

Review of the retail trade survey

1. Introduction

The retail trade survey is a monthly survey carried out among retail trade enterprises. This survey collects the monthly amount of sales including VAT, limited to the retail trade.

The retail trade statistic is based on the Royal decree of 12 October 2015: *'Royal Decree prescribing a monthly sample survey on the turnover of retail trade enterprises carried out by the Directorate-General Statistics - Statistics Belgium'*.

The retail trade statistic is currently used to establish the monthly retail trade indices prescribed by the Regulation (EC) 1165/98.

The implementation of Eurostat Regulation (EC) 1165/98 and its amendments implies the production of results at least at the level of the following breakdown (the activity codes are defined according to the NACE-rev2 classification of activities):

- G1: class 47.11 (retail sale in non-specialised stores with food, beverages or tobacco predominating);
- G2: class 47.19 (other retail sale in non-specialised stores);
- G3: group 47.2 (retail sale of food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores);
- G4: group 47.3 (retail sale of automotive fuel in specialised stores);
- G5: sum of classes 47.73, 47.74 and 47.75;
- G6: sum of classes 47.51, 47.71 and 47.72;
- G7: sum of classes 47.43, 47.52, 47.54, 47.59 and 47.63;
- G8: sum of classes 47.41, 47.42, 47.53, 47.61, 47.62, 47.64, 47.65, 47.76, 47.77 and 47.78;
- G9: class 47.91 (retail sale via mail order houses or via Internet);
- G10: sum of classes 47.79, 47.8, 47.99 (rest).

2. FRIBS (Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics)

The new European Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics, FRIBS, was adopted in 2019. 2021 will be the reference year for a large part of business statistics in this FRIBS framework.

The new regulation requires, for retail trade, the following breakdown:

- G1: class 47.11 (Retail sale in non-specialised stores with food, beverages or tobacco predominating)
- G2: class 47.19 (Other retail sale in non-specialised stores)
- G3: group 47.2 (Retail sale of food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores)**
- G4: group 47.3 (Retail sale of automotive fuel in specialised stores);
- G5: group 47.4 (Retail sale of information and communication equipment in specialised stores)
- G6: group 47.5 (Retail sale of other household equipment in specialised stores)
- G7: group 47.6 (Retail sale of cultural and recreation goods in specialised stores)
- G8: group 47.7 (Retail sale of other goods in specialised stores)
- G9: group 47.8 (Retail sale via stalls and markets)
- G10: class 47.91 (Retail sale via mail order houses or via Internet)
- G11: class 47.9 (Retail trade not in stores, stalls or markets)

In addition to the groups required by FRIBS, it is interesting to keep providing both following groups:

- G12: sum of classes 47.51, 47.71 and 47.72 (*Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods in specialised stores*)
- G13: sum of classes 47.73, 47.74 and 47.75 (*Dispensing chemist, medical and orthopaedic goods, cosmetic and toilet articles in specialised stores*)

3. Use of VAT data

Until the end of 2019, Statistics Belgium received monthly VAT returns from the FPS Finance on the second day of each month. These data arrived too late to be used to calculate the retail trade indices (internal publication and sending to Eurostat at T+30).

Since 2020, the frequency of sending monthly VAT data to Statbel has been increased to weekly. We now have the VAT data available early enough to use them for our calculations (at the time of calculating our indices about 90% of the VAT returns are available).

A comparative study showed that the majority of the data collected via our survey corresponded to the VAT data.

From now on, +/- 340 major enterprises only will continue to answer the survey.

In conclusion, the retail trade statistics will be based on all monthly VAT returns and +/- 340 enterprises via a survey.

4. New approach and revision of indices

With the new methodology (use of all monthly VAT returns), the old and new aggregates have been recalculated since 2010.