

Research Briefing

11 May 2023

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Statistics on UK-EU trade



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Summary

The UK left the EU single market and customs union at the end of 2020. Since then, UK trade with the EU has been governed by the Trade and Co-operation Agreement. While this allows tariff-free trade in goods between the UK and EU, trade barriers are higher than before.

Trade affected by Brexit and other factors

Analysing the impact of Brexit on UK trade is complicated by a number of issues. Other factors, such as the Covid pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine have affected trade flows. This makes it difficult to disentangle the effects of Brexit from other factors. In addition, Brexit has meant changes to the way trade data is collected. These data issues mean caution is necessary in interpreting the trade data.

Short-term trends in trade with the EU

In 2022, the UK exported £340 billion of goods and services to the EU, 42% of total UK exports. The UK imported £432 billion from the EU, 48% of total UK imports. The UK had a trade deficit of £92 billion with the EU compared to a £5 billion surplus with non-EU countries.

Total UK exports (goods and services combined) to both the EU and non-EU countries were lower than their 2019 level in both 2020 and 2021. In both cases, exports exceeded 2019 levels in 2022. These figures are in current prices so are not adjusted for inflation. This needs to be borne in mind given current high levels of inflation. Underlying trends may also have been distorted by exports of precious metals to non-EU countries.

Similarly, imports of goods and services from both EU and non-EU countries have now exceeded 2019 levels, in current prices.

Data on trade in goods is available in real terms (i.e., adjusted to take account of inflation) and adjusted to exclude precious metals. This data shows UK goods exports to the EU remain below 2019 levels. Imports of goods from the EU were 1.4% higher in 2022 than in 2019 but changes to data collection methods mean it is advisable to be cautious in putting too much weight on this figure.

Longer-term trends

Looking at longer term trends, the share of UK trade accounted for by the EU has fallen. Between 1999 and 2007, the EU accounted for 50-55% of UK exports. By 2022, this figure had fallen to 42%. The share of UK imports from the EU has also fallen since 1999, although by less than for exports.

Trade with the EU by country and region of the UK

Countries and regions of the UK differ in the proportion of their trade in goods accounted for by the EU. Northern Ireland has the highest proportion of trade with the EU. The EU also accounts for a high proportion of exports for Scotland, the North-East and Wales. The EU accounts for a high proportion of imports in the South-East, East and West Midlands.

1 Introduction

This briefing paper provides statistics on the UK's trade with the EU.

UK trade has been affected by a number of issues in recent years, in particular the effects of the UK's departure from the EU and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UK formally left the EU at the end of January 2020 but effectively remained in the EU single market and customs union in a transition period until the end of 2020. Since January 2021, trade between Great Britain and the EU has been governed by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.¹ While this allows tariff-free trade between the UK and EU, trade barriers are higher compared with EU membership.

Covid restrictions began in the UK in March 2020. These had a profound effect on the economy, including on trade. Disentangling the effects of the pandemic and Brexit on UK trade is not straightforward.

¹ Trade between Northern Ireland and the EU is governed by the Northern Ireland Protocol, as amended by the Windsor Framework.

2 Data issues

There have been changes to the way data on goods trade with the EU is collected. These changes affect the statistics published by the ONS and need to be taken into account when interpreting trends. The ONS has discussed them in a blog: [Trading places: How we are producing consistent estimates of trade figures following the UK's EU exit](#), 10 February 2023.

2.1 Move from Intrastat to customs declarations

The UK's exit from the EU has altered how trade data is collected. While the UK was in the EU, data on trade in goods was collected via [Intrastat](#) – the EU's system for collecting data on trade in goods between EU Member States.² Data on exports to the EU have been collected from customs declarations since January 2021 and on imports from the EU since January 2022. The ONS has adjusted EU import figures for 2021 to make them consistent with the export figures.

The different collection methods have slightly different coverage. VAT-registered businesses were included in Intrastat while customs declarations include parcel post, smaller traders and non-VAT registered businesses. A recent blog post on the ONS website said:

While broadly consistent, the inclusion of parcel post, smaller traders and non-VAT registered businesses in the new collection method led to an increase in the value of goods exports to the EU in 2021, and then an increase in value of goods imports in 2022. We have since adjusted our EU import figures for 2021, so that trade balances are consistent. However, there is still a discontinuity in our export and imports figures between 2020 and 2021. We are currently looking closely at whether further adjustments can be made to the back series to create a more consistent historical series.³

The move from Intrastat to customs declarations has led to a discontinuity in the data for trade in goods with the EU from January 2021. This coincides with the UK's departure from the EU customs union and single market. It is, therefore, necessary to be cautious when interpreting data on these trade flows. Further information is in an article by the ONS: [Impact of trade in goods](#)

² Data on goods trade between Northern Ireland and the EU is still collected via Intrastat (Source: ONS blog, [Trading places: How we are producing consistent estimates of trade figures following the UK's EU exit](#), 10 February 2023)

³ ONS blog, [Trading places: How we are producing consistent estimates of trade figures following the UK's EU exit](#), 10 February 2023

[data collection changes on UK trade statistics: adjustments to 2021 EU imports estimates](#) (13 January 2023).

2.2

Staged customs controls

Customs declarations have been needed for goods imported into Great Britain from the EU since January 2021. For a period of time, importers were permitted to delay customs declarations for up to 175 days. The ONS notes that this may have led to some double counting of goods imports from the EU. Goods imported in the second half of 2021 may have been recorded by Intrastat and then again on customs declarations in the first half of 2022. Further information is in an ONS article: [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: update on Staged Customs Controls](#) (17 February 2023).

3

UK trade in 2022: overview

In 2022:

- The UK exported £340 billion of goods and services to EU member states. This was equal to 42% of UK exports.
- Goods and services imports from the EU were worth £432 billion, equal to 48% of the UK's imports.
- The UK had a trade deficit with the EU of £92 billion, but a surplus with non-EU countries of £5 billion.
- The EU accounted for 47% of UK goods exports and 36% of services exports.
- 48% of the UK's imported goods and 47% of imported services were imported from the EU.

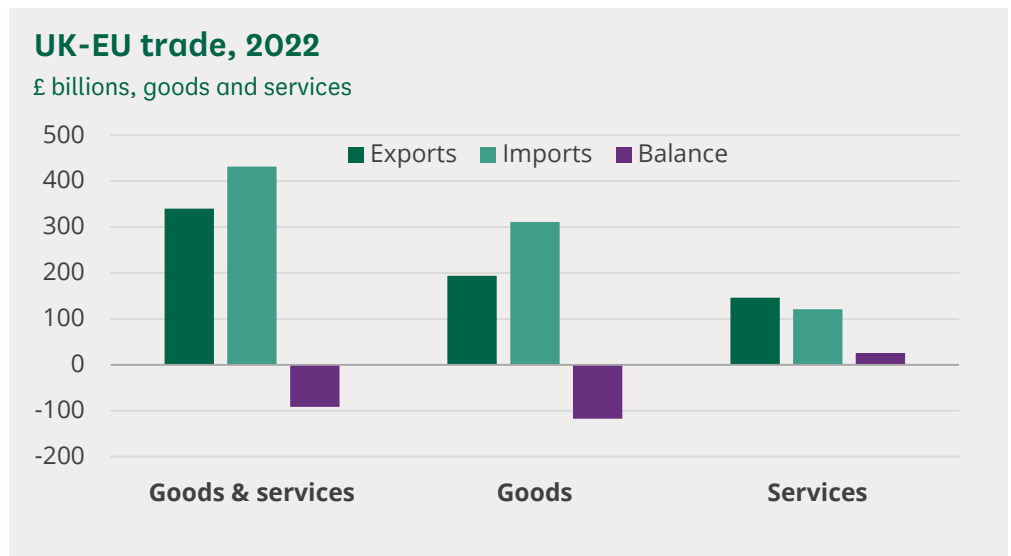
UK trade with EU and non-EU countries, 2022

Goods and services

	Exports		Imports		Balance
	£ billions	% total	£ billions	% total	£ billions
EU	340.1	41.7%	431.9	47.9%	-91.9
Non-EU	475.1	58.3%	469.9	52.1%	5.2
Total	815.2	100.0%	901.8	100.0%	-86.6

Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

The UK recorded a deficit in goods with both the EU and non-EU countries (of £117 billion and £113 billion) but a trade surplus in services with both the EU and non-EU countries (worth £25 billion and £119 billion).



Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

4 Trends in UK-EU trade

4.1 Trends since 2019

As noted in the introduction, trade over the last few years has been affected by a number of events including the pandemic and the UK's exit from the EU.

Total trade

Data on total trade (goods and services combined), split between the EU and non-EU countries, is published in current prices (ie not adjusted for inflation). The lack of inflation adjustment is significant given recent high rates of inflation and should be borne in mind when interpreting the figures below.

UK exports of goods and services to the EU were just under £300 billion in 2018 and 2019. They fell by 13% to around £260 billion in 2020. They increased to £274 billion in 2021 but remained below their pre-pandemic level. UK exports to the EU exceeded pre-pandemic levels in 2022, reaching £340 billion.

Similarly, exports of goods and services to non-EU countries were below their 2019 level in both 2020 and 2021 before exceeding the 2019 level in 2022, again in current prices. Analysis by the Resolution Foundation has shown that much of the growth of UK exports between the second half of 2021 and the equivalent period of 2022 was due to exports of precious metals, in particular to China, Hong Kong, Switzerland and the UAE.⁴

UK imports of goods and services from the EU fell by 20% in 2020, recovering slightly in 2021 before exceeding their 2019 level in 2022. Imports from non-EU countries fell in 2020 but were above their 2019 level in 2021 and grew further in 2022.

A table showing annual data on UK trade in goods and services with EU and non-EU countries is in section 8 at the end of this paper.

Trade in goods

Data on trade in goods is published in real terms (sometimes referred to as constant prices). This data has been adjusted for inflation. The data below also excludes precious metals as movements in non-monetary gold, an

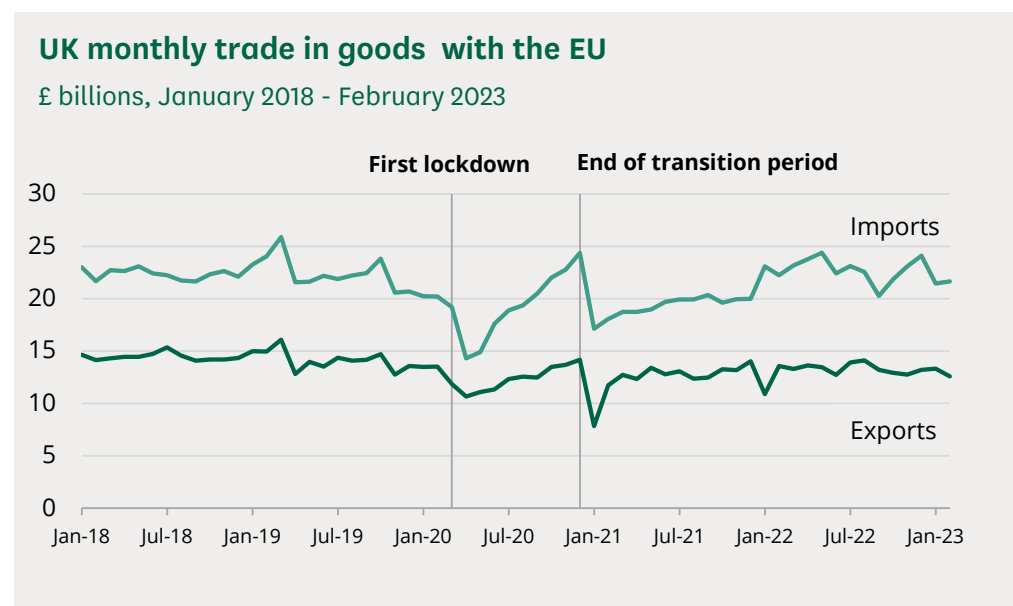
⁴ Sophie Hale and Emily Fry, [Open for business? UK trade performance since leaving the EU](#), Resolution Foundation, 28 February 2023

important component of precious metals, can be large and highly volatile, distorting underlying trends.

Trade with the EU

The chart below shows that UK goods exports to the EU fell sharply when the transition period ended at the end of 2020. While they have recovered to some extent, exports to the EU remain below 2019 levels in real terms. In 2019, UK goods exports to the EU were around £170 billion. In 2002, they were £158 billion. A similar picture emerges from looking at monthly data. In 2019, average monthly exports of goods to the EU were £14.2 billion. Monthly exports have not exceeded this figure in any month between January 2021 and February 2023.

Imports of goods from the EU also fell sharply after the end of the transition period. Unlike exports, goods imports from the EU have recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Imports from the EU were £274 billion in 2022, 1.4% higher than in 2019 in real terms. In this context it is worth pointing out that the UK has not yet imposed full border controls on goods imports from the EU. The introduction of these controls has been delayed on several occasions. The Government recently announced its [intention to introduce these controls](#), starting later this year.



Source: ONS, series [JIM7](#) and [JIM8](#)

Interpreting these trends is complicated by data collection issues discussed in section 2 above. These are likely to have boosted measured trade because of the wider coverage of customs declarations compared with Intrastat and because of the possible double counting as a result of the Staged Customs Controls. The Bank of England commented on this in its February 2023 Monetary Policy Report. The Bank concluded that once the trade data had

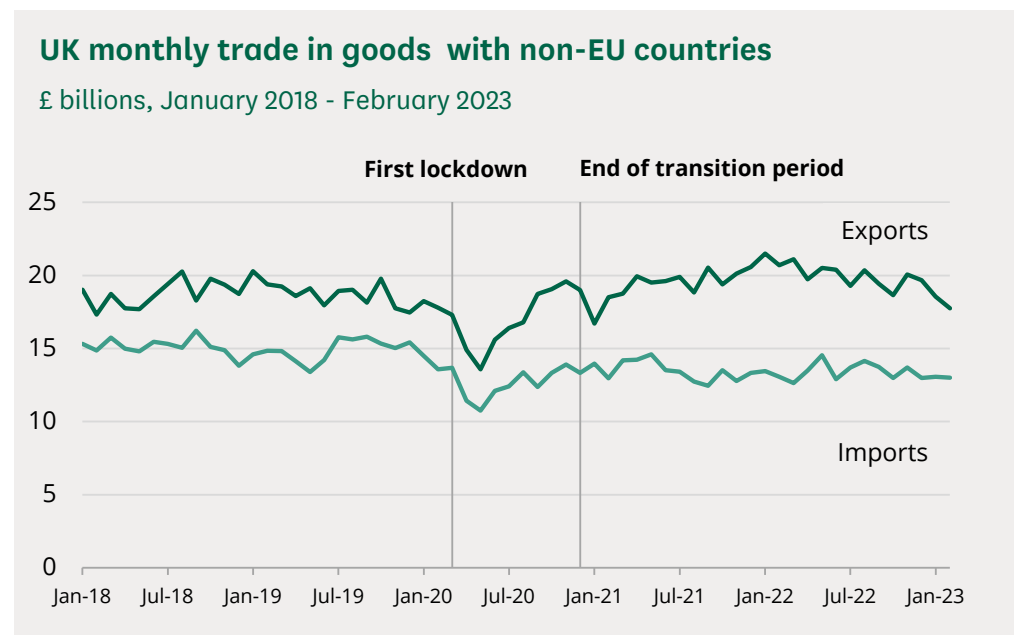
been adjusted to take account of these issues, “trade volumes have been weaker than implied by the official data since January 2021”.⁵

In addition, the end of the Brexit transition period may have led to changes in behaviour with businesses bringing trade with the EU forward from early 2021 to late 2020 to avoid the new border processes.⁶

Trade with non-EU countries

UK exports of goods to non-EU countries have remained below pre-pandemic levels. Exports were £179 billion in 2019. They fell in 2020 and were still 10% lower in real terms than their 2019 level in 2022. In 2019, UK exports averaged £14.9 billion a month. This figure has not been exceeded in any month between January 2021 and February 2023.

Imports of goods from non-EU countries were higher in 2021 and 2022 than in 2019. In 2019, imports were £226 billion. This fell to £207 billion in 2020 before recovering to £232 billion in 2021. In 2022, imports from non-EU countries were £241 billion. This is 7% higher in real terms than 2019.



Source: ONS, series [JIN2](#) and [JIN3](#)

4.2 Trends since 1999

In cash terms (ie unadjusted for inflation), the value of the UK’s trade with the EU has generally increased year-on-year since comparable records on UK-EU trade began in 1999.

⁵ Bank of England, [Monetary Policy Report](#), February 2023, p85

⁶ See the ONS article [Did UK firms stockpile items ahead of the Brexit deadline?](#), 1 February 2021

Notable exceptions to this trend have been:

- Between 2008 and 2009, when trade contracted as a result of the global financial crisis – the value of UK exports to and imports from the EU both fell by 8% in cash terms
- Between 2019 and 2020, when trade contracted as a result of the coronavirus pandemic – the value of exports to the EU fell by 13% in cash terms, while the value of imports fell by 20%.

The value of UK-EU trade also contracted between 2006 and 2007, though this was as a result of UK trade with the EU being unusually high in 2006, with trade in 2007 returning to more ‘normal’ levels. The year-on-year value of UK exports to the EU fell in 2012, 2014 and 2015.

The value of UK trade with the EU reached a record high in cash terms in 2022. UK exports to the EU increased by 24% in cash terms between 2021 and 2022, while the value of imports from the EU increased by 36%. Caution is needed when interpreting these figures. They do not adjust for inflation which was around 9% in the UK in 2022. Also the high rates of growth represent a return to more normal levels following Covid.

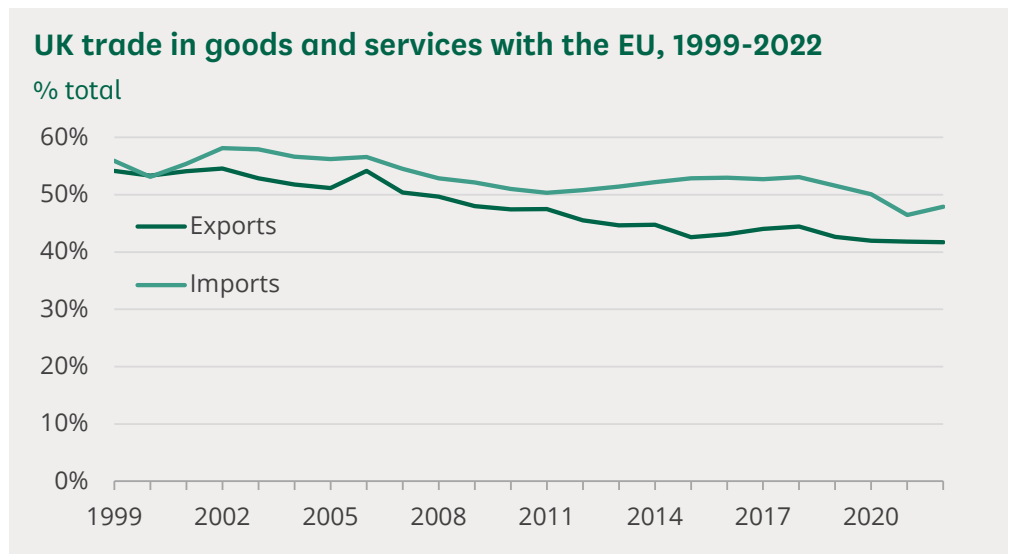


Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

Looking at trade with the EU as a proportion of the UK’s total trade gives a slightly different impression.

The proportion of the UK’s total exports going to the EU has generally been declining gradually over the last 15-20 years - in 2006, the EU accounted for 54% of all UK exports, though by 2022, this had fallen to 42%.

The picture on imports is slightly less clear. In 2003, 58% of UK imports were from the EU. Between 2008 and 2019, this remained above 50% until 2021, when it fell to 46%, before increasing to 48% in 2022.

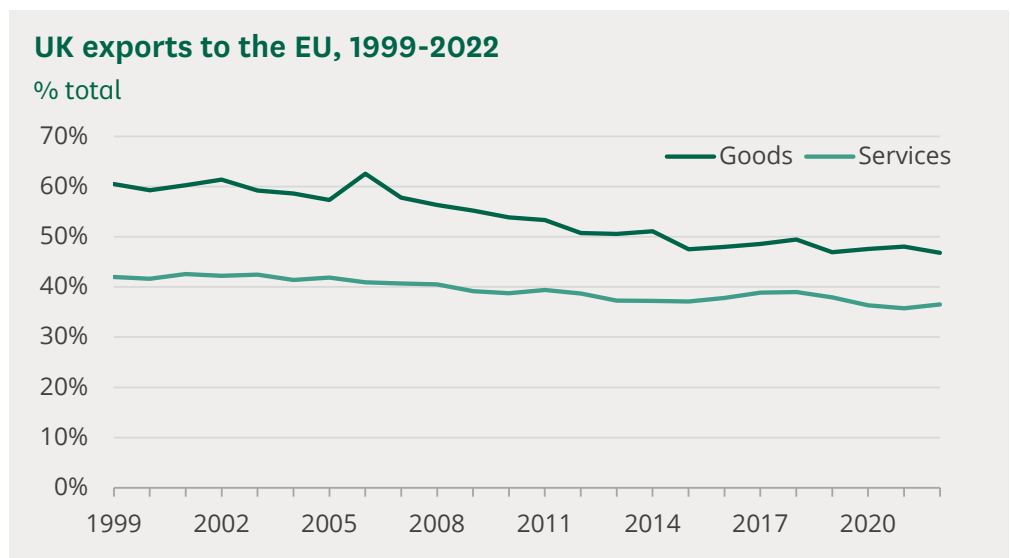


Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

The overall fall in the UK’s share of exports to the EU has been more pronounced in goods than in services; trends in imports have been more mixed.

In 1999, 60% of all UK goods exports were to the EU; this share has generally fallen since and has been below 50% since 2015, falling to 47% in 2022.

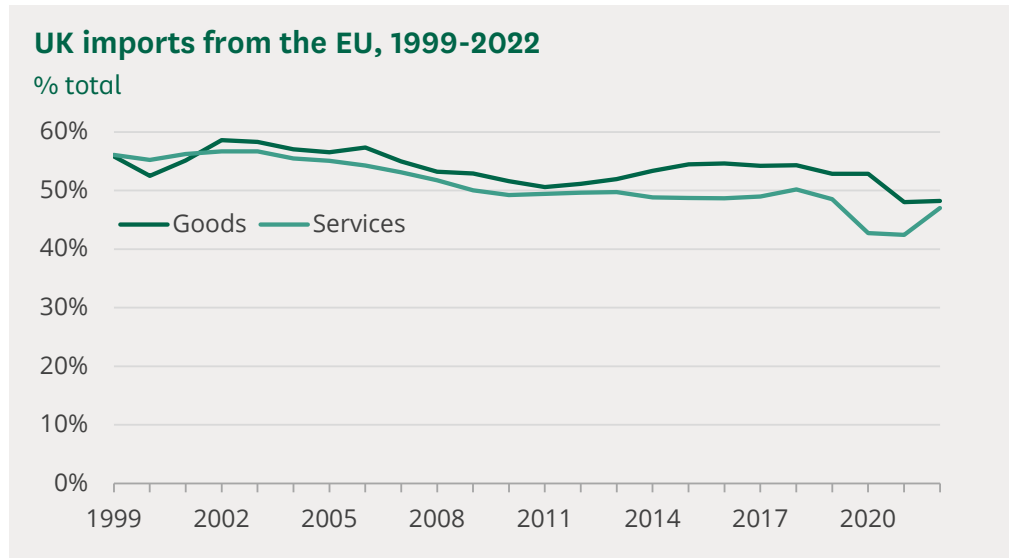
By contrast, the EU has accounted for a more consistent share of UK service exports – this remained at around 40% between 1999 and 2019, falling to 36% in 2020, 2021 and 2022.



Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

The proportion of UK goods imports being sourced from the EU remained above 50% between 1999 and 2020, spiking between 2002-06, before falling to a record low of 48% in 2021, increasing very slightly in 2022.

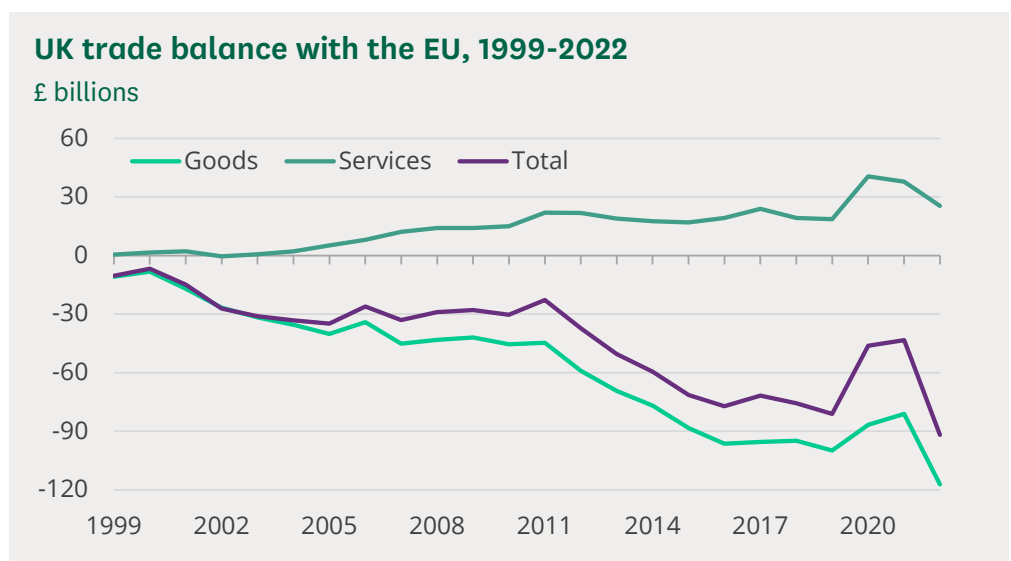
In general, the proportion of service imports being sourced from the EU has fallen since 1999, from a high of 57% in 2003 to 42% in 2021. This proportion fell significantly between 2019 and 2021, from 49% in 2019 to 43% in 2020 and a record low of 42% in 2021, before jumping to 47% in 2022.



Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

The UK has recorded an overall trade deficit with the EU every year since 1999 (when comparable records began).

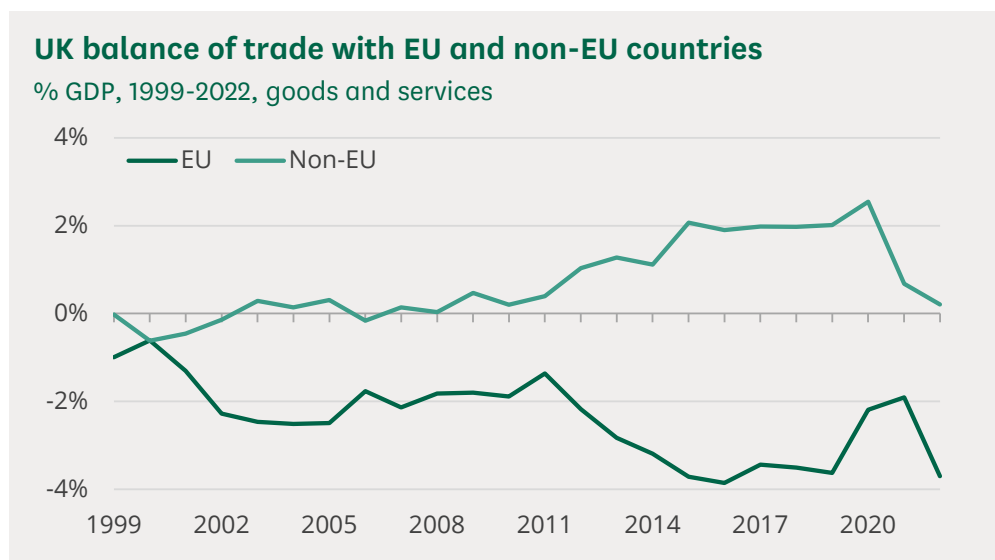
The UK has recorded a trade deficit in goods with the EU every year since 1999 and a trade surplus in services every year since 2003.



Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

The UK's trade deficit with the EU peaked at 3.9% of UK GDP in 2016 and was 3.7% in 2022, compared to 1.9% in 2021.

By contrast, the UK has recorded a trade surplus with non-EU countries every year since 2007. This surplus peaked at 2.5% of UK GDP in 2020 before falling to 0.7% in 2021 and 0.2% in 2022, as the value of UK imports from non-EU countries has increased significantly more than the value of UK exports to non-EU countries since 2020.



Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

The Rotterdam Effect

All of these figures do not account for what is known as the Rotterdam Effect – this is the theory that the UK's trade with the Netherlands (and consequently the EU) is artificially inflated owing to goods being dispatched to or arriving from the port of Rotterdam, even if the original source or eventual destination country is elsewhere. This will also have a potential knock-on effect, as some trade recorded with the Netherlands, and thus the EU, may ultimately be with non-EU countries.

The scale of this effect is not known – an ONS article on the subject states:

There are legitimate, proven reasons as to why trade with the Netherlands is high, even relative to its population. It is also reasonable to assume that trade with the Netherlands suffers from an element of distortion. However, it is not possible to estimate, with any certainty, the impact that the Rotterdam effect has on UK trade with the Netherlands and its subsequent impact on UK trade with EU and non-EU countries.⁷

⁷ ONS, [UK Trade in Goods estimates and the 'Rotterdam Effect'](#), 6 February 2015

In 2021, the Netherlands accounted for 18% of UK goods exports to the EU and 14% of UK imports of goods from the EU. Even if a high proportion of this trade was ultimately with non-EU countries, the EU would remain the UK's largest trading partner by a considerable margin.

5

Trade with individual EU countries

The table below shows UK trade with EU member states in 2022.

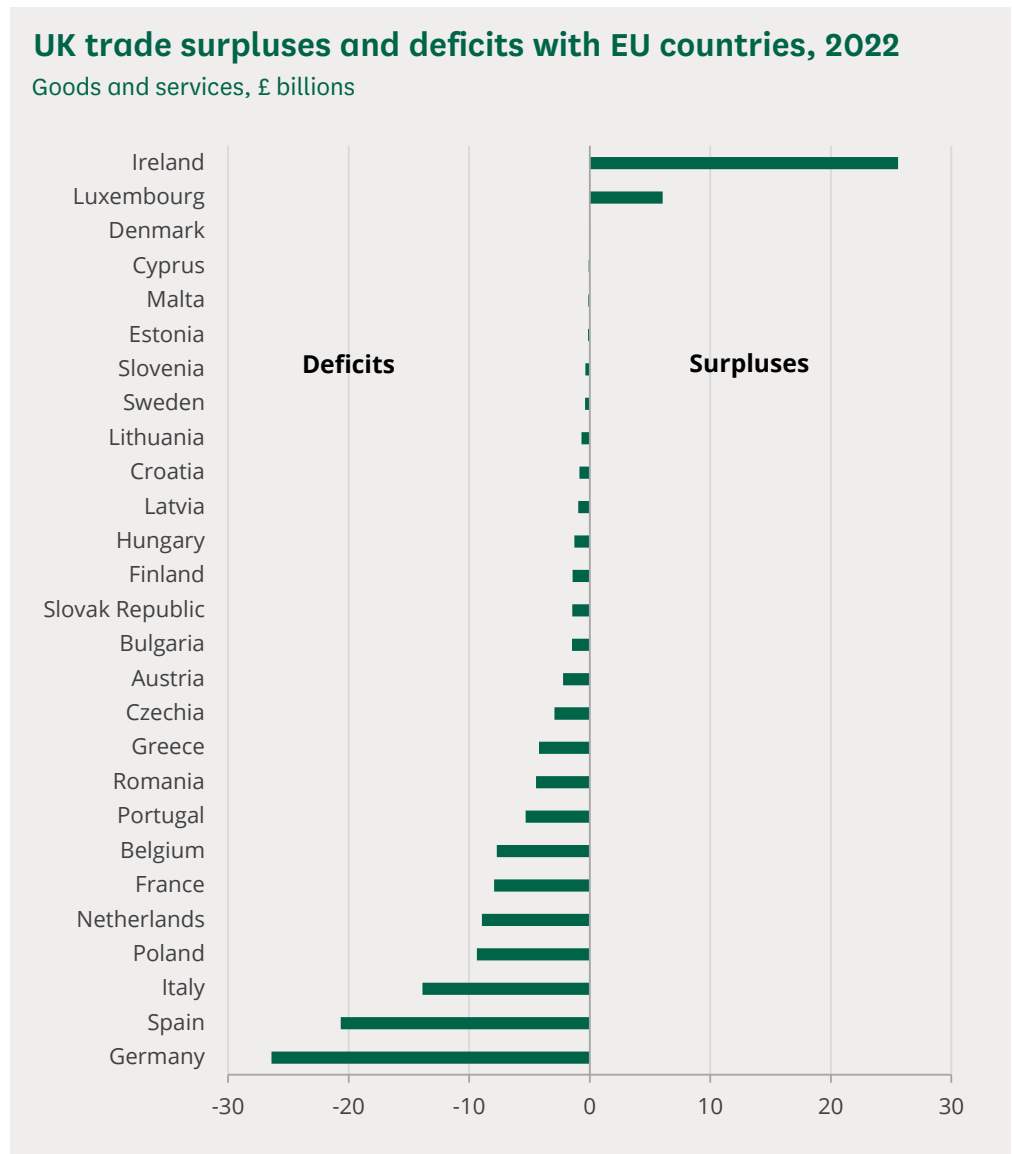
UK trade with EU Member States, 2022					
Goods and services					
	Exports		Imports		Balance
	£ billion	%	£ billion	%	£ billion
Austria	3.1	0.9%	5.3	1.2%	-2.2
Belgium	25.2	7.4%	32.9	7.6%	-7.7
Bulgaria	1.0	0.3%	2.5	0.6%	-1.5
Croatia	0.4	0.1%	1.3	0.3%	-0.9
Cyprus	1.6	0.5%	1.7	0.4%	-0.1
Czechia	3.2	0.9%	6.1	1.4%	-2.9
Denmark	8.1	2.4%	8.1	1.9%	0.0
Estonia	0.5	0.1%	0.6	0.1%	-0.1
Finland	3.2	0.9%	4.6	1.1%	-1.4
France	43.3	12.7%	51.2	11.9%	-7.9
Germany	55.9	16.4%	82.3	19.1%	-26.4
Greece	3.4	1.0%	7.6	1.8%	-4.2
Hungary	2.7	0.8%	4.0	0.9%	-1.3
Ireland	54.7	16.1%	29.1	6.7%	25.6
Italy	16.0	4.7%	29.8	6.9%	-13.9
Latvia	0.6	0.2%	1.6	0.4%	-1.0
Lithuania	1.6	0.5%	2.3	0.5%	-0.7
Luxembourg	11.8	3.5%	5.8	1.3%	6.0
Malta	1.3	0.4%	1.4	0.3%	-0.1
Netherlands	55.2	16.2%	64.2	14.9%	-8.9
Poland	8.8	2.6%	18.1	4.2%	-9.4
Portugal	3.1	0.9%	8.5	2.0%	-5.3
Romania	2.6	0.8%	7.0	1.6%	-4.4
Slovak Repub	1.8	0.5%	3.2	0.7%	-1.4
Slovenia	0.4	0.1%	0.8	0.2%	-0.4
Spain	18.0	5.3%	38.7	9.0%	-20.7
Sweden	12.5	3.7%	12.9	3.0%	-0.4

Source: ONS, [UK total trade: all countries, seasonally adjusted](#)

Germany was the UK’s largest EU trading partner in 2022, accounting for 16% of UK exports to and 19% of UK imports from the EU.

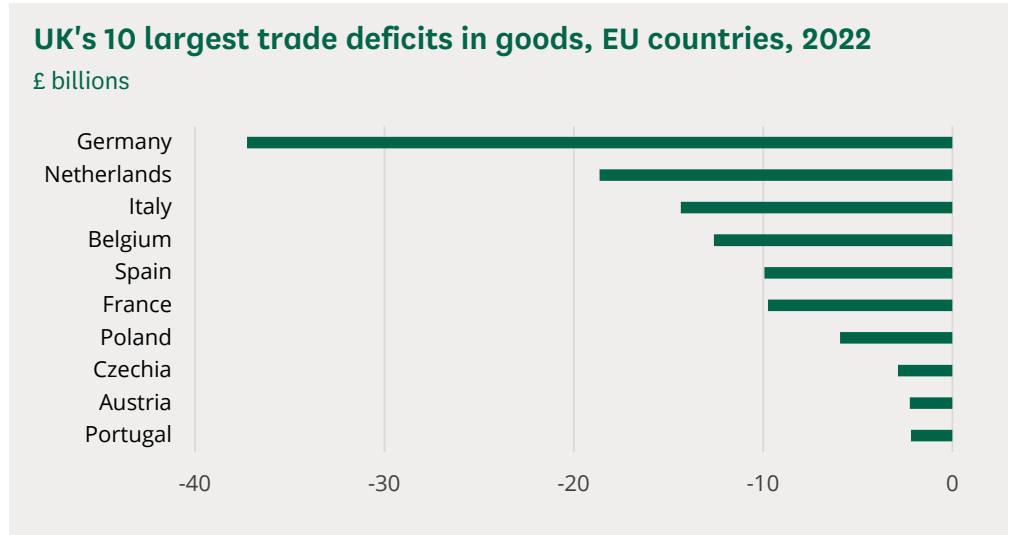
In 2022:

- The UK had a trade deficit with 24 of the 27 countries in the EU and a surplus with the remaining 3.
- The UK’s largest EU trade surplus was with Ireland (£26 billion) while its largest deficit was with Germany (£26 billion).



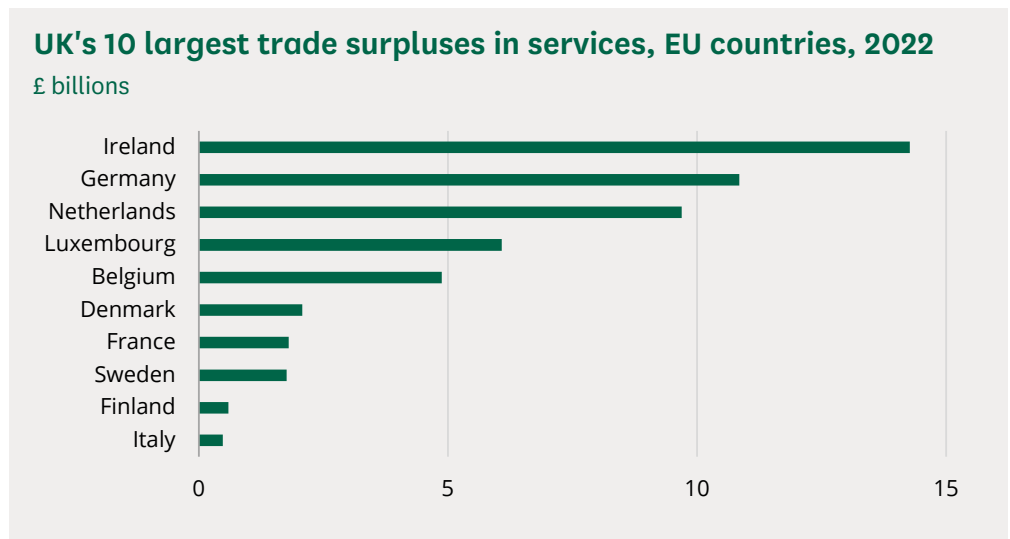
Source: ONS, [UK total trade: all countries, seasonally adjusted](#)

When examining trade in goods and services separately, the picture is more mixed. The UK recorded a trade surplus in goods with 3 EU countries and a deficit with 24. The largest UK’s goods surplus was with Ireland (£11 billion); the largest goods deficit was with Germany (£37 billion).



Source: ONS, [UK total trade: all countries, seasonally adjusted](#)

The UK recorded a trade surplus in services with 14 EU countries and a deficit with 13. The UK's largest services surplus was with Ireland (£14 billion); the largest services deficit was with Spain (£11 billion).

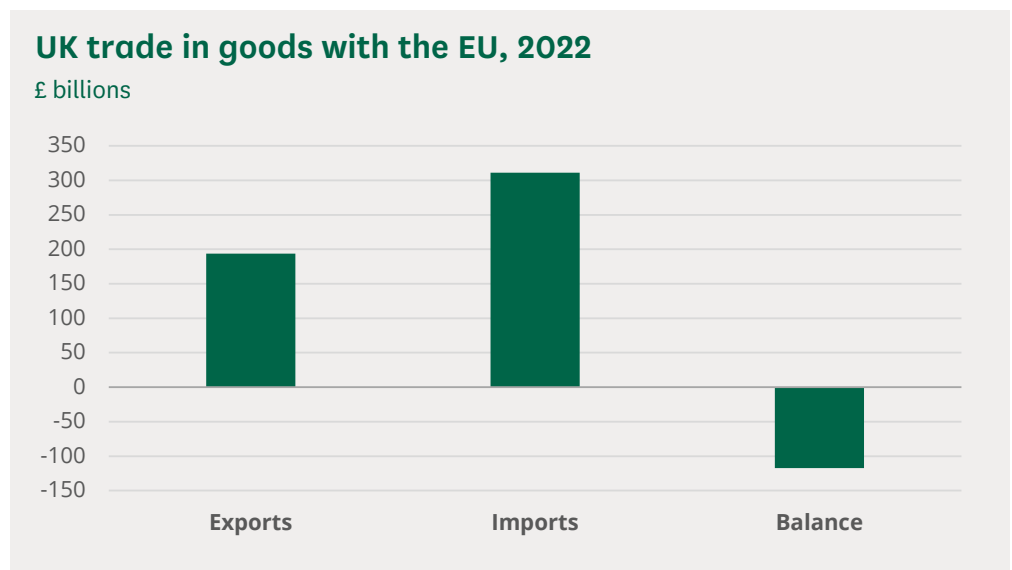


Source: ONS, [UK total trade: all countries, seasonally adjusted](#)

6 Types of goods and services traded with the EU

6.1 Trade in goods

In 2022, the UK exported £194 billion of goods to the EU and imported £311 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of £117 billion.



Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

In 2022, petroleum and petroleum products were the UK’s single largest export to the EU, with exports of £16 billion, accounting for 15% of all UK goods exports to the EU and 77% of all UK exports of petroleum and petroleum products.⁸ The value of petroleum exports to the EU increased by 81% in cash terms between 2021 and 2022, after falling sharply in 2020 and remaining relatively low in 2021, as a result of the sharp fall in global demand for fuels over this period.

Other British goods exports to the EU included road vehicles, which made up 7% of UK goods exports to the EU and medicinal and pharmaceutical products which made up 6% of UK goods exports to the EU.

⁸ This section uses 2 digit SITC product descriptions.

Top 10 UK goods exports to the EU, 2022

	% goods exports to EU	EU exports % total
Petroleum, petroleum products & related materials	14.7%	77.0%
Road vehicles	6.6%	40.9%
Medicinal & pharmaceutical products	5.6%	46.6%
Power generating machinery & equipment	5.5%	35.1%
Gas, natural & manufactured	4.2%	98.3%
Miscellaneous manufactured articles n.e.s.*	4.1%	42.6%
General industrial machinery & eqp.	3.6%	43.9%
Electrical machinery, app & appliances	3.5%	49.1%
Other transport equipment	3.2%	53.0%
Organic chemicals	3.2%	65.9%

Source: HMRC, [UK Trade Info](#)

* n.e.s. stands for not elsewhere specified

In 2022, road vehicles were the UK's single largest category of good imported from the EU, with imports of £43 billion, making up 14% of all UK goods imports from the EU and 74% of all UK imported road vehicles. In cash terms, the value of UK imports of road vehicles from the EU increased by 31% between 2021 and 2022, though were 11% lower than in 2019.

Other British goods imports from the EU included medicinal and pharmaceutical products, which made up 6% of UK goods imports from the EU - the EU accounted for 70% of all the UK's imported medicinal and pharmaceutical products, compared to 77% in 2020 and 80% in 2019.

UK top UK goods imports from the EU, 2022

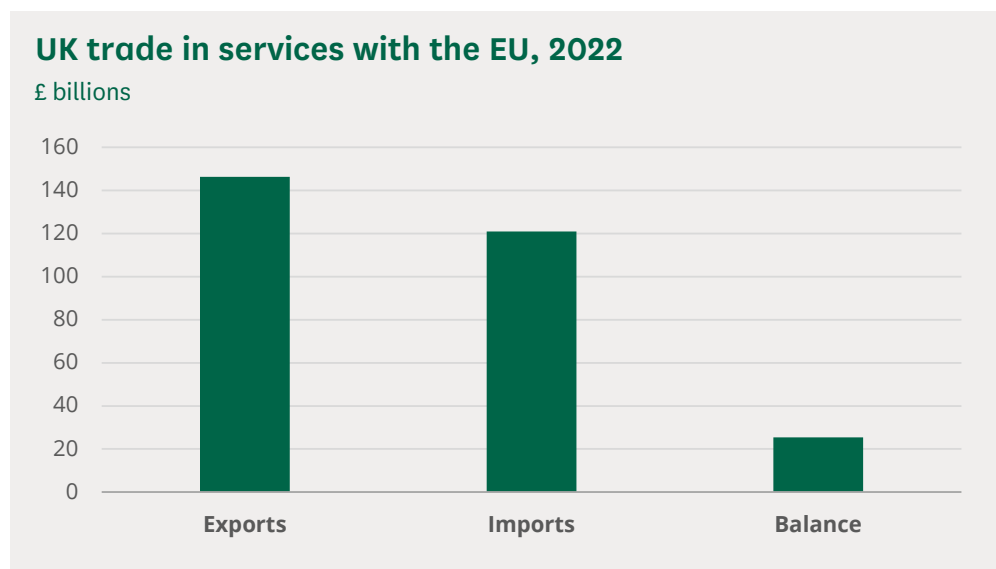
	% goods imports from EU	EU imports % total
Road vehicles	13.8%	74.2%
Medicinal & pharmaceutical products	6.1%	70.3%
Electrical machinery, app & appliances	4.6%	46.3%
General industrial machinery & eqp.	4.3%	62.1%
Petroleum, petroleum products & related materials	4.2%	22.7%
Power generating machinery & equipment	3.4%	41.7%
Miscellaneous manufactured articles n.e.s.	3.3%	39.1%
Telecomms & sound recording & reproducing eqp.	3.3%	37.7%
Special transactions and commodities not classified	3.0%	57.8%
Organic chemicals	2.8%	69.7%

Source: HMRC, [UK Trade Info](#)

6.2

Trade in services

In 2022, the UK exported £146 billion of services to the EU and imported £121 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of £25 billion.



Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

In 2022, the UK’s single largest service export to the EU was “other business services”, valued at £55 billion; this represented 38% of all UK service exports to the EU. This category includes legal, accounting, advertising, research and development, architectural, engineering and other professional and technical services.

In cash terms, the value of UK exports of other business services to the EU increased by 6% between 2021 and 2022, while the value of all service exports to the EU increased by 24%.

Ireland was the UK’s largest EU export market for other business services in 2022, accounting for 27% of UK exports of other business services to the EU, followed by Germany on 16%.

Taken as a bloc, the EU accounted for 37% of UK exports of other business services, making it the UK’s largest export market for other business services. Looking at individual countries, the USA was the UK’s largest export market for other business services, accounting for 35% of total exports, followed by Ireland on 10%.

Other British service exports to the EU included financial services, valued at £23 billion (16% of service exports to the EU), an increase of 5% in cash terms compared to 2021.

Combined, other business services and financial services made up 54% of all UK service exports to the EU.

UK service exports to the EU by type, 2022

	% service exports to EU	EU exports % total
Other Business Services	37.9%	37.2%
Financial	16.0%	32.4%
Travel	13.0%	34.4%
Telecom, computer & info services	10.5%	44.5%
Transportation	8.3%	45.8%
Intellectual property	6.7%	43.9%
Insurance and Pension	2.5%	16.2%
Manufacturing	2.3%	77.6%
Personal, Cultural and Recreational	1.2%	30.8%
Maintenance and Repair	0.9%	37.4%
Construction	0.4%	22.8%
Government	0.2%	17.9%

Source: ONS, [UK trade in services: service type by partner country, non-seasonally adjusted](#)

Travel services were the UK’s largest category of service imports from the EU in 2022, with imports of £45 billion, 37% of service imports from the EU.

UK service imports from the EU by type, 2022

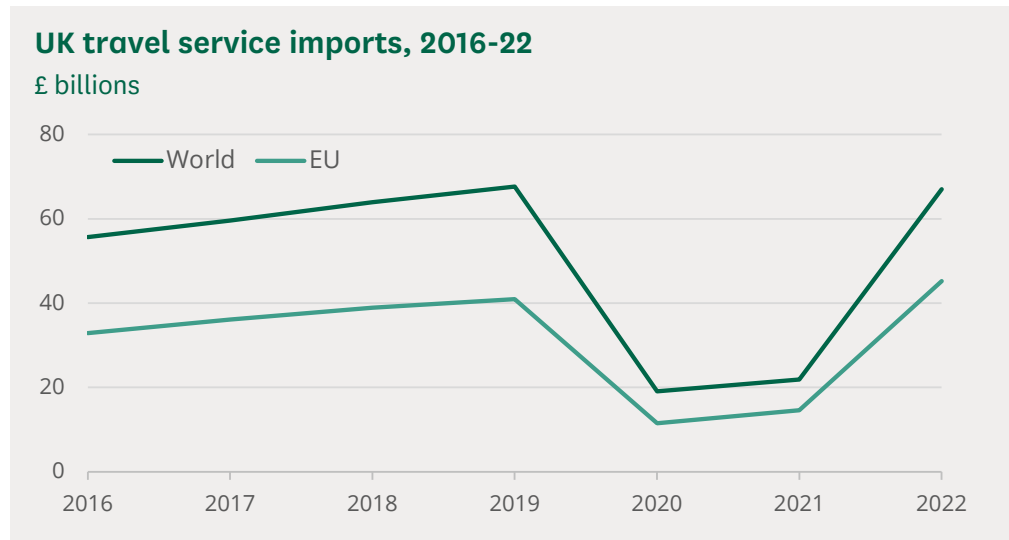
	% service imports from EU	EU imports % total
Travel	37.4%	67.5%
Other Business Services	27.0%	35.9%
Transportation	14.5%	62.4%
Telecom, computer & info services	5.6%	47.8%
Financial	3.8%	27.3%
Intellectual property	3.5%	30.5%
Construction	2.2%	65.6%
Insurance and Pension	2.2%	43.5%
Manufacturing	1.6%	83.7%
Government	0.9%	30.1%
Maintenance and Repair	0.8%	47.5%
Personal, Cultural and Recreational	0.5%	8.1%

Source: ONS, [UK trade in services: service type by partner country, non-seasonally adjusted](#)

Travel services include services provided by hotels and restaurants, travel agencies and tour operators and will include services consumed by a resident of one country in another – a British tourist staying in a hotel in an EU member state will count as a British service import; a tourist from the EU staying in a hotel in the UK would count as a UK service export.

In cash terms, the value of UK travel service imports from the EU increased by 209% between 2021 and 2022, while the value of all service imports to the EU increased by 21%. The value of UK travel services imports from the EU was

much lower in 2020 and 2021 compared with 2019, owing to Covid related restrictions on international in these years. The value of UK travel services imports from the EU was higher in 2022 than 2019 in cash terms.



Source: ONS, [UK trade in services: service type by partner country, non-seasonally adjusted](#)

Taken as a bloc, the EU was the UK’s largest source of travel service imports in 2022, accounting for 67% of UK travel service imports. Looking at individual countries, Spain was the UK’s largest source of travel service imports, accounting for 20%, followed by Greece, which accounted for 7%.

Other business services was the UK’s second largest category of service imported from the EU in 2022, with imports of £33 billion, a fall of 0.1% in cash terms compared to 2021.

Taken as a bloc, the EU was the UK’s largest source of imported other business services in 2022, accounting for 36% of UK imports. Looking at individual countries, the USA was the UK’s largest source of imported other business services, accounting for 29%, followed by India, which accounted for 7%.

Combined, travel services and other business services accounted for 64% of UK service imports from the EU.

7 Trade between UK regions and countries and the EU

HMRC publishes data on trade with the EU for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the English regions. These figures are for trade in goods only – they do not include services.

7.1 Exports

The table below shows exports of goods to the EU by country and region of the UK. It is ranked by the share of goods exports accounted for by the EU. 64% of Northern Ireland’s goods exports were to the EU in 2022 - this was the highest proportion of any country or region in the UK. £3.7 billion of this £5.9 billion total were exports to Ireland. Scotland, the North East, Wales and Yorkshire and the Humber also had relatively high shares of exports to the EU.

In cash terms, the South East of England had the highest level of goods exports to the EU of all UK regions and countries, with exports of £24.4 billion.

UK goods exports by region and country, 2022			
£ billions			
	EU	Total	% EU
Northern Ireland	5.9	9.2	64.4%
Scotland	21.1	35.7	59.1%
North East	7.2	12.6	57.3%
Wales	11.6	20.5	56.5%
Yorkshire & The Humber	11.4	20.4	55.7%
South East	24.4	44.0	55.5%
East	17.8	33.3	53.6%
North West	16.4	32.9	49.9%
East Midlands	11.8	24.2	48.6%
West Midlands	13.6	29.9	45.4%
London	21.1	46.6	45.4%
South West	9.9	23.4	42.2%
Unallocated - Known	12.5	19.9	62.7%
Unallocated - Unknown	9.0	18.9	47.5%
Total	193.7	371.5	52.1%

Source: HMRC, [UK Trade Info](#)

7.2

Imports

68% of Northern Ireland’s goods imports were from the EU in 2022 - this was the highest proportion of any country or region in the UK. £3.4 billion of this £6.5 billion total were imports from Ireland. The South East, East and West Midlands also had relatively high shares of imports from the EU.

In cash terms, the South East had the highest level of goods imports from the EU of all UK regions and countries, with imports of £66.5 billion.

UK goods imports by region and country, 2022			
£ billions			
	EU	Total	% EU
Northern Ireland	6.5	9.5	68.3%
South East	66.5	113.1	58.8%
East	28.5	49.4	57.6%
West Midlands	24.4	42.6	57.2%
East Midlands	17.7	32.9	53.7%
North East	8.3	15.5	53.5%
North West	25.3	48.3	52.4%
South West	13.4	29.6	45.1%
London	37.6	90.5	41.6%
Wales	8.1	24.1	33.5%
Yorkshire & The Humber	17.1	52.4	32.6%
Scotland	11.8	36.5	32.3%
Unallocated - Known	30.1	56.4	53.4%
Unallocated - Unknown	13.9	31.4	44.1%
Total	309.1	632.3	48.9%

Source: HMRC, [UK Trade Info](#)

8

UK trade with the EU and non-EU countries, 1999-2022

UK trade with the EU, 1999 - 2022					
Goods and services					
	Exports		Imports		Balance
	£ billion	% of total	£ billion	% of total	£ billion
1999	137.2	54.1%	147.6	55.9%	-10.4
2000	150.4	53.3%	157.1	53.1%	-6.7
2001	158.1	54.1%	173.0	55.4%	-14.9
2002	158.9	54.6%	186.0	58.1%	-27.2
2003	159.7	52.9%	190.7	57.9%	-31.1
2004	164.3	51.8%	197.5	56.6%	-33.3
2005	180.3	51.2%	215.2	56.2%	-34.9
2006	218.7	54.1%	244.7	56.6%	-26.1
2007	198.0	50.4%	231.0	54.5%	-33.0
2008	216.2	49.6%	245.2	52.8%	-29.0
2009	198.3	48.0%	226.2	52.1%	-27.9
2010	218.4	47.4%	248.8	51.0%	-30.4
2011	245.8	47.5%	268.5	50.3%	-22.7
2012	237.0	45.5%	274.3	50.8%	-37.3
2013	239.2	44.7%	289.6	51.4%	-50.4
2014	236.7	44.7%	296.1	52.2%	-59.4
2015	226.0	42.6%	297.4	52.9%	-71.4
2016	246.9	43.1%	324.0	52.9%	-77.1
2017	281.4	44.0%	353.1	52.7%	-71.7
2018	299.5	44.4%	375.1	53.1%	-75.6
2019	298.1	42.6%	379.3	51.6%	-81.2
2020	258.7	41.9%	304.9	50.0%	-46.2
2021	273.7	41.8%	317.0	46.5%	-43.4
2022	340.1	41.7%	431.9	47.9%	-91.9

Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

UK trade with non-EU countries, 1999 - 2022

Goods and services

	Exports		Imports		Balance
	£ billion	% of total	£ billion	% of total	£ billion
1999	116.3	45.9%	116.5	44.1%	-0.2
2000	131.7	46.7%	138.6	46.9%	-6.8
2001	134.2	45.9%	139.5	44.6%	-5.3
2002	132.4	45.4%	134.1	41.9%	-1.7
2003	142.3	47.1%	138.7	42.1%	3.6
2004	153.1	48.2%	151.2	43.4%	1.8
2005	172.1	48.8%	167.8	43.8%	4.3
2006	185.4	45.9%	187.8	43.4%	-2.4
2007	195.0	49.6%	192.8	45.5%	2.2
2008	219.3	50.4%	218.8	47.2%	0.5
2009	215.0	52.0%	207.7	47.9%	7.3
2010	242.1	52.6%	238.9	49.0%	3.2
2011	271.7	52.5%	265.1	49.7%	6.6
2012	283.4	54.5%	265.7	49.2%	17.8
2013	296.4	55.3%	273.7	48.6%	22.7
2014	292.2	55.3%	271.5	47.8%	20.7
2015	304.8	57.4%	265.1	47.1%	39.7
2016	326.0	56.9%	288.0	47.1%	38.0
2017	358.1	56.0%	316.8	47.3%	41.3
2018	374.4	55.6%	331.8	46.9%	42.6
2019	401.5	57.4%	356.5	48.4%	45.0
2020	358.1	58.1%	304.3	50.0%	53.7
2021	380.6	58.2%	365.3	53.5%	15.3
2022	475.1	58.3%	469.9	52.1%	5.2

Source: ONS, [Balance of Payments](#)

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