

Press Release

Number of Exporting SMEs declined

IfM Bonn: SME Statistics, however, usually do not account for the entire dimensions of all foreign activities

24.06.2021. The number of exporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has fallen slightly in recent years (2012: 350,000 enterprises, 2019: 340,000 enterprises). The share of exporting SMEs in all SMEs (exporter ratio) decreased as well. Among the set of large companies, in contrast, the number of exporting companies increased significantly (2012: 9,000, 2019: 11,000).

"Statistical data is suggestive that smaller companies in particular are less involved in global trade than they were 10 years ago. However, this impression might be misleading: For example, according to the methodology, information on the extent of indirect exports is not included. SMEs, however, play an important role as suppliers for large exporting companies. They also supply wholesale companies with goods that will be exported," explains IfM researcher Peter Kranzusch. In order to take a comprehensive look at the international activities of SMEs, company-size-specific data on trade in services would also be necessary.

Small and medium-sized enterprises are involved in the international economy through imports, which can become -according to IfM studies- a starting point for their own internationalization. The number of SMEs with imports from the EU has risen from 453,000 in 2009 to 656,000 in 2019.

The statisticals on the foreign activities of small and medium-sized enterprises are available on the homepage of the Institute for SME Research (www.ifm-bonn.org). The calculations of the IfM Bonn on exports of SMEs are based on special evaluations of the turnover tax statistics (advance notifications). Unlike the foreign trade statistics, the statistics of the manufacturing industry, the services statistics or the balance of payments, these statistics allow evaluations for all economic sectors as well as by company size classes above the specific reporting threshold.

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