Regulation (EC) No 92/2010; • Commission Regulation (EC) No 113/2010.
6.2. Data sharing	Agreement with Eurostat to disseminate the External Trade Data for Albania.
7. Confidentiality	
7.1. Confidentiality - policy	Data collected on External Trade in Goods are considered strictly confidential and are used only for statistical and research purposes based on national Statistical Law No.17/2018 "On Official Statistics", date 10.03.2018 and on Law No.9887, date 10.03.2008 "Personal Data Protection". Article 31 on Statistics Law reads as follows: Data collected for the production of official

	statistics shall be treated by INSTAT as confidential and shall be used only in aggregated tables that will not identify the source information unit. Direct identification means when a statistical unit is directly identified from its name or address or any officially allocated and commonly known identification number. When data processing is made in a manner that allows the identification of the data subject, the data should immediately be encrypted in order for the subjects to be no longer identifiable.
7.2. Confidentiality - data treatment	Albanian Institute of Statistics protects and does not disseminate data it has obtained or it has access to, which enable the direct or indirect identification of the statistical units. Albania Institute of Statistics takes all appropriate preventive measures so as to render impossible the identification of individual statistical units by technical or other means that might reasonably be used by a third party. Statistical data that could potentially enable the identification of the statistical unit are disseminated by Albania Institute of Statistics if and only if: a) These data have been treated, as it is specifically set out in the Regulation, in such a way that their dissemination does not prejudice statistical confidentiality; b) The statistical unit has given its consent, without any reservations, for the disclosure of data. The confidential data that are transmitted to Albania Institute of Statistics are used exclusively for statistical purposes and the only persons who have the right to have access to these data are the personnel engaged in this task. Issues referring to the observance of statistical confidentiality are examined by the staff working in Albania Institute of Statistics. The responsibilities of this staff are to recommend on: which detailed level the statistical data can be disseminated, so as the identification, either directly or indirectly, of the surveyed statistical unit is not possible; the anonymization criteria for the micro data provided to users; the access granting to researchers on confidential data for scientific purposes. INSTAT publishes data at aggregated level only. In order to protect the identification of trader the published total should include at least three traders, from which one trader should not exceed 85% of the total value. Internal decision: For goods for CN chapter 93, active confidentiality is applied directly by customs: all 8-digit codes of CN chapter 93 are replaced by code CN 93000000 before the data are provided to INSTAT.

8. Release policy

8.1. Release calendar	Notifications about the dissemination of statistics are published in the release calendar, which is available on the website. The announcements and delays are per-announced in this calendar. In the case of delays, the date of the next publication and the explanation of the reasons for the delays are specified.
8.2. Release calendar access	The calendar of publications is available on INSTAT website.

8.3. User access	In line with the article 34 of Law No.17/2018 "On Official Statistics", dated in 17.04.2018, disseminates statistics on INSTAT website and other media for simultaneous access, respecting professional independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably. The following dissemination channels are used to release the results: 1. Website – online release; 2. Written requests; 3. Special publications (General printed publications, Foreign Trade, Statistical Yearbook); 4. Data request, section available for external users.
9. Frequency of dissemination	Detailed data: Monthly and Annual; Aggregated data: Monthly and Annual.
10. Accessibility and clarity	
10.1. News release	According to the calendar of publications, press release regarding to the External Trade is published monthly. The format of the press release is determined by the publication sector, which also sets the publication date. Press release of the External Trade is published online at INSTATs website.
10.2. Publications	The data are presented and published at INSTATs website according to legislation and regular issues: • Monthly: External Trade; • Yearly: International Trade in Goods and Enterprises; • Yearly: Albania in Figure, Foreign and Joint Enterprises.
10.3. On-line database	All the information is available in both Albanian and English language. Since 2011, through the Pc-Axis system is provided to external users in web a longer time series data for Monthly External trade and Annual External Trade. A simple methodological explanation exists also in the web page. The database is accessible on the following link: Database of statistical data.
10.4. Micro – data access	Micro data are given to specific users after filling standard requesting forms. The micro data are given to the users in the case these data are not confidential based on Article 31 of Official Statistical Law No.17/2018. In the case of confidentiality, data are hidden at the detailed level, which means that the trade is not allocated to the real product code and/or the real partner. It is nevertheless included in the total trade and allocated to the real chapter, (i.e. to the real HS2 code).
10.5. Other	Users can send other specific requests through a dedicated section for Contacts.

10.6. Documentation on methodology	A short explanation related to the definitions of the main concepts and methodological explanations are provided to users in the end of press releases and publications. Additional support information is given to internal users when needed or required. Also the methodological notes are published at INSTATs website.
10.7. Quality documentation	The external trade statistics unit documents all the work process and procedure for internal purposes.
11. Quality managment	
11.1. Quality assurance	INSTAT is committed to ensure the highest quality with respect to the compilation of statistical information. In accordance with the Statistics Law, INSTAT use statistical methods and processes in compliance with internationally recognized scientific principles and standards conduct ongoing analyses of the statistics with a view to quality improvements and ensure that statistics are as up to-date. In performing its tasks it follows the general principles of quality management from the European Statistics Code of Practice. INSTAT declares that it takes into account the following principles: impartiality, quality of processes and products, user orientation, employee orientation, effectiveness of statistical processes, reducing the workload for respondents.
11.2. Quality assessments	Quality controls and validation of data are actions carried out throughout the process. The staff is involved in different stages of index calculation, such as the data collection, data control, data input and other necessary control are all well trained. This helps the staff to know the enterprises and their responsibilities and keep an updated collaboration. Processes are in place to monitor adequately the quality of compiled and disseminated statistics. The unit regularly undertakes data checks for coverage, classification, and missing data. In addition, it monitors the internal consistency of source data and consistency across source datasets. It notes and investigates all unusual movements in the source data received.
12. Relevance	
12.1. User needs	Users of External Trade data are classified as external and internal. External users are: • Institutions of Public Administration; • Universities; • National and international NGOs; • Business; • General public and other groups of interest. Some main indicators are sent to European Commission, World Bank; IMF; UN - Organizations etc. Internal users are those within INSTAT, who use External Trade Statistics as input for their work:

	- National Accounts Directory; - Agriculture Directory; - Economic Statistics Directory; - Price Sector; - Quarterly National Accounts Sector.
12.2. User satisfaction	INSTAT analyzes page views every year and clicks about "External Trade in Goods" in 2023 are 30,142. INSTAT conducts an annual survey to measure User Satisfaction. The 2023 survey results show that the overall quality of the topic " External Trade in Goods " was rated 3.98 point (79.5 %) on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good).
12.3. Completeness	The completeness of the Foreign Trade of Goods data for 2023 is measured by comparing the quality and quantity of the indicators requested by Eurostat with those followed by INSTAT. The completeness of Foreign Trade data (monthly) is partially compatible with Eurostat. Trade by currency is fully Eurostat compliant. Trade by enterprise characteristics is partially compatible with Eurostat.

13. Accuracy and reliability

13.1. Overall accuracy	The main source of error is wrong information being made by traders on the costumer. Whenever traders aware of error, they can easily correct them with an additional declaration. These corrections are reflected to the data by INSTAT as soon as possible. The effects of these corrections to the variables are low.
13.2. Sampling error	Not applicable. The Data for External Trade are collected by administrative sources so there is no sampling error. Validity checks applied by INSTAT to identify errors in the following fields: - Records with National Customs Procedure Code initialized with "ANU" are deleted as they correspond to a cancellation: it is an intermediate stage before the status "cancelled" is attributed to the item. - Records with customs procedure codes starting with 65 (importation of repaired goods), 93 (destructions of goods), and 99 (natural or technical losses) are deleted. - Code fields: Combined Nomenclature 8 digits, customs procedure codes, national customs procedure codes, delivery terms, office code, transport mode, container, country, supplementary unit, trader, preference, quota, currency. - CN code must be compliant with the official Combined Nomenclature of the year. - Partner cannot be Albania except for declaration with CPC "7200",

	"9600"(entry in duty free), and "6910" (re importation of exportedgoods).
	• Terms of delivery should never be empty.
	• Electricity ("2716000000") cannot be associated to another mode of transport than"7. Fixed transport installation".
	• Monetary gold checks regarding the CN code "71082000": If the code 71082000 refers to a huge amount and the trader is BOA, then it needs to be excluded, from ITGS, but included in the data sent to BOA.
	• Otherwise it is most probably an error and the commodity code probably needs to be changed to non-monetary gold.
	Preference code not valid after 2011 ("MTLYU", "SPA_BE", "MTLRO", "MTLKS").
	• Customs should always enter the same quantity with a given CN codes else the aggregation of declaration will not be meaningful for quantityof SU. The following tests are then applied:
	    ○ Quantity of SU found in the declaration is in the SU required forthe CN code.
	    ○ The quantity in SU should not be filled in if it is not required by CN.
	    ○ If the SU quantity field is not empty, the SU code should be filled in.
	    ○ If the SU code is filled in, then the quantity must not be 0.
	• Net mass and SU quantity cannot be both equal to 0.
	• Net mass should not be bigger than gross mass.
	• Statistical value must be above 0 when customs procedure is different from "7200", "9600" ("(entry in duty free), and "6910" (re importation of exported goods) as the value could be 0 in order to avoid double counting with the linked declaration).

13.3. Non - sampling error	Not available. Possible sources of non-sampling errors include: misclassification of commodity codes, non-response, late response etc.

14. Timeliness and punctuality

14.1. Timeliness	Monthly results of External Trade in Goods are published on INSTAT website 17 days after the end of the reference period (T+17 days). The reference period of these results is December 31st, 2023. <table><tr><td>Reference period</td><td>12/31/2023</td></tr><tr><td>Date of publication</td><td>1/17/2024</td></tr><tr><td>Timeliness</td><td>17</td></tr></table>
14.2. Punctuality	The data of External Trade in Goods are disseminated according to the publication calendar. The publication of External Trade has been punctuality in time to 100% of publications carried out over the years. <table><tr><td>Reference period</td><td>12/31/2023</td></tr><tr><td>Date of announcement</td><td>1/17/2024</td></tr><tr><td>Date of publication</td><td>1/17/2024</td></tr><tr><td>Time lag</td><td>0</td></tr></table>

15. Coherence and comparability	
15.1. Comparability - geographical	Differences between the methodology, concepts and definitions used to collect and process the data can influence in the comparability of data between Albania and other countries.
15.2. Comparability - over time	Over the years there are many changes regarding definitions, coverage or methods, classifications. These changes influence in the comparability over time, especially in detailed level in the case of changes to classification. INSTAT revises the data each month, and in case of significant changes it can be possible to revise the data back.
	Time series of annual trade data on a consistent basis for most aggregates are comparable from 1991, providing a comparability of 33 years (CC2=Jlast-Jfirst+1=33).
	Time series of monthly trade data on a consistent basis for most aggregates are comparable from 2005, providing a comparability of 19 years (CC2=Jlast-Jfirst+1=19).
15.3. Coherence - cross domain	INSTAT is the official institution to publish the External Trade Statistics in goods, based on the statistical law.
15.4. Coherence - internal	The internal consistency of the data is checked before it is finalized. The links between variables are checked and coherence between different data series confirmed.
16. Cost and burden	Being the administrative source as the unique source, the burden on respondents is almost zero. People working on the External Trade Statistics in goods data are: Total staff in Central Office: 3 employees.
17. Data revision	
17.1. Data revision - policy	Revision policy of External Trade in Goods is done in accordance with general revision policy and errors treatment policy introduced by INSTAT in the links below. The same revision policy is applied nationally and in transmissions to Eurostat: • Revision Policy; • The Errors Treatment Policy.
17.2. Data revision - practise	General Directorate of Customs (GDC) provides the national statistical authorities with revised records on imports and exports where statistical data already provided are amended or changed. External Trade Statistics sector reviseeach month the data and the revisions are released in the next publication. The final data for the year it's released in the External Trade Statistics in Goods yearly publication of the next year. The revisions done each month are reflected not only in publications, but in the same time they are reflected in the database available in the INSTAT web page.

	There are no reviews of data on External Trade in Goods for 2023 up to now, subject to this report.
18. Statistical processing	
18.1. Source data	The only source for external trade data in goods is the Customs Authorities. Goods covered by Customs include Electricity and Crude Oil. Pipelined gas or water is not subject to international trade in Albania. 'Ships' and 'Aircrafts' are included in External Trade Statistics based on customs declaration. At the moment INSTAT does not use any other source.
18.2. Frequency of data collection	External Trade in Goods data are collected monthly, from administrative source.
18.3. Data collection	GDC is responsible for collecting and checking the customs declarations. The data are collected electronically by Customs Offices. For statistical purposes these data are delivered monthly to INSTAT for statistical data checking and processing Provisional monthly data are provided to INSTAT every month on the 8th of the month following reference month. Data are controlled, and then a first release is published around the 17th of the month on paper and web site. The data is currently provided in excel format on CD (by mail). There are no delays in data deliveries.
18.4. Data validation	Data processing is done with in access where are included some validity checks errors, for example: Controls related with goods value that needs to be >0, net weight < gross weight, the unit of products should be the same as the unit set by custom in CN, net weight should not be 0, if unit is determined, the partner country shouldn't be AL (Albania), checks for specifics codes that should be analyzed, adjustments to the product codes or countries according to Eurostat standards, etc.
18.5. Data compilation	Since March 2012, some basic data controls are introduced. GDC performs some data controls but not for statistical propose. These controls are done for taxation purpose so the data received have some validity errors that are corrected in INSTAT. Statistical Value Customs calculate are statistical value FOB for exports; and for import, when the statistical value is underestimated in comparison with the values provided in reference tables; the Customs officers apply an adjustment rate to raise the customs value. The adjusted value is used as statistical value as it is closer to reality INSTAT does not have a regular routine for the estimation of statistical value. In the case when the Statistical value is missing, INSTAT contacts custom to correct and put the value. In the case of no answer we estimate the value using the average price for that product. The statistical data does not include the nature of the transaction. The Customs is investigating on how to collect it as this information was requested by several institutions. Until now, no way was found to collect it in the current system.

	GDC does not apply simplification. Transactions are recorded using customs declarations and data are used in statistics. **Specific goods:** • **Industrial plants:** GDC does not use simplification procedures for industrial plants. Transactions are recorded under the relevant CN codes. • **Vessels and aircraft:** INSTAT includes 'Vessels' and 'Aircraft' in the trade data based on Customs Declarations. Motor vehicle and aircraft part INSTAT includes 'Motor vehicles and aircraft part' in the trade data based on Customs Declarations. **Goods delivered to vessels and aircraft:** The Goods delivered to vessels and aircraft are considered as normal export. • **Sea products:** The sea products are considered as normal export. • **Electricity and gas:** INSTAT include 'Electricity' in its data. The data are provided monthly by General Directorate of Customs. For the moment trade on electricity and gas (group 271112) is registered by customs and taken into account in the trade of Albania. • **Military goods:** There are no special procedures in Customs to declare goods under military secrecy. Confidentiality on national level is applied by Customs before sending data to INSTAT by replacing all commodity codes belonging to the CN chapter 93 with CN code 93000000. This confidentiality is based in an internal decision of General Director of Customs.
18.6. Adjustment	Not applicable. No seasonal adjustments are made to aggregate Foreign Trade in Goods data.
19. Comment	
Annex	