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## Globalisation and communication – addressing user needs and making our external economy data more comprehensible<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This paper and presentation were prepared for the meeting. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the BIS, IFC, BoP, ECB or the central banks and other institutions represented at the meeting.

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## Globalisation and Communication

### Addressing user needs and making our external economy data more comprehensible

Caroline Bo and Casper Winther<sup>1</sup>

#### Abstract

The economic globalisation that has taken place the past decades has increased the complexity of international trade for a small open economy like Denmark. New questions and analytical needs have been put forward making it necessary to rethink the way statistics are being produced and disseminated. In addition to an increased complexity in conducting statistics within this field, it has become more difficult for statistical users to understand what the statistics actually show. Therefore, it is essential that producers of statistics also analyse and explain these data instead of leaving it solely up to users to do this. The focus is changed *from providing data to providing knowledge*.

Recently, we at External Economy, Statistics Denmark, have increased our efforts to shed light on our statistics with regards to economic globalisation. It has entailed new statistical products, and increased focus on analysing and explaining our data to our users. Emphasis is on disseminating across domains, giving users a more complete picture and thus making it easier to understand economic globalisation. Also, some answers to emerging questions regarding globalisation have been provided by linking existing information. By implementing these measures, we are trying to make it easier for our users to understand what our statistics show and which conclusions one may draw.

The efforts are ongoing, and changes to the regular dissemination of International Trade in Goods statistics, International Trade in Services statistics, and the Balance of payments are being considered. So far, users have reacted positively to these efforts. However, we can still improve how we describe our statistics – the effects of globalisation – in a way that is easy to understand.

Keywords: Dissemination, Analyses, Globalisation, Balance of payments, Trade

JEL classification: F10, F19, F60, F69

<sup>1</sup> External Economy, Statistics Denmark. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Statistics Denmark.

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## 1. Introduction

With the economic globalisation and technological development, that has taken place the past decades, global trade has become more complex for a small open economy like Denmark. Consequently, it has become more difficult to produce statistics reflecting global trade, and complicated what to conclude from these statistics. One of the key challenges is that an increasing part of Danish exports is not crossing the border and is not included in the traditional cross-border statistics on trade. Due to this, statistical users find it more challenging today to understand what the statistics on global trade actually show. Therefore, informative descriptions of statistics, such as international trade statistics and the balance of payments, is necessary. Moreover, users also express interest in getting more detailed information on economic globalisation. Thus, new statistical products on globalisation are requested. Due to the complexity, it is essential that experts on statistics also analyse these data instead of leaving it solely up to users to do this.

At External Economy at Statistics Denmark, we have increased our efforts on analysing and explaining our data to our users. It entails different formats of dissemination – descriptive papers and more analytical work. A key part is the integration of the various statistical domains of international trade in the dissemination. A traditional stovepipe approach to dissemination makes it difficult to get a complete overview of economic globalisation. Also, additional information on globalisation has been provided. By implementing these measures, we are trying to make it easier for our users to understand what our statistics show and which conclusions one may draw. Hopefully, this will provide a better understanding of the Danish trade patterns in a globalised world, and the impact of globalisation on the Danish economy.

## 2. Why is it necessary to make changes?

The pattern of international trade has changed dramatically the past twenty years, in particular regarding the ways goods cross borders. Goods may no longer be designed, manufactured nor assembled in a single country, but rather through global value chains. Multinational enterprises organise themselves across several countries. Because of the interconnectivity of the global production processes, the traditional boundaries of countries are disappearing. Multinational enterprises may let subsidiaries abroad manufacture and sell the company group's goods. Perhaps the goods never even reach the country where the company group is registered. The headquarters may own the goods produced abroad but let their subsidiaries take care of the processing activity. How multinationals choose fiscally to organise their production (i.e. which enterprise legally owns the goods during the production process and sale) can change overnight, and does not necessarily result in changes in the actual flow of goods.

The traditional trade in goods statistics focus on flows, i.e. goods crossing borders. Thus, it does not focus on change in ownership of the goods, i.e. changes between Danish and foreign counterparts in who owns the goods. An increasing

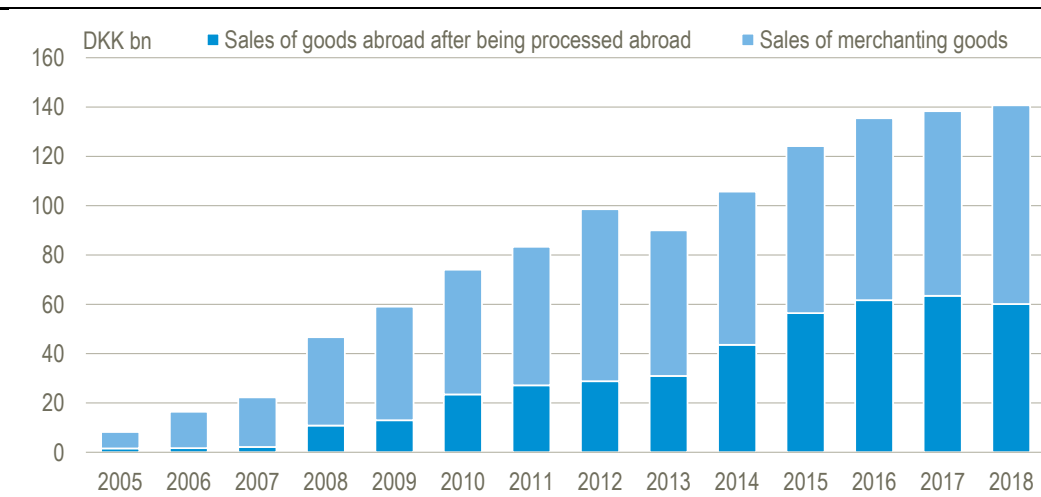
part of Danish goods exports is not captured in the traditional measures of goods trade, since more goods change ownership without having crossed Danish borders. Danish businesses are increasingly selling goods abroad which are neither produced in Denmark nor pass Danish borders. Figure 1 shows the development in sale of Danish goods abroad that have not crossed Danish borders.

Goods exports outside Denmark by Danish manufacturing enterprises amounted to more than DKK 140 bn in 2018. Sales outside Danish borders comprise of merchanting goods and goods sold abroad after being processed abroad (see more in box 1). Sales of merchanting goods made up more than one-half of total sales in 2018. From 2005 to 2018 goods sold after being processed abroad grew from about DKK 2 bn to more than DKK 60 bn, while sales of merchanting goods grew from around DKK 7 bn to more than DKK 80 bn, see figure 1.

### Goods sold abroad without crossing the border

by Danish manufacturing enterprises

Figure 1



Source: Statistics Denmark, [www.statistikbanken.dk/GLOB1](http://www.statistikbanken.dk/GLOB1)

Along with the changes in trade patterns statistical guidelines on global activities have been changed to better reflect this. Capturing the activities of global production is a challenging aspect of macroeconomic statistics. It has complicated the work for all parties involved – the companies reporting the activities, the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) producing the statistics, and the users who are studying the statistics.

#### Box 1

#### How reported data on global activities is recorded in the statistics

Understanding how global production activities are reflected in the statistics is tricky. Most of the largest Danish enterprises organise their activities globally and trade and production span many countries. Usually the organisation also entails that some of these activities abroad are managed from Denmark. When Danish trade and production activities take place outside

Danish territory, but are operated from Denmark, things start to become complicated. This is due to the fact that these activities are statistically regarded as Danish activities. Global production patterns affect the statistics in a way that 'old school economics' did not teach us. Instinctively, one thinks of a country's international trade as being the goods (and services) crossing the borders of the country. Most of our users think of Danish goods exports as being the goods leaving Danish territory when sold to a customer abroad. However, global production patterns muddle this understanding. Today, a large part of Danish goods exports is taking place outside Danish borders, and the goods, which are sold, have never been in Denmark. This kind of exports should by definition be included in the export figures in the Danish balance of payments, and the activities also have an impact on the Danish national accounts. It is, however, not part of the International Trade in Goods statistics, since the latter statistics only includes goods crossing the Danish border.

Thus, Danish exports outside Denmark's borders occur when Danish enterprises sell products abroad, which they own, and which have not crossed Danish borders. Precisely how these exports are recorded in Denmark's balance of payments depends on whether the products are sold abroad after processing, or if they are simply purchased as commodities and subsequently sold without further processing. This latter process is known as merchanting.

#### *Definition and recording of processing activities abroad*

- Processing activities abroad take place when a Danish enterprise (domestic resident) buys production services from a foreign enterprise (non-resident) outside Denmark, and the Danish enterprise owns the goods during the processing. The Danish enterprise may buy raw materials both in Denmark and abroad for the processing abroad. After the processing, the Danish company sells the finished goods to a foreign enterprise abroad.
- The payment for processing abroad is recorded in the International Trade in Services statistics as an import of a processing service. It covers both payroll and any supplementary purchasing of raw materials undertaken by the foreign enterprise in relation to the further processing of the Danish goods. The goods purchased in Denmark and sent abroad are recorded in the International Trade in Goods statistics as exports. However, as Danish ownership of the goods sent abroad remains constant and no change to a non-resident occurs, this movement of goods will not be classified as an export in the balance of payments. On the contrary, raw materials purchased abroad are not recorded in the International Trade in Goods statistics as exports, but are included in the balance of payments as imported goods, due to the change from foreign (non-resident) to Danish ownership (resident). After processing, the products are sold to a foreign customer (non-resident), and have never crossed Danish borders. The sale of goods abroad after being processed abroad is recorded as an export in the balance of payments.

#### *Definition and recording of merchanting activities abroad*

- Trade of merchanting goods takes place when a Danish enterprise (domestic resident) buys goods from a foreign enterprise (non-resident), and resells them directly to a foreign enterprise (non-resident) abroad. Thus, the goods are never entering Denmark, and they are not altered between the purchase and the sale.
- In the balance of payments, merchanting is treated as a net export (selling price minus acquisition price)

Enterprises can easily shift between the two business models, and the physical trade patterns will appear unaltered. However, how Danish enterprises choose fiscally to organise their production and sales in the global economy are crucial for how the activities are recorded in the statistics. When a company chooses to use one form of fiscal organisation instead of another, it will have an effect on how the transactions are recorded in the balance of payments and whether it is included in the calculation of Danish production (GDP) or only in Danish income (GDI).

Thus, the change in trade patterns and global production arrangements has increased the complexity in understanding statistics regarding international trade. So due to the complexity of it all, we needed to enhance our efforts on making our external economy data more comprehensible to our users.

### 3. Responding to user needs

In 2016 we started our work on making statistics on international trade more comprehensible. We have had – and still have – ongoing discussions on what is needed. In addition to new forms of dissemination, we have also concluded that we need to provide more detailed information on global trade activities. This is to shed light on our statistics; more importantly, it is an attempt to make a complex field more comprehensible.

The International Trade in Goods statistics, the International Trade in Services statistics, as well as the balance of payments are all produced at External Economy. The fact that they are all produced in the same office makes it much easier when developing new disseminating practices regarding the field of international trade and economic globalisation, especially when explaining the interrelations between the statistics.

#### 3.1 Our users

When considering new initiatives on explaining our data we needed to keep in mind that we have a mixed group of users. Overall, we can characterise our users as belonging to one of two main groups – the general public and experts.

- The first group includes, among others, journalists. Hence, people with limited knowledge of our statistics. It is important to stress that journalists play an important role since they are the ones who communicate our statistics to the general public, and thus it is important that they understand the basics of our statistics. We have come to realise that the public at large has difficulties in understanding our statistics more generally. They are looking for a more overall explanation of our statistics, including economic globalisation, in a not too technical wording.
- The latter group comprises experts who already have an in-depth knowledge of our statistics and are completely familiar with the economic terms. It is important that this group has a deep understanding of our statistics as they play a key role in providing facts about society and thus affect the political

decision-making. We have come to realise that this group also has difficulties in understanding our statistics, especially how global production setups are included in the statistics. In addition to understanding how global activities are reflected in Danish international trade figures, this group is asking for more analytical work focused on economic globalisation and the trade patterns linked to it. Thus, we need to provide new insights on economic globalisation for our expert users.

Against this backdrop, when planning new initiatives, we have kept in mind that we have users with different demands.

## 3.2 Actions

We have taken several steps to make the topics of international trade and economic globalisation more comprehensible. It includes providing different formats of dissemination – descriptive papers and more analytical work. Also, we have provided more detailed data, i.e. new insights, on economic globalisation. We have increased our collaboration with colleagues from the national accounts and the central bank to add additional aspects to our numbers, and we plan to do this more in the future.

Our analytical papers are typically written in a language that demands general knowledge of economics. However, we try to incorporate graphics as much as possible to ease the understanding. Our analyses are written in Danish. We have chosen, however, also to translate them into English. In that way we are able to reach a greater audience, and share them with colleagues internationally. Also, as a bonus, they get more attention as they are published twice. The analyses are usually aimed at our expert users.

The publication *Behind the Numbers* (Bag Tallene) is a series of articles written in more simple terms and with a minimum of numbers in them. They are aimed at the general public and are produced in collaboration with the communication team at Statistics Denmark. These articles are produced on a regular basis and are only published in Danish.

In addition, we have launched new data on globalisation for the manufacturing industry, using existing sources. Along with the published data we publish newsletters (only in Danish), which show data in tables, graphs and text.

Lastly, in 2017 a [webpage](#) on Statistics Denmark's website was launched. It focuses solely on economic globalisation. The webpage provides an overview of all statistics, publications and newsletters that Statistics Denmark produces on economic globalisation across statistical domains. The statistics are explained in an easy-to-understand language. The webpage also links to international websites related to the topic.

### 3.2.1 Explanatory initiatives for the general public

Several actions have been taken to meet the requests of the general public. It entails providing an overall explanation of our statistics, including economic

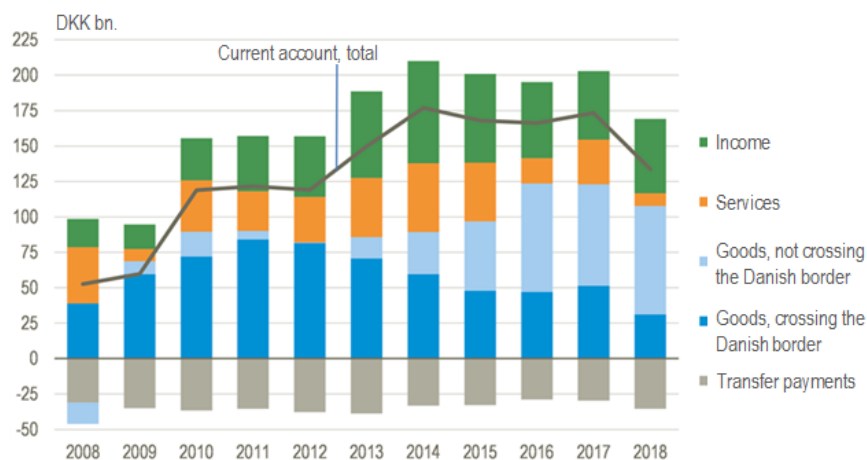
globalisation, in a not too technical wording. Examples of some of our actions are given below.

The newsletter *Udenrigsøkonomi (External economy)* was launched in 2014. It is published yearly and combines International Trade in Goods statistics, International Trade in Services statistics, and the balance of payments. Recently, we have introduced a split of the goods account into goods, crossing the Danish border, and goods that do not cross the Danish border. A graph from the newsletter is shown below.

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### Current account balance, total net earnings and contribution to surplus

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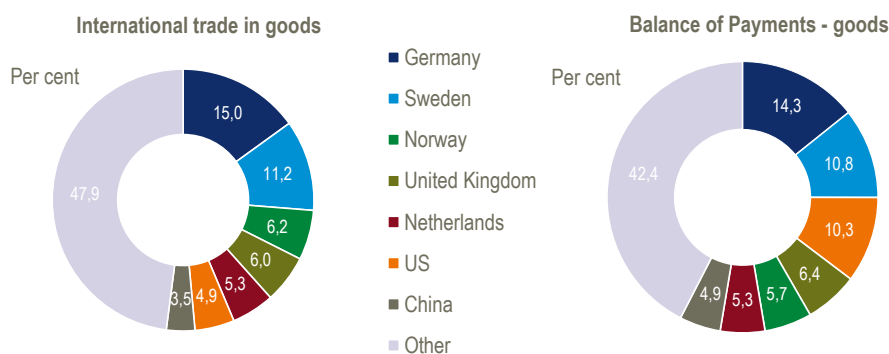


The analysis *How big are Danish exports and who are our main trading partners?* was published in 2017 (Danish) and again in 2018 (English). It describes Danish exports and Denmark's trading partners, based on the different export statistics. The analysis is aimed at the public at large who are interested in understanding the different export figures that exist. Among other things, the analysis shows that around a sixth of the total Danish export of goods takes place outside Danish borders. It also looks at Danish trading partners based on the different trade concepts including the concept of trade in value added. Two graphics from the analysis are shown below.

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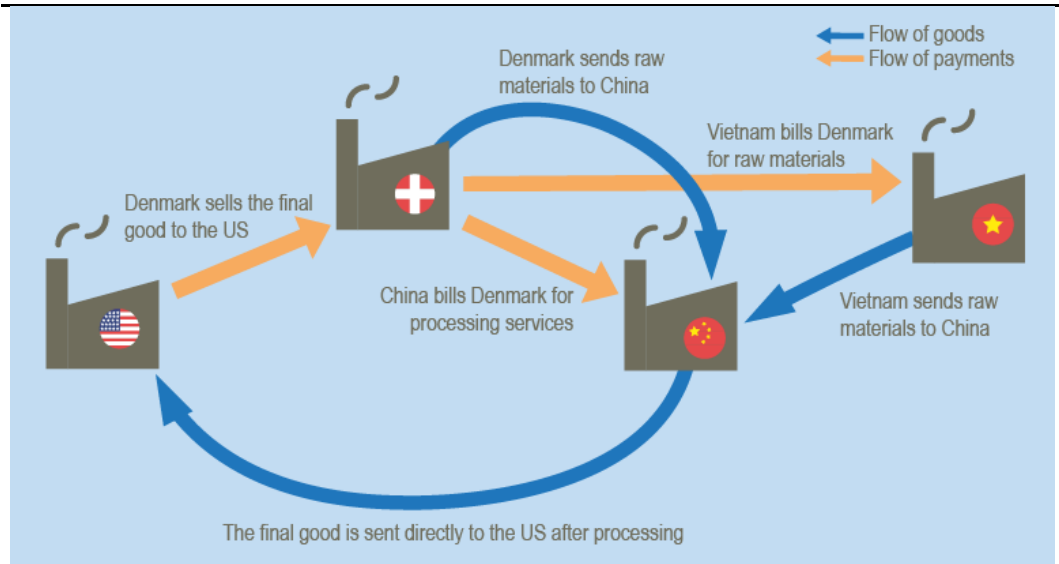
### Largest export markets for goods, 2016

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## Example

### Processing setup



In addition, a few more initiatives have been launched. It includes a “fact sheet” comprising key facts about Danish external economic activities made to serve the purpose of being a fact sheet to discussions on this topic during the Danish election in 2019. The last initiative to be mentioned is the article *‘Danish exports with and without Danish labour’* in the ‘Behind the Numbers’ publication. It was published in 2019. It is an article about how Danish manufacturing companies’ global production setup affects Danish export numbers.

### 3.2.2 New insights for our expert users

Our expert users are asking for more detailed information on how global production setups are included in the statistics. Moreover, they are requesting more detailed data on global production activities. Several actions have already been taken to meet these requests. Examples of some of our actions are given below.

The analysis Large increase in sales of goods abroad by Danish manufacturing industries was published twice in 2016 (Danish and English). It describes how manufacturing companies organise production internationally, and focuses especially on production and sales abroad. One of the key findings is that Danish manufacturers’ sale of goods abroad has increased dramatically – from about DKK 8 bn in 2005 to DKK 120 bn in 2015. This is illustrated in figure 1 in chapter 2.

New data on globalisation was launched in 2018. It entailed two tables supplemented by an annual newsletter (Danish manufacturing companies’ international production) combining information from different sources on manufacturing companies’ international production. Some information is new, e.g. goods flows related to processing activities. An extraction from one of the tables is shown below.

## Detailed data on Danish manufacturing companies' international production

	2016	2017	2018
<b>Exports</b>			
Trade with goods that crosses the border	352	372	373
Goods sold abroad without crossing the border	135	138	141
- Goods sold abroad in connection to processing abroad	62	63	60
- Goods sold under merchanting	74	75	81
Charges for the use of intellectual properties	5	6	6
Other trade, including maintenance and repair services, sale of manufacturing services, construction and intracompany services	17	18	18
Goods sent abroad after processing abroad without change of ownership	2	3	2
Goods acquired under merchanting (negative credit)	-48	-51	-55
<b>Imports</b>			
Trade with goods that crosses the border	150	160	165
- Goods procured abroad in connection to processing abroad	12	11	10
Charges for the use of intellectual properties	3	2	3
Purchase of manufacturing services abroad	7	7	7
Other trade, including maintenance and repair services, sale of manufacturing services, construction and intracompany services	40	34	35
Goods returned after processing abroad without change of ownership	2	2	2
Units: DKK bn			
Source: Statistics Denmark, <a href="http://www.statistikbanken.dk/GLOB1">www.statistikbanken.dk/GLOB1</a> , GLOB2			

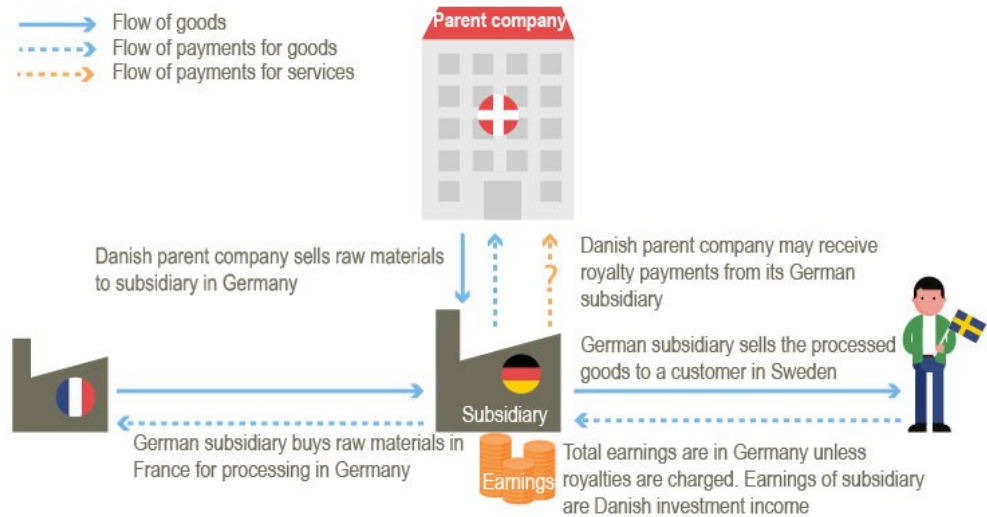
The analysis The global organisation of industrial groups has an impact on the measurement of Danish production and income was published in 2018 (Danish) and again in 2019 (English). It describes the global setup of Danish industrial groups and their impact on the Danish economy. Focus is on the close correlation between Danish exports and income from subsidiaries abroad. The analysis is a continuation of the analysis from 2016. It shows, among other things, that income from subsidiaries of DKK 42.1 billion accounts for approximately one third of total earnings from Danish industrial groups' manufacturing activities abroad. These earnings could have been counted as exports had the group chosen a different role for the production taking place in subsidiaries abroad. Two graphics from the analysis are shown below.

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## Example

### Global production setup

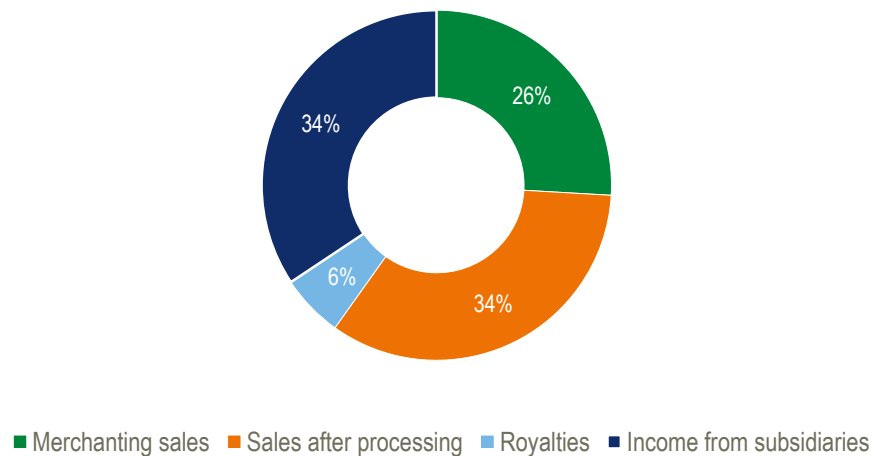
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### Danish industrial groups' earnings from production abroad. 2016

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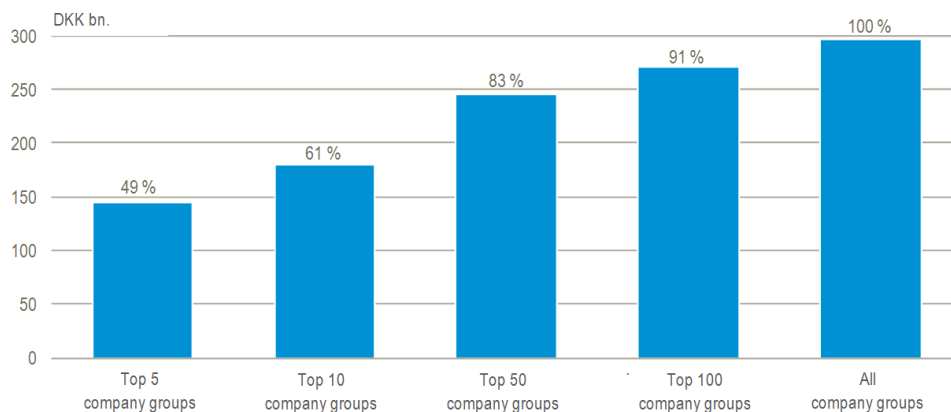
The analysis A few industrial groups contribute massively to Denmark's balance of payments surplus was published in 2019 (Danish). An English version is planned to be published in February 2020. The analysis is a continuation of the analyses from 2016 and 2018, and further elaborates on the global setup of Danish industrial groups and their impact on the Danish economy. Focus is on how much the industrial groups contribute to the balance of payments surplus, and the scale of their outwards foreign direct investments. One of the key findings is that the direct contributions by just five large industrial groups to the current account surplus correspond almost to the entire Danish balance of payments surplus in 2018. This finding is illustrated in the first of the two graphics from the analysis shown below.

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## Total balance of payments contribution

Broken down by the number of industrial groups. 2018

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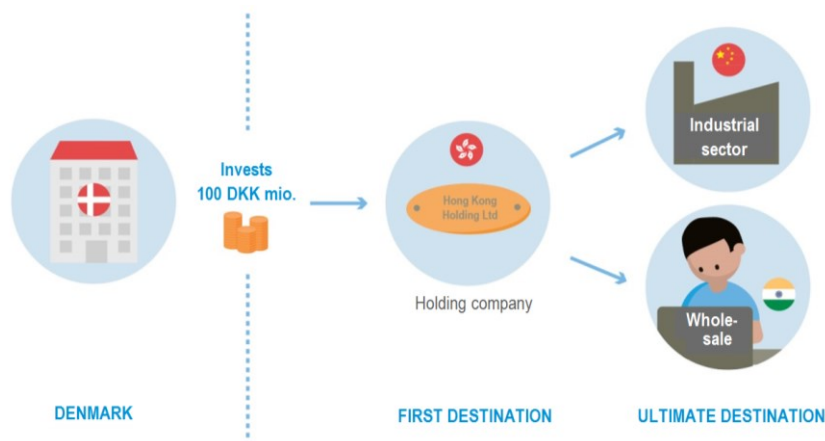


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## Investments abroad by industrial company groups

First vs. ultimate destination

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## 4. Experiences so far

Users have reacted positively to our efforts. The response has been that our new products are highly appreciated and much needed. Moreover, users have told us that they hope we will continue our efforts in explaining our data, conduct analyses, and provide more detailed data where possible. Furthermore, our measures have made it easier for experts and to some extent journalists to pick up conclusions that one can draw from our data that they most likely would not have otherwise detected due to the complexity of the topic. Also, we have noticed that the English versions do provide extra attention to our analyses.

Table 1 shows how much attention our initiatives have got. It should be noted that a low number of views shall not be regarded as a failure. As mentioned, we have different products aimed at different users. Some products are aimed at experts and others are aimed at the general public. The latter group is of course much bigger than the first one. The table stresses this. Three of our analyses (1, 3 and 4 in the table) and one of our newsletters (10 in the table) are aimed at experts and have received less attention in number of views. However, these publications have not gone unnoticed. Several experts have shown great interest in them. These publications have led to people contacting us from ministries, trade unions, industrial organisations, and universities with questions regarding the underlying data and the topic in general.

It is thus most interesting to look at table 1 to see if our initiatives aimed at the general public, get as much attention as we are hoping for. We have e.g. made a paper with a general introduction to the exports definition (2 in the table). The table shows that this analysis has indeed received a lot of attention. In fact, it is the most read analysis of the ones published by Statistics Denmark in 2017. Some users have contacted us due to this paper, mentioning that they appreciate our efforts in explaining the exports definitions as they are far from clear cut to understand.

Another product aimed at the general public is our newsletter combining the International Trade in Goods statistics, the International Trade in Services statistics, and the balance of payments (11 in the table). As seen in the table the newsletter has a large audience. It is also among the most read newsletters produced by Statistics Denmark. Moreover, table 1 shows that the website on economic globalisation has been viewed a lot since its launch in 2017. In the spring of 2019 the website had approximately a thousand views per month.

Number of views as of January 2020 for some of our new products

Table 1

Product	Published	Number of views by external users since launch	Target group
Analyses			
1 Large increase in sales of goods abroad by Danish manufacturing industries	DK Oct 2016 (UK Nov 2016)	DK 772 (UK 545)	Experts
2 How big are Danish exports and who are our main trading partners?	DK Dec 2017 (UK Feb 2018)	DK 7,168 (UK 1,519)	General public
3 The global organisation of industrial groups has an impact on the measurement of Danish production and income	DK Oct 2018 (UK May 2019)	DK 666 (UK 97)	Experts
4 A few industrial groups contribute massively to Denmark's balance of payments surplus	DK Nov 2019 (UK Feb 2020)	DK 433 (UK –)	Experts

Behind the numbers (Bag Tallene) <sup>1</sup>				
5	Facts about Denmark's economic activities with foreign countries	Feb 2019	1,619	General public
6	Danish exports with and without Danish labour	Jun 2019	437	General public
Webpage				
7	Webpage on economic globalisation	April 2017	21,080	General public / experts
Tables				
8	Glob1	Oct 2018	256	Experts
9	Glob2	Oct 2018	101	Experts
Newsletters (annual)				
10	Danish manufacturing companies' international production	Oct 2018	999	Experts
11	External economy	Feb 2019	4,556	General public

<sup>1</sup> Since we produce Bag Tallene on a regular basis only two are included in the table.

## 5. Concluding remarks and future work

The past several years we at External Economy at Statistics Denmark have increased our efforts to shed light on our statistics. This includes measures making the topics of international trade and economic globalisation more comprehensible, and also proving new insights on the topic. Our focus has changed – *from providing data to providing knowledge*.

We have two main areas we will focus on regarding future measures. First, we will continue our efforts on explaining our statistics, also to overcome the difficulty of having two different concepts of trade. One of the things we are discussing is to have a more integrated way to describe our statistics instead of disseminating them separately. More specifically, we aim at disseminating the statistics on international trade in goods and services as well as the balance of payments in one single monthly press release.

Secondly, our expert users are asking for more analytical work and detailed data to understand the impact of globalisation on the Danish economy. Our collaboration with the central bank in our analytical work has allowed us to get the full picture of the economic impact of industrial groups on the balance of payments. And we have gained insights into the different channels of earnings used by companies with an international organisation of production. We will continue to add new dimensions to our analyses of the impact Danish industrial groups have on the Danish economy. As a next step we plan to look into the job composition and wages of those industrial firms that to a large extent have an international production setup.

# Globalisation and Communication

*-Addressing user needs and making our external economy data more comprehensible*

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Lisboa 17 February 2020

# Key takeaways

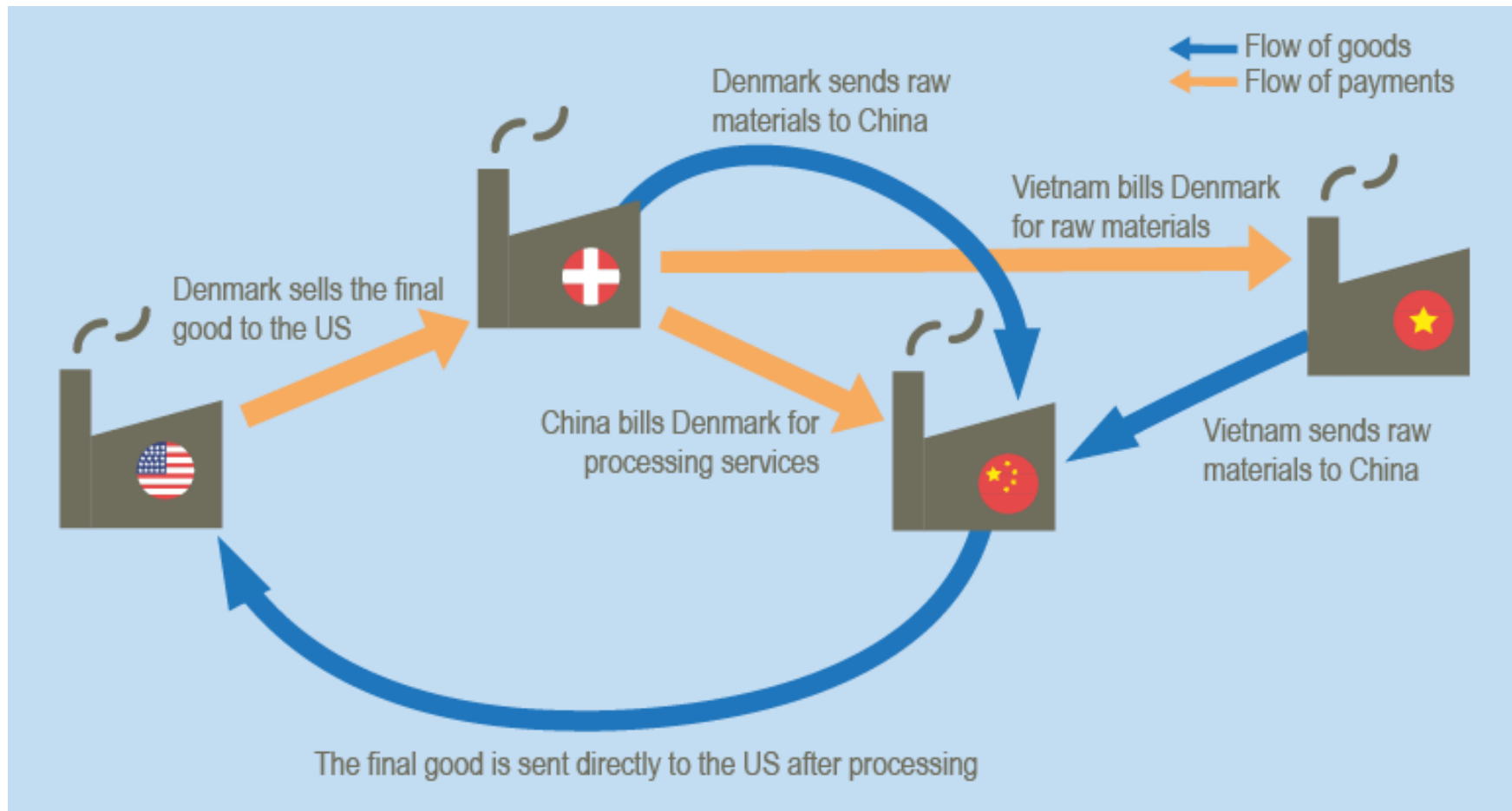
- Major impact of globalisation on a small open economy as DK  
=> Globalisation challenge the traditional use of statistics and raises new questions
- Re-think dissemination - from *providing data* to *providing knowledge*
  - Much can be done within existing frameworks
  - *Explain* data and put statistics into perspective
  - To fully understand the impact one must look across domains
  - *Explore* and provide new knowledge – more details, new analytical insights

# Our mission is challenged by globalisation

- Statistics Denmark provides statistical knowledge to support decisions, debate, and research on Danish society.
- To fulfill our role in society it is crucial that our users understand our statistics and can get the answers they are looking for – i.e. we must stay relevant
- For statistics on international trade and economic globalisation this is a challenge!

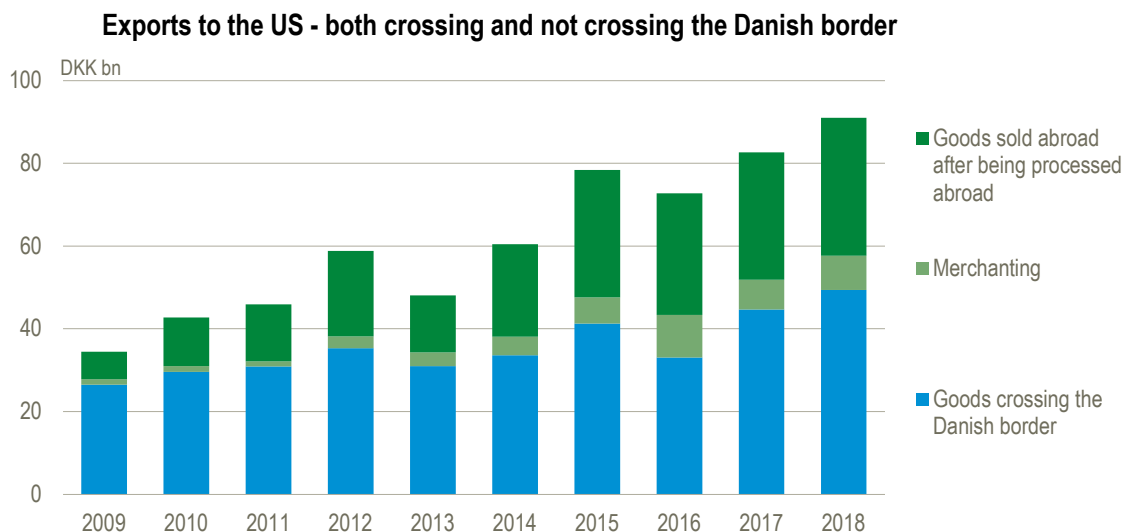
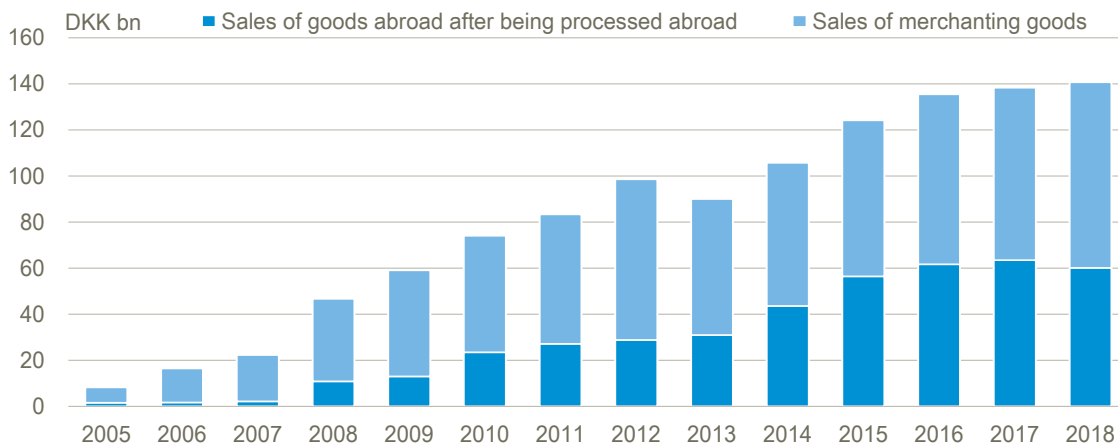


# International trade flows are complex/part of global value chains...



# ...it is also reflected in Danish trade

- The impact of production abroad by manufacturing companies is significant
- A significant part of Danish exports do not cross the DK border (not the way most people think!)



# Necessary to make changes

## *- from providing data to providing knowledge*

1. Explain: Statistics on international trade is difficult to understand
  - Border crossing vs. change of ownership, influenced by different business models - explain data more thoroughly and put statistics into perspective
2. Explore: Economic globalisation is complex, additional information is needed to grasp its effects on the Danish economy
  - Provide new knowledge and more detailed data on global trade activities to give deeper insights into the topic

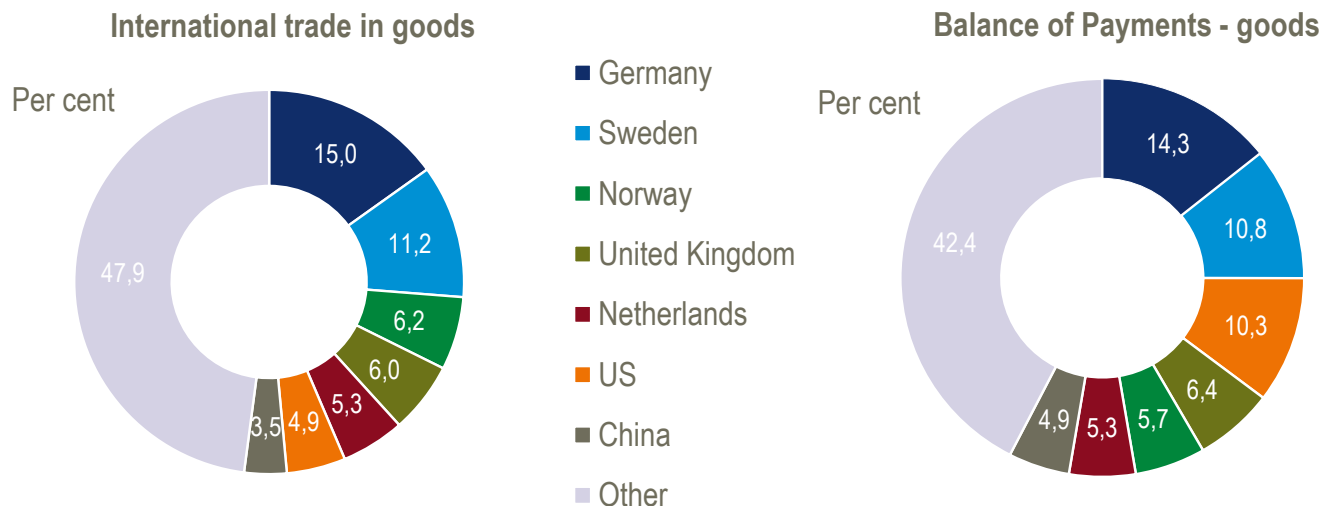


# Actions

- New forms of dissemination
- New statistical products - more detailed data on global trade activities
- Increased collaboration with colleagues from the national accounts and the central bank
- Keep in mind that we have a mixed group of users - general public and experts
- Some examples...

# Explanatory initiatives (general public)

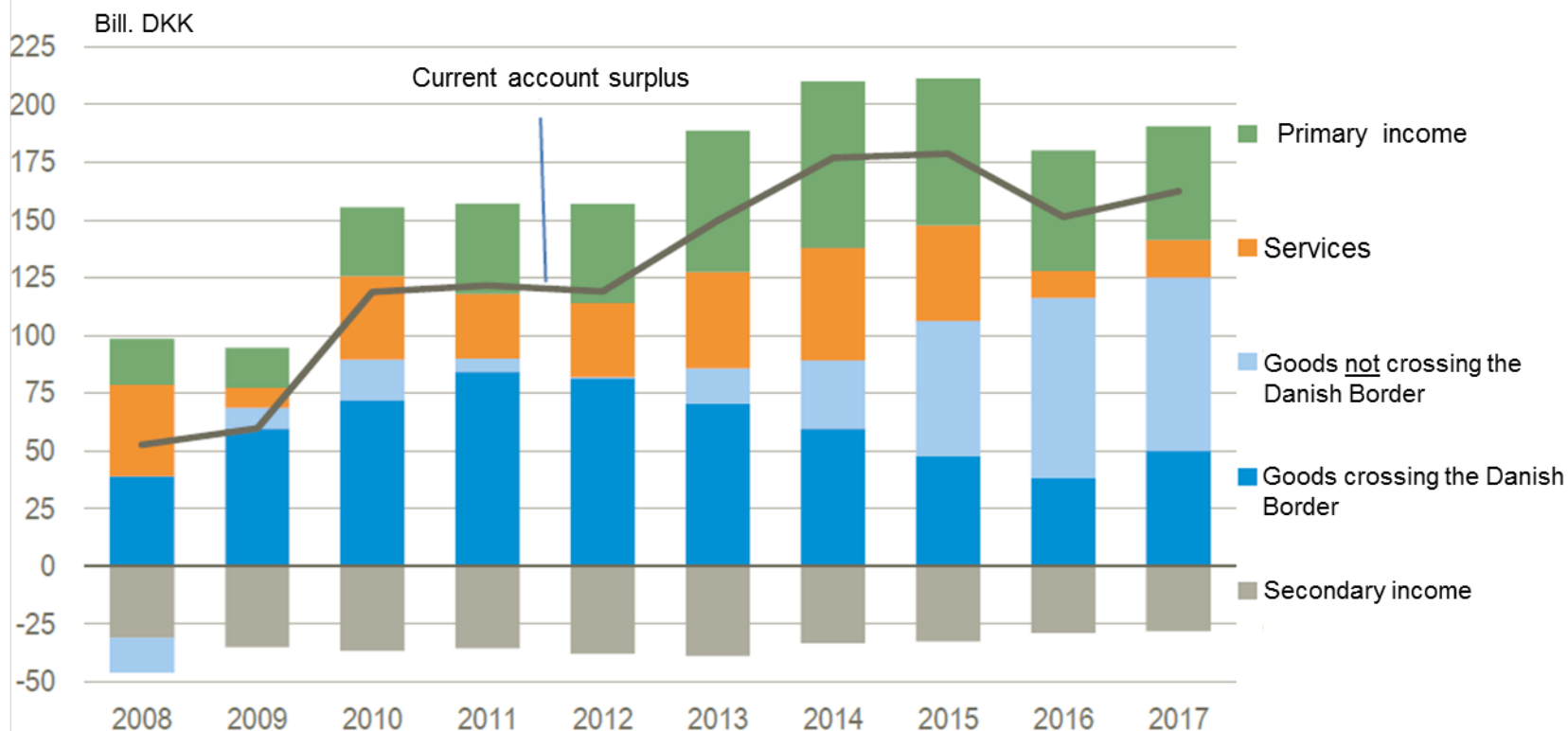
- *How big are Danish exports and who are our main trading partners?*
- Published in 2017



# Explanatory initiatives

- current account surplus driven by goods that do not cross the border

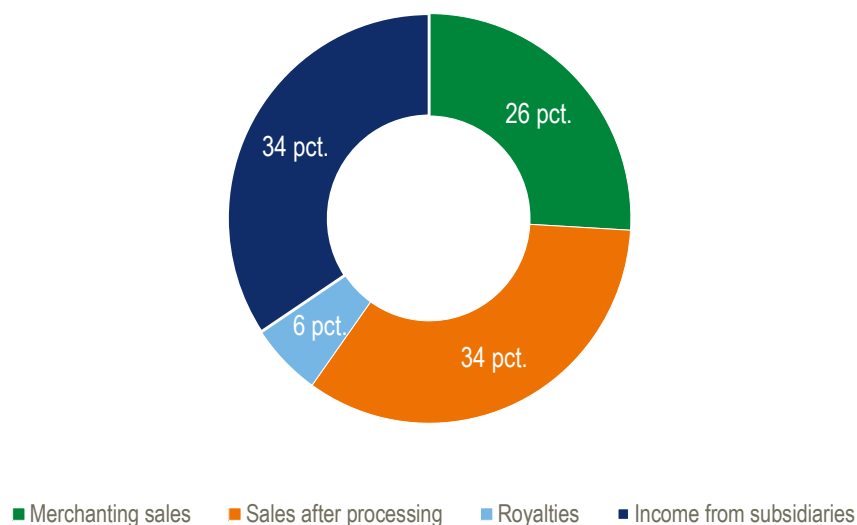
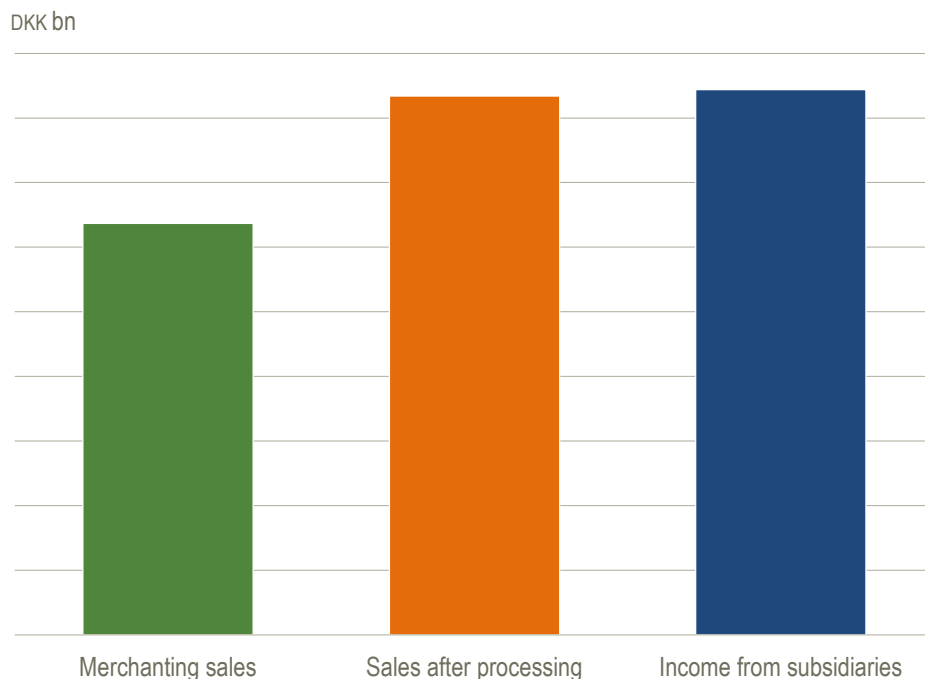
Current account surplus by main item



# New insights (expert users)

## – close link between production and income

Danish industrial groups' *earnings* from production abroad (2016)

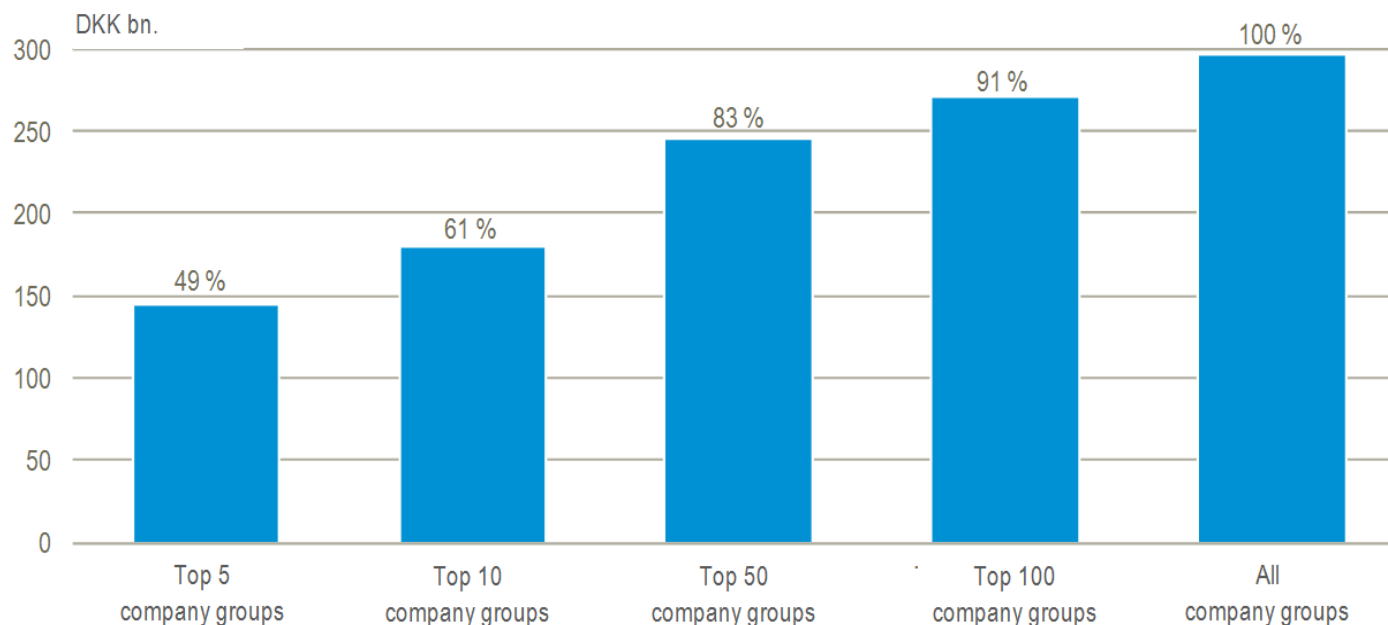


# New insights

## – impact on BoP

Total balance of payments contribution

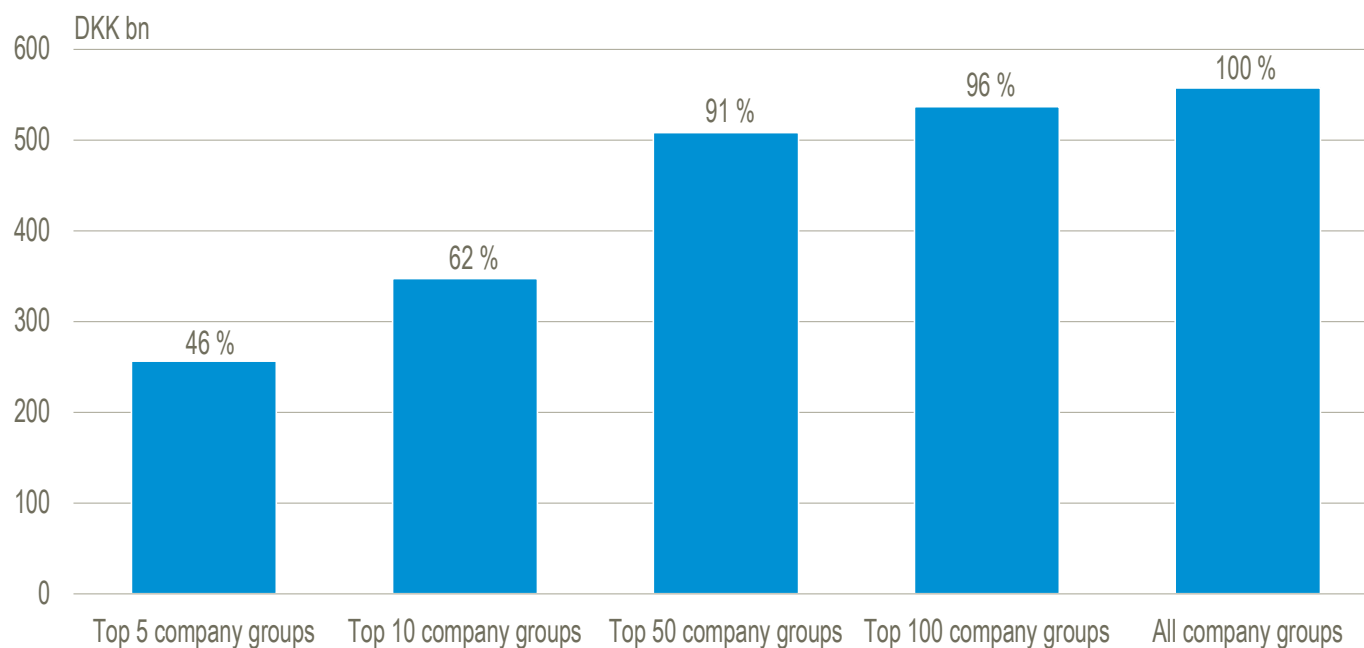
Broken down by the number of industrial groups. 2018



# New insights

## – impact on iip

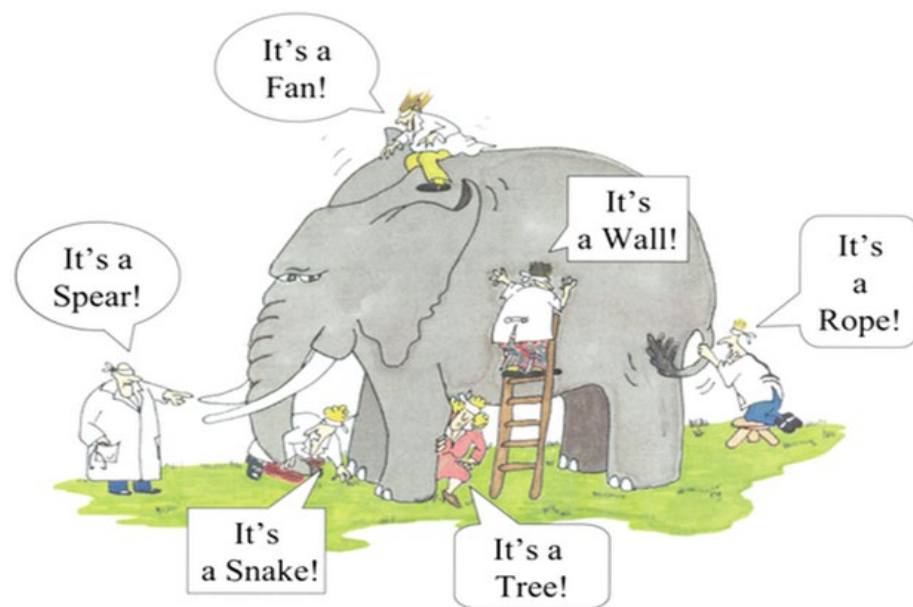
Outwards Foreign Direct Investments  
Broken down by the number of industrial groups. 2018



# Key message

## - do we get the full picture?

- A stove pipe approach is of limited use when assessing the impact of globalisation – a broader view is needed, especially in trade statistics
- Positive reactions from users so far saying new products are appreciated



# Future work

- We plan to continue *explaining* our statistics and making it more accessible
  - As a next step we plan to fully integrate the monthly dissemination of balance of payments, international trade in goods and services statistics
- And we continue *exploring* to meet expert users needs
  - As a next step we plan to look into the job composition and wages of those industrial firms that to a large extent have an inter production setup.



Thank you!