

11 – DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN TRADE

The tables in this section provide a Regional overview of domestic trade organisation, on the basis of available data for the distribution sector in Sicily, as well as data relating to Sicily's trade with foreign countries (imports and exports), classified according to the ATECO 2007 classification, which, since January 2009, has defined the new groupings of goods for commercial trade. Therefore the historical series for data regarding foreign trade in the present yearbook are different from those in previous editions since they have been revised in the light of the new nomenclature.

The figures regarding domestic trade in Sicily in absolute terms, for the year 2010, showed 17,882 whole-sale commercial enterprises, 72,627 retail-outlets with fixed address, and 889 large-scale enterprises divided up into 736 supermarkets, 130 department stores and 26 hyper-markets. Compared with the year 2009, the number of businesses in the wholesale trade (Tab.11.1) fell by 137, due to a decline in the number of businesses selling "food products, beverages and tobacco" (-122), "other products for final consumption" (-167), "agricultural raw materials" (-7) and "machinery and equipment" (-48). On the other hand, there were increases in whole-sale enterprises dealing in "intermediate non-agricultural products, wreckage etc." (+120, in 2010) and "other products" (+87).

The structure of this sector did not undergo any great changes compared to the previous year, with businesses dealing in food and beverages accounting for 31.7% of the overall total. Enterprises dealing in "other products for final consumption" accounted for 31.4%; "intermediate non-agricultural products and wreckage" 18.5%; those selling "machinery and equipment" (12.5%); enterprises dealing in "agricultural raw materials" 4.1%, and, lastly, those dealing with "other products" accounted for 1.9%.

Over the course of 2010 (Tab.11.2) there was also a reduction (-362) in the number of fixed-point-of-sale retail-stores, representing a relative 0.5% fall, with little substantial structural change in Sicily as a whole when compared to the previous year. Most of the business enterprises in Sicily are of a small size, with specialised shops, food-stores and tobacconists figuring prominently.

Large-scale retail businesses (Tab.11.3), which at the end of 2009 numbered 879, had increased by 1.3% by the end of 2010 and numbered 890 (sub-divided into 736 supermarkets, 127 department stores and 27 hyper-markets). Table 11.3 also shows the number of workers in supermarkets, who by the end of 2010 totalled 9,699 (with a ratio of 13.2 workers per store), 2,050 in department stores (16.1 per store) and 3,290 in hypermarkets (121.8 per store).

Most commercial enterprises in the production sector therefore witnessed an inversion in the trend of slow growth pervading the previous five-year period. Figures for retail sales are shown in Table 11.4, where it can be

seen that between 2009 and 2010, there was an overall increase to the tune of 107,000 Euros, explained by a 0.4% (46,000 Euro) increase in sales at the small and medium-size distribution level, but above all in large-scale distribution (+1.3%, 61,000 Euros), (including a 33,000 Euro increase in the food sector and 28,000 Euro rise in the non-alimentary sector).

Foreign trade figures for Sicily appear in Tab.11.5 and 11.6, and show figures for import and export trade respectively, expressed in thousands of Euros and classified according to type of product.

Again in 2010, Sicily confirmed its role as net importer. In fact, the foreign trade balance ended up with a deficit of 7,123 million Euros, against a negative balance the previous year of 5,008 million Euros. Compared with the year 2009 there was a rise in imports to the tune of 5,101 million Euros (+45.3%) accompanied by a 47.8% increase in exports (2,986 million Euros).

The major factor in the negative balance of Sicily's trade exchange with foreign countries is explained by the various aggregates: "mining products from quarries and mines", "IT and communication activity products", "products from professional, scientific and technical activity" and "products from artistic and sporting activity and entertainment and leisure", which are not absorbed by the positive balance in the other sectors. At the Regional level all Provinces contributed to a varying extent to this negative balance.

Glossary

CIF (Cost Insurance Freight): clause in contracts of maritime transport used in national and international statistics of foreign trade. It indicates that the value of the goods includes costs of transport and insurance from the place of production to the national frontier of the acquirer.

Country of destination: last known state, at moment of exportation, towards which goods have been sent.

Country of origin: country in which the goods were wholly obtained.

Department store: retail outlet operating in the non-alimentary field, with a sales surface greater than 400 sq m and at least 5 different sales departments containing goods belonging to different sectors.

Economic enterprise: a combination of various resources (equipment, work, work techniques, products) that result in the production of specific goods or services.

Exports: transfer of goods and services from resident operators to non-resident operators (rest of the world). They include all goods that (either free of charge or not) leave the economic territory of the region and are destined for the rest of the world.

FOB (Free on Board): traditional clause in maritime transport contracts indicating that in the quotation prices for the goods, both the forwarding costs and potential risks are at the expense of the seller, until goods are loaded on to the ship.

Goods: all movables that can be traded. For statistical purposes electricity is also considered a movable.

Hard-discount: retail sales outlet with fixed premises of medium-to-large size, which has a policy of economizing on premises, service and running-costs, and offers self-service of a limited range of mass-consumer products, generally not brand-names, at lower costs than the market average.

Hyper-market: retail outlet with floor-area of over 2.500 sq m, divided into sections, alimentary and non-alimentary, with the respective characteristics of a supermarket and department store.

Imports: purchases abroad (rest of the world) of goods and services, brought into Regional territory. They include all goods that (either free of charge or not) enter the economic territory of the region from the rest of the world.

Large-scale business: enterprise possessing sales outlets operating as supermarkets, hyper-markets, hard-discount, department-stores, other large-scale specialized enterprises.

Production unit: place in which the production of goods takes place, or where the provision of services destined for the market-place (or not) is organised. It is topographically situated in a single place and employs persons on behalf of a single company.

Supermarket: Retail sales outlet operating in the food-sector (autonomously or as part of a department store) organised mainly on a self-service basis and with payment on leaving; its sales area is larger than 400 sq m, and it offers a wide variety of mass consumer products, mostly pre-packaged, as well as occasional non-alimentary articles for domestic use.

Worker: a person employed by a company, or self-employed, working in an economic unit with or without the agreed contractual compensation.

Further reading

Publications

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