

# **Other economic issues**

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## An overview

Indicators	ICT goods exports (% of total goods exports)		ICT goods imports (% total goods imports)		Patent applications, residents and non residents (per 1,000,000 inhabitants)		Commercial bank branches (per 100,000 adults)		Domestic credit to private sector (% of GDP)	
	2023 (a)	2023 (a)	2023 (a)	2023 (a)	2022 (b)	2022 (b)	2024 (c)	2024 (c)	2024 (d)	2024 (d)
YEAR										
PRT	3.4	3.4	5.6	71.6	39.4	78.4				
Portugal										
ESP	1.5	1.5	4.6	27.6	41.4	74.4				
Spain										
FRA	3.4	3.4	5.4	216.9	40.9	107.5				
France										
ITA	2.1	2.1	4.5	156.5	25.0	35.7				
Italy										
SVN	2.2	2.2	3.1	116.5	33.1	47.1				
Slovenia										
CRO	1.6	1.6	4.0	33.7	21.0	48.4				
Croatia										
GRC	2.7	2.7	104.1	104.1	28.9	63.6				
Greece										
MLT	29.5	29.5	11.6	30.1	22.4	58.7				
Malta										
CYP	1.4	1.4	3.5	22.2	32.6	33.0				
Cyprus										
SRB	..	..	..	..	22.5	61.3				
Serbia										
XXK	..	..	..	..	39.3	50.4				
Kosovo										
BIH	0.3	0.3	2.5	15.8	46.6	46.4				
Bosnia and Herzegovina										
MNE	0.8	0.8	4.2	11.3	24.7	54.8				
Montenegro										
MKD	0.9	0.9	4.4	11.7	22.6	33.9				
North Macedonia										
ALB	0.0	0.0	7.6	7.6	15.8	44.2				
Albania										
TUR	0.8	0.8	3.8	107.3	4.4	20.7				
Turkiye										
SYR	0.0	0.0	2.2	6.3	18.4	106.6				
Syrian Arab Republic										
LBN	0.9	0.9	2.3	47.5	12.6	80.2				
Lebanon										
JOR	0.3	0.3	3.5	31.0	16.5	69.6				
Jordan										
ISR	15.3	15.3	9.5	1053.9	12.5	68.5				
Israel										
PSE	0.6	0.6	3.1	..	6.6	27.6				
West Bank and Gaza										
EGY	2.3	2.3	3.2	17.2	12.3	13.6				
Egypt, Arab Rep.										
LIBY	-	-	5.7	..	29.6	58.3				
Libya										
TUN	4.2	4.2	3.6	29.6	5.3	19.5				
Tunisia										
DZA	0.0	0.0	4.8	24.9	22.7	81.4				
Algeria										
MAR	3.0	3.0	4.3	77.8						
Morocco										
NORTH AFRICA										
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(..) Not available

(a) 2022 Albania and West Bank and Gaza; 2019 Lybia; 2017 Algeria; 2010 Syrian Arab Republic

(b) 2015 Lebanon

(c) 2023 North Macedonia, West Bank and Gaza and Algeria; 2022 Lybia; 2013 Syrian Arab Republic

(d) 2023 Israel and Morocco; 2017 Lebanon; 2011 Syrian Arab Republic.

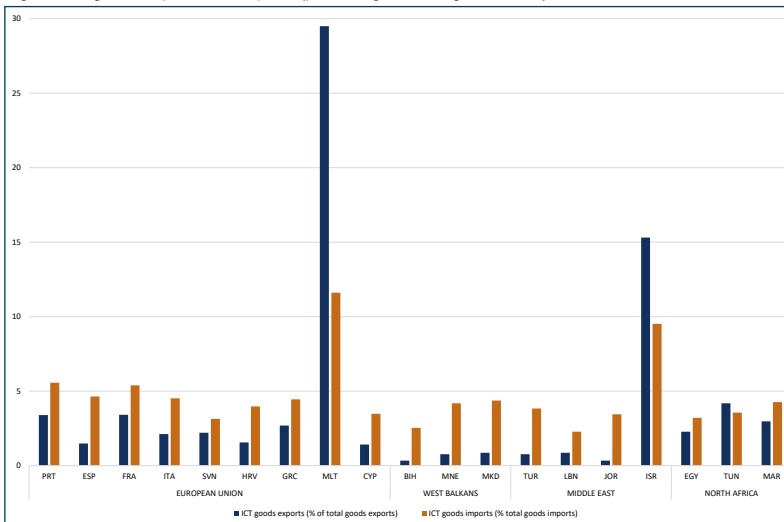
Sources: International Monetary Fund, UNCTAD, World Bank, WeMed on World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) data.

## Some highlighted topics

*ICT products foreign trade.* Mediterranean countries are predominantly net importers of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) products: in twenty-three out of the twenty-six countries in the region, the share of ICT goods is higher in imports than in exports (see Figure 1). Three countries constitute notable exceptions. In Malta, within the European Union, ICT products account for a very significant share of total goods exports (29.5%) and also of imports (11.6%), the latter representing the highest import share in the entire Mediterranean area. Israel, in the Middle East, also records a strong presence of ICT products in its trade flows, accounting for 15.3% of exports and 9.5% of imports.

While smaller in absolute terms, Tunisia also plays a noteworthy role: for this North African country, the share of ICT products is higher in exports than in imports, and ICT exports account for 4.2% of total goods exports, placing Tunisia third in the Mediterranean region after Malta and Israel.

Fig. 1. ICT goods exports and imports (percentage of total goods trade). Year 2023.



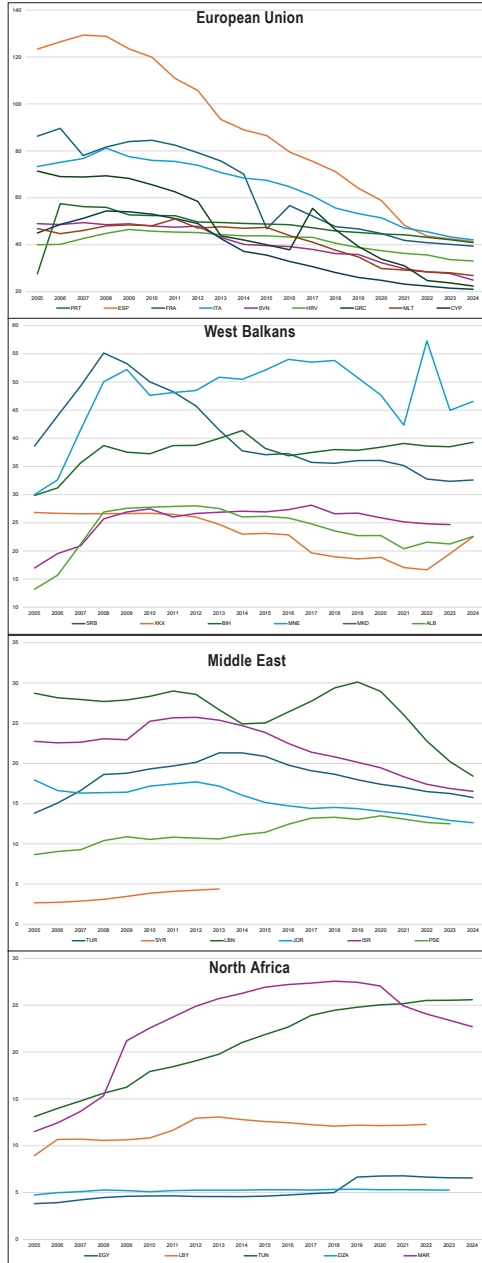
Source: UNCTAD.

*Bank branches.* The availability of bank branches varies significantly across Mediterranean countries. The most recent data – referring to 2024 and, in some cases, to 2023 – highlight substantial differences both across regions and among countries within the same region. In the European Union and the Western Balkans, the number of bank branches per 100,000 adults ranges between 20 and 45, depending on the country. By contrast, in the Middle East and North Africa, the presence of bank branches is more limited, typically ranging between 5 and 25 per 100,000 adults.

Looking at developments over the past two decades, the number of bank branches has progressively declined across all European Union countries, most notably in Spain, where the number of branches per 100,000 adults fell from over 120 to around 40. In the other regions, trends have been more uneven. In the Western Balkans, the number of bank branches increased sharply up to 2008 – the year in which the international financial crisis erupted – after which growth stalled or a contraction in branch numbers was observed.

In the Middle East, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan experienced a decline in the number of bank branches over the period under review, while Turkey and Palestine recorded a modest increase. By contrast, all North African countries exhibit an upward trend, particularly pronounced in Tunisia and Morocco, and more moderate in Libya, Egypt, and Algeria.

Fig. 2. Commercial bank branches (per 100,000 adults).  
Period 2005-2024.

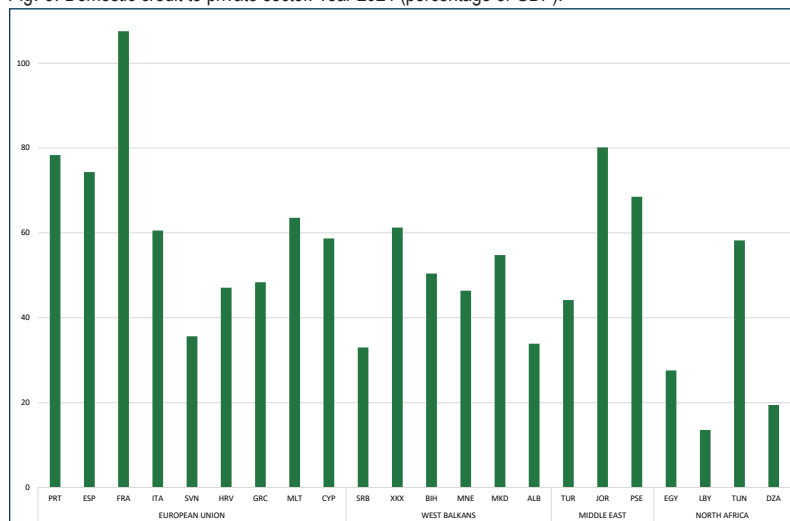


Fonte: International Monetary Fund.

*The activity of financial intermediaries.* The ratio of domestic credit to the private sector relative to GDP provides an indication of the intensity of financial intermediaries' involvement in financing economic growth and, conversely, of the level of indebtedness of firms and households, as well as the overall dependence of the economic system on credit. The most recent available data indicate that ten Mediterranean countries record ratios above 60%. Of these, five are European Union members – Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, and Malta – with France posting the highest value (107.5%). Other countries with ratios exceeding 60% include Kosovo (61.3%) in the Western Balkans; Jordan (80.2%), Israel (69.5%), and Palestine (68.5%) in the Middle East; and Morocco (81.4%) in North Africa (see Figure 3).

Croatia (47.1%), Greece (49.1%), and Cyprus (58.7%) within the European Union; Bosnia and Herzegovina (50.4%), Montenegro (46.4%), and North Macedonia (54.8%) in the Western Balkans; Turkey (44.2%) in the Middle East; and Tunisia (58.2%) in North Africa record intermediate levels of domestic credit to the private sector relative to GDP (between 40% and 60%). By contrast, Egypt (27.6%), Algeria (19.4%), and Libya (13.6%) in North Africa display the lowest ratios among the twenty-six Mediterranean countries.

Fig. 3. Domestic credit to private sector. Year 2024 (percentage of GDP).



Source: World Bank.