

# Industrial production growth led by consumer durables

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04/2000

## Statistics in focus

### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND SERVICES

THEME 4 – 7/2000

## Contents

Industrial production trends in the Triad.....	2
Producer price trends in the Triad.....	2
Industrial production trends in the EU.....	3
Producer price trends in the EU.....	4
Employment trends in the Triad and Member States .....	5
Construction in the EU .....	6
Retail trade and new car registrations in the EU.....	6
Business cycle at a glance.....	7

Gunter Schäfer

Output in EU-15 advanced 0.9% in February 2000 compared to the previous month, after a fairly stagnant period for the production index during the turn of the New Year. The growth rate for industrial production was the highest month on month rise since March 1999. The increase for total industry could largely be attributed to growth within the consumer durables industrial grouping.

The euro-zone production index for total industry rose by 1.3% in February 2000 compared to the previous month, after two months of no growth.

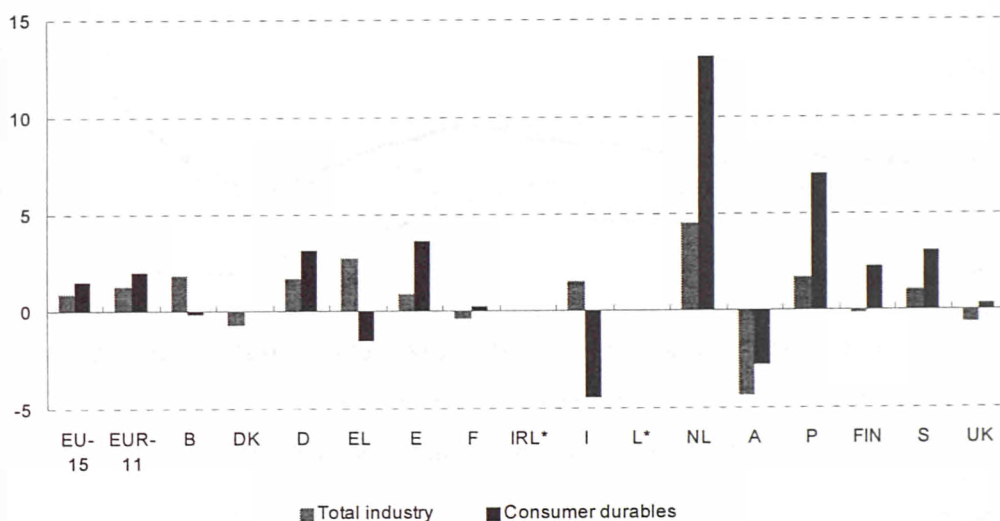


Figure 1: Production index, seasonally adjusted series, January 2000 - February 2000 (%)<sup>1</sup>

(1) EL and A, 12/99; F, P and S, 01/00; \*: not available.



## Industrial production trends in the Triad

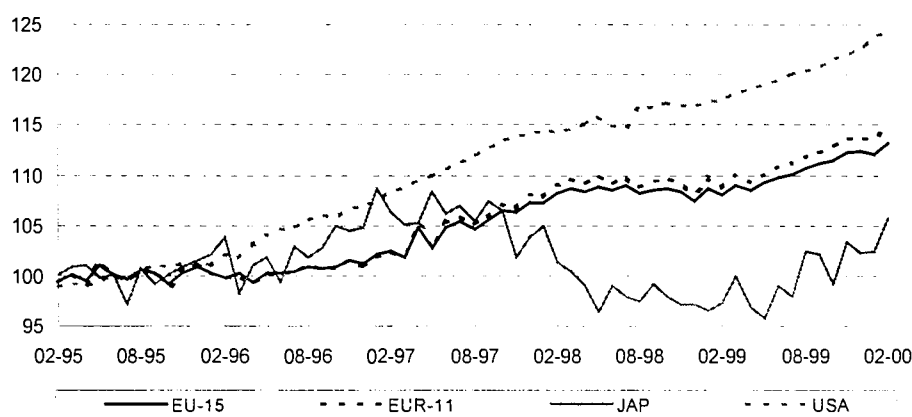


Figure 2: Production index for total industry (1995 = 100)

Recent growth (t/t-1)	EU-15	EUR-11	JAP	USA
11-99	0.8	0.9	4.2	0.3
12-99	0.0	0.0	-1.1	0.5
01-00	-0.2	0.0	0.1	1.1
02-00	0.9	1.3	3.2	0.3

Table 1: Industrial production, latest growth rates (%)

The USA saw industrial production growth slow somewhat in February 2000 (compared to the previous month). The month on month increase of 0.3% still represented a significant increase, whilst relatively it was below the rates reported in three out of the previous four

months. Consumer durables grew the most in February 2000 (0.3%), whilst the output of capital goods rose by just 0.1%.

Industrial output grew by 3.2% in Japan between February 2000 and the previous month, following growth

of 0.1% in January 2000. There was a considerably degree of variation in the rates of growth of industrial production in Japan during the second half of 1999, with large increases in some months being cancelled out by significant reductions in other months.

## Producer price trends in the Triad

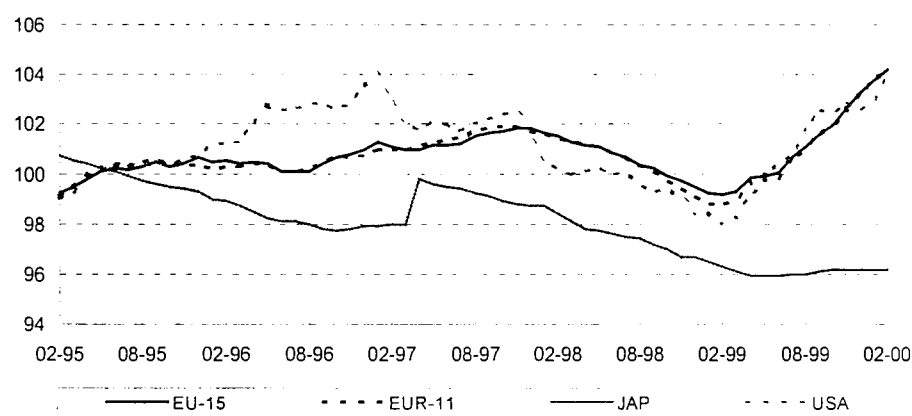


Figure 3: Producer price index for total industry (1995 = 100)

Recent growth (t/t-1)	EU-15	EUR-11	JAP	USA
11-99	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.5
12-99	0.6	0.6	0.0	-0.3
01-00	0.5	0.6	0.0	0.2
02-00	0.4	0.5	0.0	1.2

Table 2: Industrial producer prices, latest growth rates (%)

On the basis of a comparison with the same month of the previous year, EU producer prices rose by 5.1% (February 2000). This was the highest producer price increase recorded since EU data became available in January 1991, and a marked contrast to the negative rates of change that were recorded during the spring of 1999.

Producer prices have followed a similar trend in the USA to that seen in the EU. Industrial producer prices were 6.1% higher in February 2000 (when compared to February 1999), a significant change from the negative rates of change that were reported in the first half of 1999. The February 2000 figure represented the third consecutive month that

prices rose by more than 4.0% using this measure.

In Japan producer prices followed a different evolution. In February 2000 Japanese producer prices fell by 0.1% when compared to the same month of a year before, a much slower rate of decline than the -2.0% reported in the early part of 1999.

## Industrial production trends in the EU

	03-99	04-99	05-99	06-99	07-99	08-99	09-99	10-99	11-99	12-99	01-00	02-00
EU-15	0.9	-0.5	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4	-0.3	0.8	0.0	0.2	0.9
EU-11	1.7	-0.5	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.3
B	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.0	1.3	0.1	0.7	1.0	1.1	-0.4	0.1	1.8
DK	1.5	-1.0	3.0	-3.0	1.8	-1.8	2.9	-0.6	2.9	-0.5	-0.5	-0.7
D	0.3	0.6	0.4	1.0	-1.6	2.7	0.0	-0.1	1.0	0.3	0.3	1.7
EL	-0.5	0.9	-0.1	1.3	3.5	-0.1	-4.9	1.6	-0.3	2.8	:	:
E	1.6	-1.4	2.1	-0.5	1.2	1.5	-1.2	-0.4	1.6	1.2	0.2	0.9
F	1.0	-0.1	0.5	1.0	1.1	0.0	-0.1	0.4	1.6	-0.2	-0.4	:
IRL	-2.0	2.3	-1.8	3.8	1.4	2.1	:	:	:	:	:	:
I	1.7	-1.4	-0.4	1.5	0.6	0.9	-0.4	0.6	1.1	0.1	-1.1	1.5
L	3.7	1.3	1.2	-2.5	2.1	7.6	-2.0	-2.1	0.3	5.3	-9.7	:
NL	-0.4	-1.1	1.0	-0.4	2.4	-2.7	0.1	1.3	0.2	0.7	-3.4	4.5
A	2.8	0.5	0.0	1.5	-0.3	1.5	0.2	2.6	4.1	-4.3	:	:
P	-0.2	1.0	0.3	-0.4	1.6	1.7	-2.9	1.2	2.0	-2.1	1.7	:
FIN	-1.3	3.3	-2.6	0.4	1.3	-1.3	2.2	-1.5	1.7	6.7	-2.4	-0.1
S	0.4	-1.4	2.5	-0.6	-1.1	-2.8	7.0	0.8	-0.6	-2.9	1.0	:
UK	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.5	-0.2	0.2	0.1	-0.5	-0.4	-0.6
NO	-0.3	-2.9	2.2	-0.4	6.8	-1.2	-6.5	2.0	3.5	1.5	-1.4	0.3

*Table 3: Production index for total industry, latest growth rates, t/t-1 (%)*

Comparing February 2000 to the previous month, the rates of change in EU-15 output for the main industrial groupings were: consumer durables (1.6%), intermediate goods (0.9%), capital goods (0.7%) and consumer non-durables (0.6%).

After reporting a growth rate of 0.3% in the previous two months, output rose by 1.7% in Germany in February 2000. The performance of the different industrial groupings in Germany in February 2000 (compared to the month before) was as follows: intermediate goods (2.5%), capital goods (1.7%), consumer durables (3.1%) and consumer non-durables (1.2%). The negative figures for intermediate goods and consumer durables in January 2000 were largely redressed in February 2000.

Compared to the previous month, industrial output in Spain rose by 0.9% in February 2000, whilst growth of 0.2% was recorded in January 2000 and 1.2% in December 1999. While activity in consumer durables, capital goods and intermediate goods increased by 3.6%, 1.6% and 0.6% respectively in February 2000, the index for consumer non-durables fell by 1.9%.

After declining 1.1% in January 2000, production in Italy gained 1.5% in February 2000 when compared with the previous month. Whilst the most recent data for Italy showed alternating months of growth and decline the trend was still for a gradual rise in output. However, whilst industrial output was broadly stable in the United Kingdom over the second half of 1999, the latest three monthly figures reported a decrease in output equal to or in excess of 0.4% (between December 1999 and

February 2000). Indeed, production fell in all of the main industrial groupings, except consumer durables (0.4%).

Most other Member States who reported a figure for February 2000 saw their production rise, after stagnant or declining output at the turn of the New Year. Output in Belgium was 1.8% higher in February 2000 than a month before, following a 0.4% reduction in December 1999 and almost no change in January 2000. February 2000 month on month growth rates varied considerably: from Denmark (-0.7%) and Finland (-0.1%) through to the Netherlands (4.5%).

## Producer price trends in the EU

	04-99	05-99	06-99	07-99	08-99	09-99	10-99	11-99	12-99	01-00	02-00	03-00
EU-15	0.8	0.1	0.1	-0.6	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.4	
EU-11	0.6	0.1	0.2	-0.7	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	
B	1.1	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.1	1.0	0.9	-0.1	:	:
DK	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	-0.6	0.8	0.5	-0.1	0.7	:
D	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.2	:
EL	1.2	0.1	0.2	1.5	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.7	0.7	0.2	:	:
E	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.8	:
F	1.1	0.0	0.2	1.5	0.9	1.0	0.8	1.3	1.3	0.5	0.7	:
IRL	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	1.8	0.4	0.1	:
I	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.6	:
L	-1.2	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	1.3	0.5	0.2	1.5	-0.3	:
NL	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.9	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.4	0.5	2.0	0.7	:
A	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
P	2.0	2.3	1.1	0.5	2.3	1.7	0.2	0.9	1.7	1.7	0.4	:
FIN	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.8	1.0	0.5	0.9	:
S	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
UK	-0.1	-0.1	-0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	1.3	0.6	0.0	-0.1	-0.2
NO	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

Table 4: Producer price index for total industry, latest growth rates, t/t-1 (%)

The chief motor behind the increase in EU producer prices for total industry has been increasing prices in the energy sector, shown most clearly when looking at the producer price index for intermediate goods - up by 8.5% in February 2000 when compared to the same month of 1999. As far as the other main industrial groupings were concerned, price increases were significantly lower, although the most recent data shows that there has been a tendency to see price increases quicken. This was particularly discernible in the consumer non-durables grouping (0.8%, in February 2000). Corresponding rates of change for the other industrial groupings were: capital goods (0.3%) and consumer durables (0.5%).

Euro-zone industrial producer price indices rose by 5.6% between February 1999 and February 2000. This figure was slightly higher than that for the EU as a whole, and the upswing since mid-1999 was equally striking. The 9.2% increase reported for intermediate goods' producer prices over the same period was above the EU figure, whilst the other main industrial groupings reported the following figures: capital goods (0.4%, between February 1999 and 2000), consumer durables (0.7%, February 2000) and consumer non-durables (0.7%, February 2000).

Germany and the United Kingdom saw industrial producer prices rise by 2.4% and 2.1% respectively (February 2000 and March 2000 compared to the same month of the previous year). However, whilst these figures showed a considerable change in the evolution of German producer prices compared to mid-1999 (when prices were falling by

1.5% in June 1999), prices quickened at a less rapid pace in the United Kingdom (from -0.2% in June 1999).

In Italy, industrial producer prices rose by 4.6% in February 2000, compared to the same month of a year before; a significant increase when compared to the rate of change for June 1999 (-1.4%). The latest price increases reported in Spain were close to the EU average: up by 5.1% between February 1999 and February 2000. However, the largest increases were observed in France, where prices had fallen throughout 1998 and the first quarter of 1999. This situation was reversed in mid-1999 and price increases subsequently accelerated to 10.7% by February 2000 - the third consecutive month that an increase in excess of 9.0% was recorded.

## Employment trends in the Triad and Member States

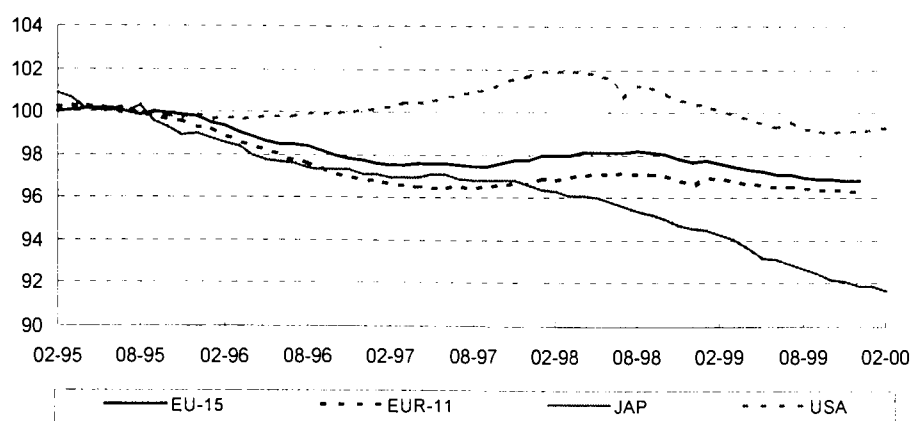


Figure 4: Employment index for total industry (1995 = 100)

Recent growth (t/t-1)	EU-15	EUR-11	JAP	USA
11-99	-0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.0
12-99	0.0	-0.1	-0.2	0.0
01-00	:	:	0.0	0.1
02-00	:	:	-0.2	0.0

Table 5: Industrial employment, latest growth rates (%)

Total EU industrial employment was 0.9% lower in December 1999 than it had been in the same month of the previous year. There has been a slowing down in the reduction of industrial employment over recent months, as the year on year figure for September 1999 was -1.3%. However, the latest trend was still downwards.

There was less of a decline in the euro-zone, with the rate of change comparing December 1998 and December 1999 showing a loss of 0.4%, which could be compared to a reduction of 0.8% recorded during the twelve months to September 1999.

Whilst certain Member States reported an expansion in their

respective industrial workforces, others continued to report declines. The largest changes during the twelve-month period were reported in Finland (4.4%, fourth quarter 1999) and Spain (2.2%, fourth quarter 1999). On the negative side, Belgium (-6.8%, January 2000), the United Kingdom (-2.7%, December 1999) and Portugal (-2.1%, January 2000) had the largest reductions.

	I-99	II-99	III-99	IV-99	08-99	09-99	10-99	11-99	12-99	01-00
EU-15	-0.4	-0.9	-1.2	-1.1	-1.2	-1.1	-1.2	-1.1	-0.9	-0.9
EUR-11	0.0	-0.4	-0.7	-0.5	-0.7	-0.8	-0.7	-0.5	-0.4	-0.4
B	0.1	-0.3	-3.2	-3.1	-3.2	-3.1	-3.2	-2.8	-3.2	-6.8
DK	1.5	1.4	-2.5	-5.6	:	:	:	:	:	:
D	0.0	-0.8	-1.1	-1.0	-1.0	-1.1	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.1
EL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
E	4.7	2.6	2.0	2.1	:	:	:	:	:	:
F	0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.3	:	:	:	:	:	:
IRL	0.9	0.2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
I	-4.1	-3.0	-3.0	-2.3	-2.9	-3.4	-2.9	-2.2	-1.9	:
L	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.4	1.3	0.0
NL	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	:	:	:	:	:	:
A	-1.3	-1.7	-1.9	-2.0	-2.0	-1.9	-2.1	-2.0	-1.8	:
P	-1.7	-2.6	-2.9	-3.4	-2.7	-2.9	-3.0	-3.6	-3.2	-2.1
FIN	0.5	2.8	3.1	4.4	:	:	:	:	:	:
S	0.9	0.0	-0.1	-0.6	:	:	:	:	:	:
UK	-2.4	-3.3	-3.6	-3.1	-3.6	-3.8	-3.4	-3.3	-2.7	:
NO	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

Table 6: Employment index for total industry, latest growth rates, compared to a year before (%)

## Construction in the EU

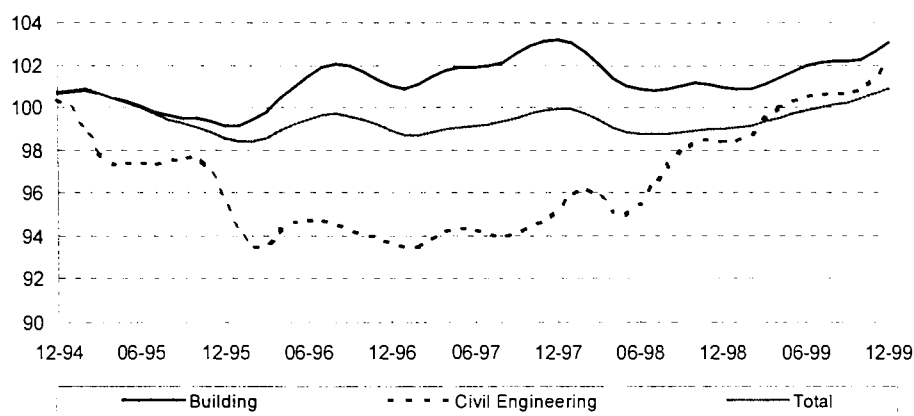


Figure 5: Construction output in the EU (1995 = 100)

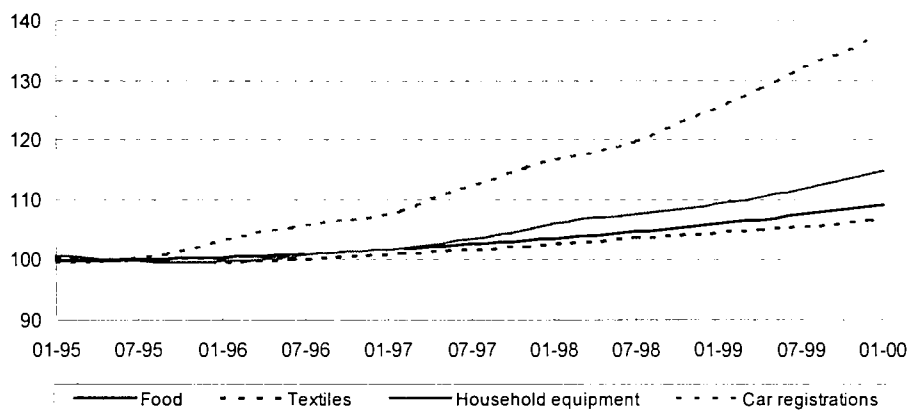
The second half of 1999 saw relatively stable construction output in the EU up until the 2.5% increase recorded in December 1999 (on the basis of a month on month comparison). The latest rate of

growth followed more modest changes equal to -0.5% and 0.5% in October and November 1999. When looking at more long-term developments, the recent upturn in growth contributed towards a 6.0%

increase in output between December 1998 and December 1999.

Over the twelve months to December 1999, most Member States saw output prices of new residential buildings increase at a slow pace. However, in the United Kingdom, prices increased by 9.5% during this period, largely as a result of a buoyant housing market. The price increases in the United Kingdom contributed for a large proportion of the overall 3.0% increase in output prices recorded in the EU, whilst the corresponding figures in the euro-zone saw output prices rise by just 1.5%. Over the same period, output prices fell by 1.0% in Germany (fourth quarter 1999), whilst they rose by 1.0% in Austria and 2.3% in Luxembourg.

## Retail trade and new car registrations in the EU



With a 0.2% increase in the volume In Germany, the volume of retail

Figure 6: Retail sales turnover and new car registrations in the EU (1995 = 100)

of EU retail sales between January 2000 and December 1999, the trend of growing retail sales volumes remained positive, with a 2.5% increase between January 1999 and 2000. The figures for the euro-zone showed a similar evolution: with a 0.1% increase for the month on month rate and a 1.7% increase during the latest 12-month period.

sales fell by 1.9% in January 2000 (compared to the previous month), the third successive month of negative rates. Retail sales in Germany were 3.2% lower in January 2000 than they had been in the same month of 1999. There was also a mixed picture in the United Kingdom, where a 1.2% decrease in sales was reported in February 2000

(compared to the previous month), which almost reversed the 1.6% gain recorded a month earlier. The overall trend of retail turnover in the United Kingdom was positive, with sales 5.1% higher in February 2000 than they had been a year before. Growth over the most recent twelve-month period was higher still in Sweden, where sales grew by 9.8% in February 2000.

In France, the 6.6% reduction in sales volumes in December 1999 was off-set by increases of 1.7% in November 1999 and 5.9% in October 1999 (all compared to the previous month). In Italy, the picture was one of broad stability, with the month on month figure for January 2000 being 0.1%, following a decline of just 0.1% in each of the two preceding months. Viewed over a longer time frame, Italian retail sales rose by 1.1% between January 1999 and January 2000.

## Business cycle at a glance

	Industrial production	Industrial producer prices	Industrial new orders	Industrial employment	Construction	Building permits	Retail trade	Car registrations
EU-15	↗↗ 02-00	↗↗ 02-00	↗↗ 01-00	↘ 12-99	→ 12-99	↘ 12-99	↗↗ 01-00	↗↗ 12-99
EUR-11	↗↗ 02-00	↗↗ 02-00	↗↗ 01-00	↘ 12-99	↗ 12-99	→ 12-99	↗↗ 01-00	↘ 12-99
B	↗ 02-00	↗↗ 01-00	↗ 01-00	↘↘ 01-00	↗↗ 02-00	→ 10-99	↗↗ 12-99	↗ 02-00
DK	→ 02-00	↗↗ 02-00	↗ 02-00	↘ 12-99	↘↘ 12-99	↘ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	→ 02-00
D	↗↗ 02-00	↗↗ 02-00	↗↗ 02-00	↘ 01-00	↗ 02-00	↘ 12-99	↘↘ 01-00	↘↘ 12-99
EL	↘ 12-99	↗↗ 01-00	:	↘↘ 12-98	:	→ 04-99	↗ 12-99	↗ 02-00
E	↗↗ 02-00	↗↗ 02-00	:	↗ 12-99	↗↗ 12-99	↗ 10-99	↗ 02-00	↗ 06-99
F	↗↗ 01-00	↗↗ 02-00	:	↗ 12-99	↗ 01-00	→ 01-00	↗↗ 12-99	→ 01-00
IRL	↗↗ 08-99	↗↗ 02-00	:	→ 06-99	:	↘ 12-99	↗↗ 08-99	↗ 11-99
I	↗ 02-00	↗↗ 02-00	↗ 12-99	↘ 12-99	↘↘ 06-98	↗ 09-99	↗ 01-00	↗ 01-00
L	↘ 01-00	↗↗ 02-00	↘ 12-98	↘↘ 01-00	↗ 01-00	→ 09-99	↗ 12-99	→ 01-00
NL	↗ 02-00	↗↗ 02-00	↗↗ 01-00	↘ 12-99	↗ 12-99	↘↘ 12-99	↗↗ 02-00	↘ 10-99
A	↗↗ 12-99	:	↗ 12-99	↘ 12-99	→ 12-99	:	↘ 01-00	↗ 08-99
P	↗ 01-00	↗↗ 02-00	:	↘↘ 01-00	:	→ 01-00	:	↘↘ 12-99
FIN	↗↗ 02-00	↗↗ 02-00	:	↘ 12-99	↗ 12-99	↘ 01-00	↗ 01-00	↗ 02-00
S	→ 01-00	:	↘↘ 12-98	↘ 12-99	:	:	↗↗ 02-00	↗ 02-00
UK	↘↘ 02-00	↗ 03-00	↘ 02-00	↘ 12-99	↗ 09-98	→ 01-00	↗↗ 02-00	↗↗ 09-99
NO	↗↗ 02-00	:	:	:	↘ 09-99	↘ 02-99	→ 10-99	↗ 11-99

Table 7: Business cycle at a glance, seasonally adjusted series, latest month available (%)<sup>1</sup>

Growth rates<sup>2</sup>: ↗↗ High growth; ↗ Moderate growth; → No change; ↘ Moderate decline; ↘↘ Large decline

(1) Producer prices: gross data.

(2) The growth rates compare the last three months with the previous three months period in relation to the standard deviation of each individual series since January 1995: high growth:  $> \sigma$ ; moderate growth:  $0.3\sigma \rightarrow \sigma$ ; no change:  $-0.3\sigma \rightarrow 0.3\sigma$ ; moderate decline:  $-\sigma \rightarrow -0.3\sigma$ ; large decline:  $< -\sigma$ .

# Further information:

## ➤ Reference publications

Title Monthly Panorama of European Business  
 Catalogue No KS-AM-00-002-EN-C Price EUR 17

## ➤ Databases

New Cronos Theme 4  
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