



Activity Title and Number: Study and Workshop on improving the comparability of EU-China external trade statistics A438-C4

Beneficiary: General Administration of the People's Republic of China (GACC) Department of Statistics, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

Location and Date: Beijing, Luxembourg; 1-3 December 2015

Stakeholders: N/A

Brief Activity Report

Relevance and Impact

On 16 May 2014, the European Commission and GACC signed the Strategic Framework on Customs Cooperation 2014-2017 (the SFCC). In the area of trade statistics, the overall aim of the SFCC is to “enhance mutual understanding on each other's external trade statistics, and where appropriate, to address discrepancies”. Accordingly, the SFCC calls for “*a joint report... which explains the reasons of the discrepancies between European and Chinese external trade statistics in goods including, where appropriate, recommendations on how to address these discrepancies*” (SFCC, p.6).

In this context, the EUCTP II supported a detailed analysis of the mirror study of 2009-2012 external trade statistics carried out under the previous EUCTP II *Mirror Comparison of EU-China External Trade Statistics*, supplemented by newly available statistics for 2013-14. The report was supplemented by a 3 days' workshop for the EU-China Working Group on External Trade in Goods Statistics at Eurostat to review findings, exchange views on technical issues and agree on recommendations for the EU-China Joint Customs Cooperation Committee (JCCC).

Activity Description

The objective is to provide the JCCC with a concise, analytical report to support bilateral discussions on how to enhance mutual understanding of each other's external trade statistics and, where appropriate, address discrepancies. The report should go beyond a mere comparison of extracted external trade statistics and provide qualitative analysis and commentary on the possible underlying causes of asymmetries and the trends over the period analysed.



Meeting at Eurostat, Luxemburg,
1 Dec 2015

Results and Dissemination

Main results/conclusions of the study:

- The relative asymmetry of asymmetries in data decreased significantly over the last two decades
- The asymmetries in data are mainly caused by indirect imports and indirect exports.
- The westbound trade is affected by asymmetry more significantly than the eastbound due to the higher amounts of indirect trade.
- The impact of Hong Kong in EU – China trade has decreased dramatically over the decades, nevertheless it remains the major re-exporter of Chinese and EU origin goods.
- The methodologies applied by China and EU are closely compatible, however application of different trade systems, small differences in coverage, introduction of simplified reporting of data in Customs, the use of special codes in EU statistics are responsible for part of the asymmetries related to certain product groups.
- The share of confidentiality in EU and China data is very low and it does not impact asymmetries at global level, however confidentiality can create significant asymmetries at detailed commodity level.
- The insignificant remaining asymmetries in data at product level can be explained by general reasons.