

Commercial agents

ROLE OF COMMERCIAL AGENTS AND ASSESSMENT OF DIRECTIVE 86/653/EC ON COMMERCIAL AGENTS

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Contact: Géraldine Verbrugghe, T: +32 2 737 05 87, verbrugghe@eurocommerce.be
Christel Delberghe, T: +32 2 737 05 91, delberghe@eurocommerce.be

Executive Summary

Commercial agents are self-employed intermediaries authorised on a permanent basis to negotiate the sale or purchase of goods for and on behalf of another person, the “principal”.

Commercial agents play an important role in promoting new business, facilitating access to new markets by foreign players –especially SMEs–, and driving sales growth. Their closeness to customers, expertise, market knowledge and consultation have always been valued as key factors in a highly competitive trading environment.

In 2011, Eurostat estimated that there were 590,000 commercial agents in EU-28 countries generating a combined turnover of € 260 billion (about 3 % of total commerce¹ turnover) and providing employment to over 1 million persons². Furthermore, according to Eurostat, there are an estimated 1.7 million principals, 88% of which are SMEs. The number of commercial agents continues to grow every year. According to estimates based on data provided by EuroCommerce members, Eurostat data tends to underestimate the total number of commercial agents (altogether no less than 740,000).

Throughout the EU, the Commercial Agents Directive gives commercial agents common rights and obligations, in particular with regard to contracts and commissions. The Directive also offers commercial agents predictability and legal certainty when acting internationally with agents within the EU market.

The Commercial Agency Directive 86/653/EEC has developed a uniformed status for commercial agents across the EU as well as a high level of legal certainty over the decades, from which both commercial agents and principals have benefited. The Directive also enhanced trade and the movement of goods.

Eurocommerce asks the Commission to take full account of the economic and social impact of commercial agents and the importance to their principals in its evaluation of the Commercial Agents Directive. Eurocommerce believes that over the past 27 years the Directive has proven to be a practical and effective tool. It contains balanced provisions on

¹ Total commerce turnover refers here to Eurostat Nace G – car sales (G45), wholesale (G46) and retail (G47)

² The total employment figure is only available for 2010

all essential components of a commercial agency agreement and does not regulate self-evident matters. The Directive in its current form is "fit for purpose". It is still accurate, highly practical and is compatible with the full body of European laws. EuroCommerce therefore asks the Commission to maintain the status quo and avoid either repealing the directive or re-opening it.

1. The Commercial Agent: definition and characteristics

According to the Directive 86/653/EEC "on the coordination of the laws (...) relating to self-employed commercial agents" (referred to as "the commercial agents directive", "commercial agents" are **self-employed intermediaries** authorised on a permanent basis to **negotiate the sale or purchase of goods for and on behalf of another person**, the "principal".

The Commercial Agency Directive is **product-focused**. It does not apply to services and in particular does not cover tied agents for financial services, insurance intermediaries, and distributors and franchisees which are all covered by specific legislation.

Commercial agents have existed for hundreds of years and remain crucial intermediaries for many companies when entering new markets. A commercial agent is a person who negotiates sales contracts between a principal that he/she represents and a customer. He/she may conclude a transaction **with another business** (B2B) or **directly with a final consumer** (B2C) in all sectors of the economy (between industry and industry, industry and consumer, industry and wholesale or wholesale and retail). The distribution of costs and benefits of the transaction is defined by the contract between the agent and the principal.

Commercial agents are often independent entrepreneurs who retain the freedom to accept all offers of representation (as long as they are compatible). On average, B2B commercial agents work for 3-5 principals.

Agents are paid on a commission basis proportionally to the success of their activities. As the commission is only paid when orders are brought in and the relevant business has been carried out successfully, the principals can estimate the costs that they have to pay their agents, offering them predictability.

In general, commercial agents in the B2B field perform for several principals. They usually represent a range of several product lines³ and, when these complement each other, the synergetic effects are regarded as a great advantage. Customers appreciate the time saved and the strategic benefits that can be accrued from working closely with a commercial agent. With a well-compiled range of products from different suppliers, agents can often act as a problem solver for customers and support them with their knowhow in product development and manufacturing.

Today, commercial agents are no longer just salespersons but rather full-service businesses. Manufacturers often resort to commercial agency agreements in order to gain a foothold in different markets and overcome obstacles inherent in approaching new markets. This is an **attractive and cost-effective solution especially for small and medium sized enterprises** (SMEs) who gain direct access to a range of customers in other EU Member States without large capital expenditure. Commercial agents act as real market partners and contribute to reducing costs and building up more efficient and competitive supply chains.

³ It should be noted here that the sale of competing products is (often) not allowed.

Commercial agents also tend to increasingly **manage almost all sales-related tasks**. They invest time and work to promote the products of the manufacturer and to develop a network of customers within their territory, relying on the quality of the principal's products and services. It may even occur that commercial agents - that offer technical consultancy - plan and develop a product with manufacturers / customers over a several years period (three years or more). This can happen for example in the Automotive, Military, Space, Aeronautical, Oil & Gas, and Medical industries where extensive qualification is required. However, in this case, the agent is only entitled to commission on commercial transactions.

Key characteristics of Commercial Agents

- **Commercial agents offer cost efficient and low-risk solutions**
Principals benefit from a range of advantages by partnering with commercial agents. They pay a commission whose amount depends on actual sales, and they only engage in the payment of the agent after having invoiced the delivered goods. The use of commercial agents often provides a way to rely on specialised sales and marketing people.
Through commercial agents, principals avoid price increases imposed by importers or wholesalers, dependence on just one company (concentration of payment risk) and are able to establish a direct contact with the final customers of their products.
- **Commercial agents provide up-to-date market knowledge and help accessing markets**
Commercial agents act as a bridge between two businesses. As a result of intense competition, commercial agents have adapted their services to provide their principal with first-hand information on market structures, characteristics and preferences. The function of commercial agents has evolved to become a more integrated function seeking to achieve a perfect match between demand and supply. Commercial agents study the market in order to identify interesting products with good sales opportunities, report to the principal about their market survey results and come up with propositions for strategies. Given the fast pace evolution of ICT, the increasing complexity of the economic context, and globalization, the competences of and services provided by commercial agents change constantly to meet customers' demand. These additional services generate new sources of commissions.
The increasing use of online trading does not affect the demand, nor the legal status of the commercial agent. Indeed, often the commercial agent is a key factor in helping to develop and introduce these effective sales channels to generate increased revenue for the manufacturer.
Given the permanent contact with their clients, commercial agents are able to immediately involve the principal in the new business or market. They are a good channel for importers to enter a market, are close to potential business customers, speak the language of the market and have valuable knowledge of the national market. They can thus help to reduce the risk of market entry, by avoiding the need to open a national subsidiary while offering the advantages of being located in the market.
- **Commercial agents facilitate access to the Single Market by European SMEs**
40 years ago, complicated customs regulations, the lack of experience, almost non-existent transport lines and other obstacles made export or import by small manufacturers or retailers a risky adventure. Since then, many hurdles have been eliminated. The increasing number of SMEs has also forced them to work internationally in order to secure their existence. Commercial agents provide a good solution to facilitate access to international markets while limiting the risks and costs linked to expansion.
- **Commercial agents contribute to the recovery of the European economy**
The European economy is slowly recovering. Commercial agents support internal and international trade and provide a solution for SMEs, which are the backbone of the European economy.

Only a small initial capital is needed to start as commercial agent. In relation to other businesses neither expensive equipment nor investment in stocks is necessary. Commercial agents make use of all available educational opportunities in order to adapt to the market's changing needs and to be well equipped for reaching the highest level of performance. In times of high unemployment rates across Europe, a growing number of people see this profession as an entry point to the labour market.

2. Economic importance of the sector and social relevance to medium-size business and employment

Commercial agents represent a significant occupation in the European Union, in their own rights and in support to other sectors, especially SMEs. They play a significant role in facilitating companies' access to other markets and as such play a fundamental role in enabling SMEs to exploit the potential of the Single market.

In 2011, Eurostat estimated that there were 590,000 B2B commercial agents in EU-28 countries generating a combined turnover of € 260 billion (about 3 % of total commerce⁴ turnover) and providing employment to over 1 million persons⁵. The number of commercial agents has steadily increased over the last decade from about 523,000 in 2003 (EU-27 countries) generating a turnover of nearly € 200bn and providing employment to nearly 900,000 Europeans. These average figures show wide national variations and Italy comes as a country where the sector is particularly developed.

Commercial agents are active in a wide range of economic branches such as agricultural raw materials, textiles clothing & footwear, fuels & chemical industry, timber and building material, machinery & industrial equipment, furniture & household equipment, food & beverages, automotive or medical industries⁶.

Measuring the economic contribution of the sector is however a difficult exercise. Firstly, Eurostat only provides figures for "wholesale on a fee or contract basis"⁷ (business-to-business transactions), which does not capture business to consumer transactions. Secondly, there may be variations with measurements undertaken at national level.

According to estimates based on data provided by EuroCommerce members, Eurostat data tends to underestimate the total number of commercial agents (altogether no less than 740,000). According to IUCAB⁸, an international network representing commercial agents, 519,000 commercial agents are spread out across 14 European countries⁹. According to the same survey, most of these (46%) work internationally (both inside and outside the EU). These figures tend to show that the sector can be expected to continue growing in the forthcoming years.

4 Total commerce turnover refers here to Eurostat Nace G – car sales (G45), wholesale (G46) and retail (G47)

5 The total employment figure is only available for 2010

⁶ See Eurostat NACE G461 and subsequent subcategories, contributions from IUCAB and Agent 321

7 Eurostat figures relate to "wholesale on a fee or contract basis" G-461.

8 IUCAB (Internationally United Commercial Agents and Brokers) represents a huge international resource of knowledge and information on matters relating to the commercial agency profession covering commercial, promotional and legal issues. <http://www.iucab.com/en/index.php>

⁹ Those countries are Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Slovenia, UK & Ireland

3. The Commercial Agency Directive 86/653/EEC

3.1. Causes and objectives of the adoption of the Commercial Agency Directive

The development of an integrated European market in the 1980s resulted in the desire to eliminate the inconsistent patchwork of agency laws across European Member States and to harmonise national laws. The essence of a commercial agent's job, often acting as an international facilitator between its principal and customer, justified the need to establish uniform rules creating a more predictable legal environment for the industry and to protect commercial agents. This is particularly important in cases where an agent builds up a customer base and faces the risks of contract termination once the business is firmly established and expanding.

The "commercial agents" Directive adopted in 1986, proclaimed that the differences in national laws concerning commercial representation substantially affected the conditions of competition and the performance of that commercial activity within the European Union.

The Directive aims to:

- remove the differences in national laws concerning commercial representation, which substantially affects the conditions of competition;
- fix the protection available to commercial agents vis-à-vis their principals and to the security of commercial transactions;
- remove the differences inhibiting substantially the conclusion and operation of commercial representation contracts where principal and commercial agents are established in different Member States;
- ensure that trade in goods between Member States should be carried on under conditions which are similar to those of a single market. This necessitates approximation of the legal systems of the Member States. In this regard the legal relationship between commercial agent and principal must be given priority;
- maintain improvements already made in line with the principles of Article 117 of the Rome Treaty on social provisions.

3.2. The importance of the Directive today

The Directive is the indispensable mother of national laws on commercial agents, providing a minimum level of protection and allowing a certain leeway for national subtleties.

The commercial agents directive:

- sets down rights and obligations of commercial agents in each national EU Member State. In this way, it removes deals with a number of obstacles to intra-EU trade;
- lays down common standards for commercial agency contracts to create a more predictable legal environment for both the commercial agent and principal where the principal and the commercial agents are established in different Member States. Trade in goods between Member States should be carried out under conditions which are similar to those of a single market, and this necessitates alignment of the legal systems of the Member States to the extent required for the proper functioning of the common market. In this regard the rules concerning conflict of laws do not, in the matter of commercial representation, remove the inconsistencies referred to above, nor would they even if they were made uniform. Accordingly the aforementioned harmonisation is necessary notwithstanding the existence of those rules.
- guarantees a minimum level of protection. Therefore Member States cannot go below this level and disrupt the harmonization already achieved. Better conditions in favour of commercial agents can be agreed on national level where this is allowed;
- is the only instrument to force new Member States also to adopt a functional law on commercial agents on EU level. Fair competition within the Common Market also needs fair conditions regarding EU wide commercial agents' activities;

- is the basis of European Court decisions. It is of highest importance that third country manufacturers cannot evade mandatory rules like the right to indemnity by a choice-of-law-clause¹⁰;
- substantially cares for professional freedom of commercial agents that operate cross-border and are a considerable factor in eliminating barriers to service activities between Member States¹¹;
- has developed stable legal practice in the Member States and has created a high level of legal certainty over the decades. The use of commercial agents has always been an accepted & cost effective way to promote new business, open markets to foreign players, and drive sales growth. Their closeness to customers, expertise, market knowledge and consultation, have always been regarded as key factors in a competitive environment. Both commercial agents and the companies represented (principals) have benefited and thus enhanced the movement of goods and trade greatly;
- has furthermore proven to be practical from the very start. It contains balanced provisions on all essential components of a commercial agency agreement and does not regulate self-evident matters. Even 27 years after coming into force the Directive is in its current version still of high quality, highly practical and compatible with the body of European laws. This is also evident from the fact that there have not been any amendments since 1986 when the Directive was adopted.

A repeal the Directive is not an appropriate policy option. It would only result in legal uncertainty due to different national laws, obstacles to intra-EU trade, to less commercial agency contracts, evasion of mandatory rules like the right to indemnity by third country manufacturers, the arbitrary selection of the national right of the Member State which offers the least protection for the commercial agent. Overall it would mean a restriction to the professional freedom of commercial agents.

4. Conclusion

The commercial agents directive has developed stable legal practice in the Member States and has created a high level of legal certainty over the decades. Both commercial agents and the companies represented (principals) have benefited and thus the directive has contributed to enhancing the movement of goods and trade greatly.

On this basis, Eurocommerce asks the Commission to take full account of the economic and social impact of commercial agents and the importance to their principals in its evaluation of the Commercial Agents Directive. Eurocommerce believes that over the past 27 years the Directive has proven to be a practical and effective tool. It contains balanced provisions on all essential components of a commercial agency agreement and does not regulate self-evident matters. The Directive in its current form is "fit for purpose". It is still accurate, highly practical and is compatible with the full body of European laws. EuroCommerce therefore asks the Commission to maintain the status quo and avoid either repealing the directive or re-opening it.

Annexes:

- IUCAB Survey
- AGENT 321 Survey
- EUROSTAT Data

¹⁰ See Ingmar GB Limited v Eaton Leonard Inc, Case C-381/98 from 9 November 2000

¹¹ Such as Directive 2006/123/EC on services in the internal market

Annex 1: key contribution of commercial agents (based on IUCAB survey)

| COUNTRY | B | C | | D | E | F | G | H | I | | J |
|--------------|-----------------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|---------------------------------|------------------|--|----------------|---|
| | commercial agents B2B | % (of B) and number of sole proprietors | | internationally working commercial agents B2B | persons employed by commercial agents B2B | Turnover of agents in <u>EUR millions</u> | Average turnover of agent (EUR) | principals | % (of H) and number of principals with size according SME definition | | principal's turnover in <u>EUR billions</u> |
| | number | % | number | number | number | | | number | % | number | |
| AUSTRIA | 8.900 | 75 | 6.675 | 6.200 | 16.000 | 900 | 101.123 | 20.000 | 80 | 16.000 | 22 |
| BELGIUM | 5.000 | 60 | 3.000 | 2.500 | 3.750 | 500 | 100.000 | 15.000 | 90 | 13.500 | 25 |
| CYPRUS | 300 | 60 | 180 | 300 | 1.500 | n.a. | n.a. | 2.000 | 100 | 2.000 | n.a. |
| DENMARK | n.a. | | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | | n.a. | n.a. |
| FINLAND | 3.500 | 4 | 140 | n.a. | 3.000 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | | n.a. | n.a. |
| FRANCE | 30.000 | 56 | 16.800 | 12.000 | 67.000 | 2.687 | 89.566 | 193.000 | 88 | 169.840 | 54 |
| GERMANY | 48.000 | 68 | 32.640 | 32.700 | 94.000 | 9.657 | 201.187 | 235.000 | 95 | 223.250 | 225 |
| GREECE | 4.600 | 60 | 2.760 | 4.600 | 10.700 | 400 | 86.956 | 30.000 | 75 | 22.500 | 5 |
| HOLLAND | 9.800 | 90 | 8.820 | 9.800 | 40.000 | 1.078 | 110.000 | 49.000 | 75 | 36.750 | 22 |
| ITALY | 216.000 | 82 | 177.120 | 42.124 | 920.000 | 8.786 | 40.675 | 690.000 | | n.a. | n.a. |
| NORWAY | 2.200 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 6.000 | 686 | 311.818 | n.a. | | n.a. | n.a. |
| SPAIN | 165.700 | 70 | 115.990 | 99.400 | 288.000 | 13.779 | 83.156 | 412.500 | | n.a. | 55 |
| SWEDEN | 5.000 | 10 | 500 | 5.000 | 20.000 | 1.130 | 226.000 | 15.000 | 95 | 14.250 | 11 |
| SWITZERLAND | n.a. | | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | | n.a. | | n.a. | n.a. |
| SLOVENIA | n.a. | | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | | n.a. | | n.a. | n.a. |
| UK + IRELAND | 20.000 | 80 | 16.000 | 20.000 | 60.000 | 2.500 | 125.000 | 60.000 | 80 | 48.000 | 120 |
| | 519.000 | 74 | 380.625 | 234624 agents 46 % (of B) | 1.529.950 | 42.103 | | 1.721.500 | 88 | 546.090 | 539 |

Source: IUCAB, 2014

Annex 2: Sectors of activity

The survey was conducted by Agent 321, the international bureau of commercial agents, brokers and distributors on the basis of a questionnaire sent to nearly 400,000 commercial agents across Europe. On average, a commercial agent works for 2.54 sectors.

“Classification of European Commercial Agents according to Market Sectors”
Agent321.COM - January 2014 - Research conducted by the Studies Centre Agent321.COM
V.01.06 (L.EN)

Research Detail

| (IT) Settore Merceologico (EN) Market Sector (FR) Secteur de Marché (ES) Sector de Mercado | Numero di Agenti Number of Agents Nombre des Agents Número de Agentes | % % % % | |
|---|--|------------------|--|
| Industria - Industry - Industrie - Industria | 138,260 | 13.83 % | |
| Alimentare - Food - Alimentaire - Alimentación | 124,201 | 12.42 % | |
| Servizi - Services - Services - Prestaciones de Servicios | 114,581 | 11.46 % | |
| Edilizia - Building and Construction - Bâtiment - Construcción | 74,254 | 7.43 % | |
| Arredamento - Furniture and Furnishing - Meuble - Mueble | 70,408 | 7.04 % | |
| Elettronica - Electronics - Électronique - Electrónica | 69,203 | 6.92 % | |
| Articoli da Regalo - Gifts and Accessories - Cadeaux - Artículos de Regalo | 66,570 | 6.66 % | |
| Tessile Abbigliamento - Textile Clothing - Textile Habillement - Textil Confección | 56,078 | 5.6 % | |
| Estetico - Aesthetics - Esthétique - Estético | 55,121 | 5.51 % | |
| Medico - Medical - Médical - Salud | 48,327 | 4.83 % | |
| Forniture Ufficio e Aziende - Office Furniture - Fournitures de Bureau - Suministros de Oficinas | 44,629 | 4.46 % | |
| Ferramenta e Giardinaggio - Hardware and Gardening - Jardinage - Ferrería, Terraza y Jardín | 39,169 | 3.92 % | |
| Sicurezza - Security Products - Sécurité - Seguridad | 36,625 | 3.66 % | |
| Auto Moto - Cars and Motorcycles - Automobile - Automoción | 34,344 | 3.43 % | |
| Agricolo Zootecnico - Agriculture and Livestock - Agriculture - Agropecuaria | 16,326 | 1.63 % | |
| Enti Pubblici - Public Authorities - Administrations Publiques - Autoridades Públicas | 8,501 | 0.85 % | |
| Immobiliare - Real Estate - Immobilier - Inmobiliario | 3,745 | 0.37 % | |
| | 1, 000,342 | 100.00 % | |

Attention: The mentioned Research and its data are property of Agent321.COM and cannot be used for any commercial purposes. Data can be mentioned only with the previous authorization by Agent321.COM. Once authorization has been accorded, mentioning of Agent321.COM is required.

Source: Agent 321.com, International Bureau of commercial agents, brokers and distributors

Annex 3: Commercial agents, extracts from the Eurostat database

| Wholesale on a fee or contract basis - Number of enterprises | | | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|
| | 2008 (EU 27) | 2009 (EU 27) | 2010 (EU 27) | 2011 (EU 28) |
| G (Trade) | 6.143.969 | 6.045.647 | 6.222.356 | 6.271.600 |
| G46 (Wholesale trade) | 1.729.708 | 1.724.637 | 1.786.879 | 1.808.008 |
| G461 (Wholesale on a fee or contract basis) | 547.149 | 542.039 | 579.659 | 590.000 estimated |
| G4611 (agri raw materials, live animals, textile raw materials & semi-finished goods) | 16.923 revised | 17.811 | 18.983 | na |
| G4612 (fuels, ores, metals & industry chemicals) | 25.235 | 38.827 | 23.549 | 23.662 |
| G4613 (timber and building materials) | 38.715 revised | 38.020 | 38.956 | 38.431 |
| aircraft) | 39.351 | 41.279 | 41.692 | 41.651 |
| ironmongery) | 46.399 | 45.217 | 45.235 | 43.488 |
| goods) | 51.284 | 49.702 | 50.496 | 50.220 |
| G4617 (food, beverages and tobacco) | 67.616 | 63.626 | 63.762 | 64.599 |
| G4618 (other particular products) | 118.226 | 113.965 | 131.312 | 137.429 |
| G4619 (a variety of goods) | 143.400 | 133.590 | 165.673 | 170.242 |

| Wholesale on a fee or contract basis - Turnover or gross premiums written, € millions | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2008 (EU 27) | 2009 (EU 27) | 2010 (EU 27) | 2011 (EU 28) |
| G (Trade) | 9.117.514 | 8.242.652 | 8.870.098 | 9.532.045 |
| G46 (Wholesale trade) | 5.416.762 | 4.791.788 | 5.257.689 | 5.768.510 |
| G461 (Wholesale on a fee or contract basis) | 258.000 estimated | 219.948 | 236.261 | 260.065 |
| G4611 (agri raw materials, live animals, textile raw materials & semi-finished goods) | na | 7.067 | 7.262 | 7.773 |
| G4612 (fuels, ores, metals & industry chemicals) | 53.584 | 42.245 | 47.224 | 57.498 |
| G4613 (timber and building materials) | 9.539 | 6.651 | 7.307 | 7.538 |
| aircraft) | 17.770 | 15.708 | 17.340 | 17.995 |
| ironmongery) | 6.846 | 4.823 | 6.559 | 6.533 |
| G4616 (textiles, clothing, fur, footwear & leather goods) | 9.251,32 revised | 7.538 | 8.619 | 9.363 |
| G4617 (food, beverages and tobacco) | 67.698 | 61.897 | 64.692 | 67.451 |
| G4618 (other particular products) | 30.184 | 25.695 | 27.176 | 29.675 |
| G4619 (a variety of goods) | 56.953 | 48.324 | 50.081 | 56.240 |

| Wholesale on a fee or contract basis - Value added at factor cost, € millions | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2008 (EU 27) | 2009 (EU 27) | 2010 (EU 27) | 2011 (EU 28) |
| G (Trade) | 1.153.272 | 1.109.552 | na | 1.197.417 |
| G46 (Wholesale trade) | 572.071 | 549.881 | na | 594.369 |
| G461 (Wholesale on a fee or contract basis) | 43.300 estimated / see metadata | 37.100 estimated / see metadata | na | 44.490 |
| G4611 (agri raw materials, live animals, textile raw materials & semi-finished goods) | na confidential / revised | 1.243 | na | 1.596 |
| G4612 (fuels, ores, metals & industry chemicals) | 2.849 | 3.740 | na | 3.615 |
| G4613 (timber and building materials) | 2.776 | 2.165 | na | 2.413 |
| aircraft) | 6.829 | 5.998 | na | 6.623 |
| ironmongery) | 2.713 | 2.000 | na | 2.572 |
| goods) | 3.882 | 2.726 | na | 3.832 |
| G4617 (food, beverages and tobacco) | 5.491 | 4.847 | na | 5.522 |
| G4618 (other particular products) | 8.472 | 7.502 | na | 9.664 |
| G4619 (a variety of goods) | 8.822 | 6.884 | na | 8.654 |

| Wholesale on a fee or contract basis - Number of persons employed | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2008 (EU 27) | 2009 (EU 27) | 2010 (EU 27) | 2011 (EU 28) |
| G (Trade) | 32.816.300 | 33.279.700 | 32.791.400 | 33.254.800 |
| G46 (Wholesale trade) | 10.548.000 | 10.830.100 | 10.434.200 | 10.635.300 |
| G461 (Wholesale on a fee or contract basis) | 971.300 | 1.005.100 | 1.004.400 | 1.046.000 |
| G4611 (agri raw materials, live animals, textile raw materials & semi-finished goods) | 30.000 | 33.600 | 34.700 | 34.100 |
| G4612 (fuels, ores, metals & industry chemicals) | na confidential / revised | 60.700 | 50.000 | 51.800 |
| G4613 (timber and building materials) | 71.200 | 68.600 | 63.900 | 64.000 |
| aircraft) | 92.600 | 104.800 | 95.100 | 97.100 |
| ironmongery) | 67.700 | 70.500 | 69.600 | 68.500 |
| goods) | 83.500 | 86.500 | 88.000 | 90.500 |
| G4617 (food, beverages and tobacco) | 133.400 | 137.200 | 125.600 | 133.300 |
| G4618 (other particular products) | 198.500 | 200.600 | 218.500 | 229.900 |
| G4619 (a variety of goods) | 244.500 | 242.600 | 259.100 | 276.900 |
| <i>EuroCommerce calculations based on Eurostat data</i> | | | | |

| Wholesale on a fee or contract basis - Value added at factor cost | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---------|---------------------------------------|---------|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| | 2008 (EU 27) | | 2009 (EU 27) | | 2010 (EU 27) | | 2011 (EU 27) | | 2011 (EU 28) |
| G (Trade) | 1.153.271,78 | | 1.109.552,04 | | na | | na | | 1.197.416,70 |
| G46 (Wholesale trade) | 572.071,41 | | 549.880,81 | | na | | na | | 594.369 |
| G461 (Wholesale on a fee or contract basis) | 43.300 estimated / see metadata | | 37.100 estimated / see metadata | | na | | na | | 44.490,2 |
| | na confidential / revised | | 1.243,36 | | na | | na | | 1.595,6 |
| G4611 (agri raw materials, live animals, textile raw materials & semi-finished goods) | | | 2.849,25 | | na | | na | | 3.615,0 |
| G4612 (fuels, ores, metals & industry chemicals) | | | 2.775,79 | | na | | na | | 2.412,8 |
| G4613 (timber and building materials) | | | 6.829,48 | | na | | na | | 6.623,1 |
| G4614 (machinery, industrial equipment, ships and aircraft) | | | 2.713,35 | | na | | na | | 2.571,5 |
| G4615 (furniture, household goods, hardware & ironmongery) | | | 3.882,28 | | na | | na | | 3.831,9 |
| G4616 (textiles, clothing, fur, footwear & leather goods) | | | 5.490,61 | | na | | na | | 5.522,0 |
| G4617 (food, beverages and tobacco) | | | 8.472,48 | | na | | na | | 9.663,7 |
| G4618 (other particular products) | | | 8.822,43 | | na | | na | | 8.654,4 |
| G4619 (a variety of goods) | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Wholesale on a fee or contract basis - Number of persons employed | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2008 (EU 27) | % share | 2009 (EU 27) | % share | 2010 (EU 27) | % share | 2011 (EU 27) | % share | 2011 (EU 28) |
| G (Trade) | 328.163 revised | 100,00 | 332.797 | | 327.914 | | na | | 332.548 |
| G46 (Wholesale trade) | 105.480 revised | 32,14 | 108.301 | | 104.342 | | na | | 106.353 |
| G461 (Wholesale on a fee or contract basis) | 9.713 revised | 2,96 | 10.051 | | 10.044 | | na | | 10.460 |
| | 300 estimates / see metadata / low reliability | | 336 | | 347 | | na | | 341 |
| G4611 (agri raw materials, live animals, textile raw materials & semi-finished goods) | na confidential / revised | | 607 | | 500 | | na | | 518 |
| G4612 (fuels, ores, metals & industry chemicals) | | | 712 | | 686 | | na | | 640 |
| G4613 (timber and building materials) | | | 926 | 1,048 | 951 | | na | | 971 |
| G4614 (machinery, industrial equipment, ships and aircraft) | | | 677 | 705 | 696 | | na | | 685 |
| G4615 (furniture, household goods, hardware & ironmongery) | | | 835 | 865 | 880 | | na | | 905 |
| G4616 (textiles, clothing, fur, footwear & leather goods) | | | 1.334 | 1.372 | 1.256 | | na | | 1.333 |
| G4617 (food, beverages and tobacco) | | | 1.985 revised | 2.006 | 2.185 | | na | | 2.299 |
| G4618 (other particular products) | | | 2.445 revised | 2.426 | 2.591 | | na | | 2.769 |
| G4619 (a variety of goods) | | | | | | | | | |

Source: Eurostat