**To put in the about section of the interactive visualisation tool** [**http://play.fm.to.it/trademap/**](http://play.fm.to.it/trademap/)

**About the data**

The United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (UN Comtrade) contains detailed goods imports and exports statistics reported by statistical authorities of close to 200 countries or areas. It concerns annual trade data from 1962 to the most recent year. UN Comtrade is considered the most comprehensive trade database available with more than 3 billion records.

This interactive visualisation tool makes use of the UN Comtrade Application Programming Interface (API). This means that the data available through the visualisation will always reflect the very latest data available on the UN Comtrade website.

UN Comtrade data covers trade in goods only and are compiled on a customs basis. This means they are not compatible with data collected on a balance of payments basis. All data are reported in current US dollar values, calculated using an average annual exchange rate. This is calculated by weighting the monthly exchange rate with the monthly volume of trade.

Commodity data are available through the interactive tool, based on the Harmonised System (HS) at the 2 digit level. There are a number of different revisions of the HS coding system. The data available through this interactive tool are on the basis of ‘HS as reported’ (for example if data was originally submitted to UN Comtrade in HS1996 then HS1996 is displayed). ‘HS as reported’ will generally provide the user with more data but it can result in some inconsistencies over time.

**Limitations**

Data on trade in services are not included in this visualisation. For data on international trade in services see the UN Service Trade database <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/servicetrade/default.aspx>

The partner "Areas NES (not elsewhere specified)" is used (a) for low value trade and (b) if the partner designation was unknown to the country or if an error was made in the partner assignment. The reporting country does not send the UN details of the trading partner in these specific cases. Sometimes reporters do this to protect company information. It is not possible to display “Areas, NES” and other non-geographically specific areas on the map. When data are available for these partners it will be displayed in the relevant charts.

The values of the reported detailed commodity data do not necessarily sum up to the total trade value for a given country dataset. Due to confidentiality, countries may not report some of its detailed trade. This trade will - however - be included at the higher commodity level and in the total trade value.

Countries (or areas) do not necessarily report their trade statistics for each and every year.

Imports reported by one country do not coincide with exports reported by its trading partner. Differences are due to various factors including valuation (imports CIF, exports FOB), differences in inclusions/ exclusions of particular commodities, timing etc.

Almost all countries report as partner country for imports the country of origin which is determined by the rules of origin established by each country. Hence, the term ‘partner country’ in the case of imports does not necessarily imply any direct trading relationship.

**Key contacts**

For UN Comtrade, including queries about the data and how to access this through the Comtrade API, contact [comtrade@un.org](mailto:comtrade@un.org)

**Further information**

Further information on the trade in goods data produced by UN Comtrade is available in the Comtrade User Guide <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradekb/Knowledgebase/Comtrade-User-Guide> and in the International Trade Statistics Knowledgebase <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradekb/Knowledgebase/>

Information on the data reported by each country, including availability and explanatory notes, is available here <http://comtrade.un.org/db/mr/rfReportersList.aspx>

Information on the work of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-innovation-skills>

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