



**Luchtime seminar and workshop  
on the occasion of  
the 2012 Meeting of BWC States Parties.**

# **UN COMTRADE: Basic facts on trade data**

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## What is UN Comtrade?

- The United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database: [comtrade.un.org](http://comtrade.un.org)
- Maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), Trade Statistics Branch
- Contains detailed imports and exports statistics reported by statistical authorities of close to 200 countries or areas since year 1962
- Recognized by UN Statistical Commission in 2010 as the global database and information platform on official international merchandise trade statistics
- Considered the most comprehensive trade database available in Internet





[Home](#) [Data Query](#) [Data Availability](#) [Metadata & Reference](#) [Subscription & Support](#) [Fast tracks](#)

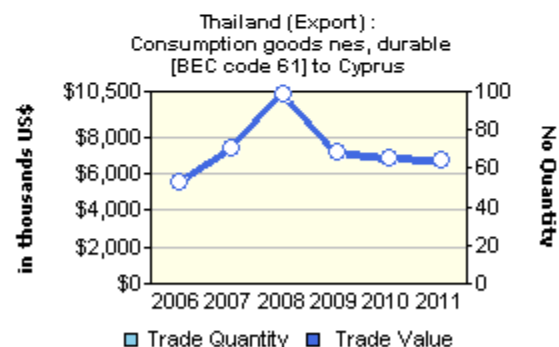
[Home](#)

### Shortcut Query

Show  of  in the year   
 from  to   
 in  classification.

[»NEW!« UN Monthly Comtrade - detailed monthly trade dat](#)

### Trade in Graph



[\(details\)](#). [graph more...](#)

### Data Availability

**Consumption goods nes, durable** [BEC Code 61] was reported by 201 countries between 1988-2011 with 374899 records. [\(details\)](#)

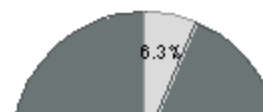
Welcome to UN Comtrade!  
You are identified as **Comtrade Guest**.

### What's New on Comtrade

[2012.12.04] [Monthly Bulletin of Statistics tables updated more...](#)

### What's inside

Available Trade in UN Comtrade as share of World Trade for 2011 (world trade 2011 is estimated at 36.0 trillion US dollars)



### Work on IMTS

- > [Methodology IMTS](#)
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\* regularly updated

Search for  data  help

### Upgrade of UN Comtrade



### NOW AVAILABLE



Enter search terms

### Help / Guideline / FAQ

- > [What is UN Comtrade?](#)

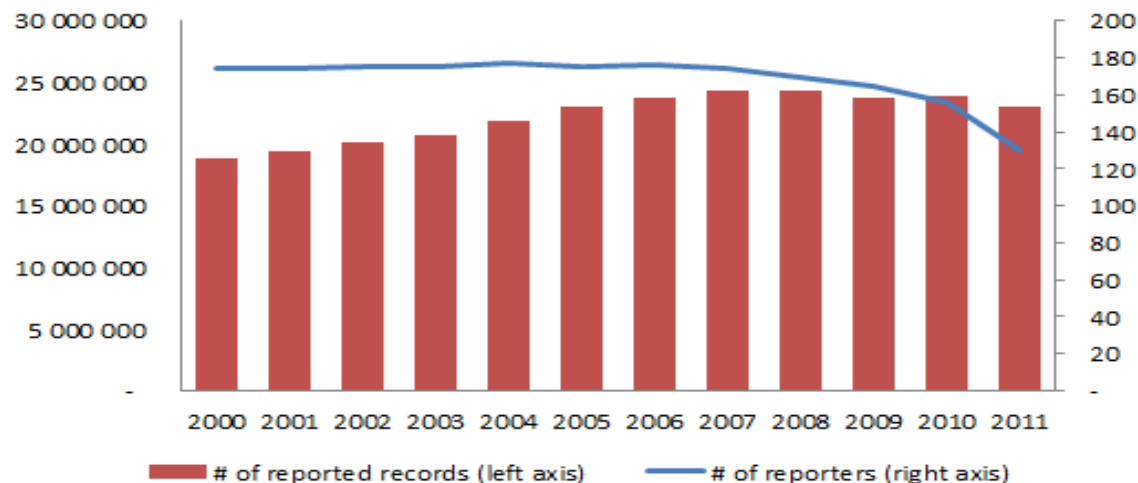
## Content

A typical record is, e.g.:  
Exports of cars from Germany to the United States in 2007, in terms of value (US dollars), net weight (kg), and supplementary quantity (number of cars)

- Exports: Trade Flow
- Cars: Product / Commodity (in HS [Harmonized System], SITC [Standard International Trade Classification] and BEC [Broad Economic Categories] classifications)
- Germany: Reporter
- United States: Partner Country
- 2007: Year (Since 1962 until now)
- Value, Net weight and Supplementary Quantity: Measurement

Quantity may be more suitable to monitor specific product as it is not influenced by price, exchange rate, inflation, valuation, transfer pricing, etc.

## Coverage



- Level of detail available is up to HS 6-digits
- The database is continuously updated. Whenever trade data are received from the national authorities, they are standardized by the UN Statistics Division and then added to UN Comtrade
- However, as repository of official statistics, no attempt for estimation of non-reported countries



## Data Processing @ UN Comtrade

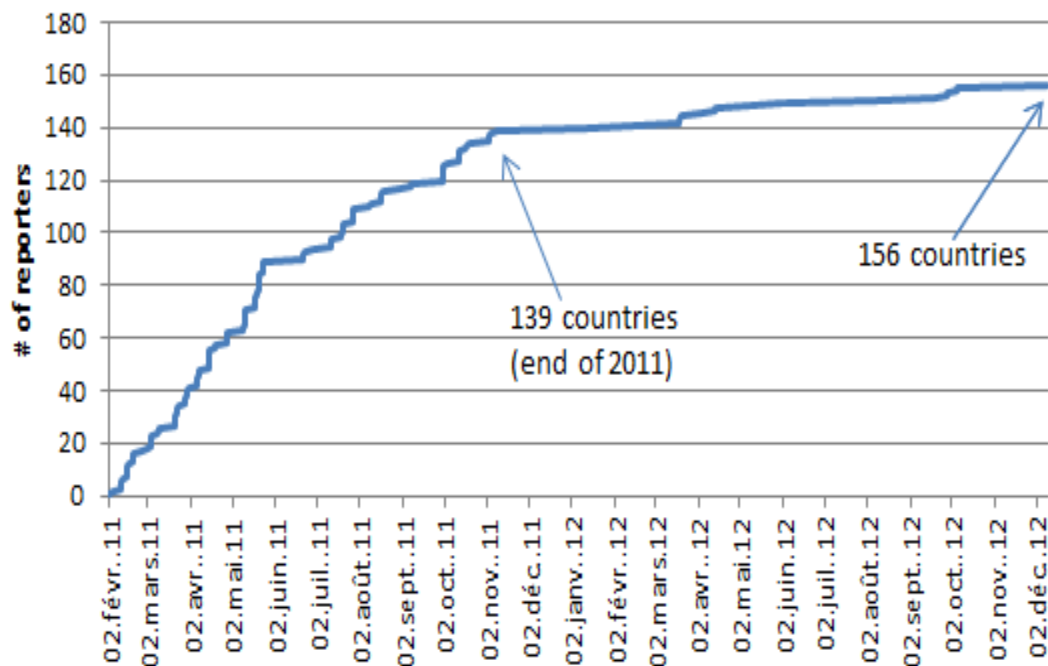
- Standardization of values (conversion into USD from National Currency)
- Standardization of territories (as reporting areas or partner countries)
- Standardization of products/commodities up to 6-digit level
- Standardization of quantities based on WCO recommended unit (at 6-digit HS level)
- Standardization of trade flows (into 4 flows: exports, imports, re-exports and re-imports)
- Conversion into other commodity classification
- Detection of extreme quantity outliers then if necessary adjustment on those quantities

All of these to make data comparable internationally



## Data Availability - Timeliness

### Evolution of 2010 data availability 2 Feb 2011 - 10 Dec 2012



- It takes a while to have almost complete coverage
- As shown from chart, 139 countries in one year (in 2011) and addition of 17 countries in another year (in 2012)
- Nevertheless, those 139 countries has covered already more than 95% of global trade
- Technical assistance aims to improve timeliness

## Selected Features

- Dissemination of massive amount of data via:
  - Batch (users notified by email upon completion)
  - Web service (automated data exchange among computers via internet)
- Personalization features
  - Customization of download format
  - Saving own query profiles; notification of new/revised data
  - Creation of personalized country group and product group
- Extensive metadata
  - Explanatory and publication notes
  - Quantity estimation flag
- Excellent support and user community
  - Single point of contact: [comtrade@un.org](mailto:comtrade@un.org)
  - Knowledge base, User Forum, etc.





## Data re-dissemination

- Trade data dissemination does not exclusively done by UN Comtrade through its web site / publication
- But also by other organizations (which embed the value-added by combining with other statistics domains, by estimating non-reported countries, or by providing advanced analytical tools):
  - World Bank, *WITS*
  - UNCTAD, *UNCTADstat* database
  - ITC, *TradeMap*
  - CEPII, *BACI*
  - University of Sussex, *TradeSift*
  - Etc.



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## UN Comtrade upgrade project (2013/2014)

- To collect, process and disseminate short terms statistics (monthly)
  - Beta version of UN Comtrade monthly is available online at <http://comtrade.un.org/monthly>
  - Around 70 countries with 80% of global trade in value terms
- To add more data items, such as
  - Imports FOB (excluding freight and insurance)
  - Country of consignment as trading partner
  - Mode of transport
  - More detail trade flows (e.g., imports for processing)



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