

Comment on Methodology of External Trade Statistics

External trade statistics represent an important source of information for the needs of the economy-oriented public, ministries and other state authorities of the Czech Republic (Office of the Government, Chamber of Deputies, the Senate, Czech National Bank), institutions of higher education, international organisations (Eurostat, FAO, IMF, OECD) and last but not least the business-oriented public. External trade data are used for analytical purposes, particularly for evaluation of economic development of the state; detailed data give the business-oriented public an insight into the business environment.

The source of information on external trade is data collected by customs authorities. Starting from processing of the January 2004 data, data collection and the first check are carried out by the Directorate General of Customs (DGC), whereas the Czech Statistical Office is in charge of further data processing, checks and publishing.

In compliance with the binding regulations of the EU, the measurement of data on exports and imports is governed by Customs Act No. 13/1993 Sb., as amended; by Decree No. 199/2004 Sb., on trade with third countries implementing certain provisions of the customs act and repealing certain decrees regulating exemptions from import duty and the non-preferential origin of goods (by the Ministry of Finance of the CR) as amended, effective since 1 May 2004. Intrastat, is governed by Decree No. 563/2005 Sb., on statistics of exported and imported goods and on the way of sharing data on trade with the other Member States of the European Communities amending decree No. 201/ 2005 Sb. which came into effect on 1 January 2007.

External trade statistics is made up of the sum of intra - Community trade (trade with the EU Member States) and trade with third countries. Data on goods traded between Member States of the Communities are supplied by reporting units to the customs office on the Intrastat questionnaire, with information on dispatches of goods or arrivals of goods. Data on imported and exported goods in trade with third countries are given in a Single Administrative Document (SAD).

Enlargement of the European Union by two countries (Bulgaria and Romania) affected the shifts of member countries between individual groups of countries. Data for the corresponding period of preceding year in all tables are converted to the comparable basis of members as in current year, which keeps them comparable.

SITC, Rev. 4 was accepted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2006 and became effective on 1 January 2007. SITC, Rev. 4, retains the overall structure of SITC, Rev. 3, and consists of the same number of sections, divisions and groups. The changes made were at the level of basic headings and some subgroups.

Data on external trade in USD and in EUR in Table 2 "External Trade, January - February 2008" are calculated, using average monthly exchange rate in a given period as reported by the Czech National Bank.

The Czech Statistical Office publishes monthly the **sample indices** of nominal **prices of imports and exports**, which are based on prices measured among selected commodities and selected units. The development of prices is measured, using representatives-items with defined constant quality, so that only changes in prices are measured. These indices are published in the edition Statistical Information - "Import and Export Price Indices in the CR" (Czech-English version), publication code: 7201-08. The price indices serve the preparation of deflators used to compute imports and exports indices at constant prices, where the indices are converted on the basis of the structure of imports or exports according to the SITC, Rev. 4, at the 2-digit level in a given period.