

# EUROPEAN UNION FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT POSITION AT END-1996

Overview

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Foreign direct investment (FDI - see definition on page 7) statistics give information on one of the major aspects of globalisation. Within the Balance of Payments statistics Eurostat maintains a FDI database that comprises harmonised and thus comparable data on inward and outward FDI flows and positions for the European Union, its major FDI partners, the United States and Japan. It gives the geographical breakdown for the two FDI components: equity capital and reinvested earnings together with other capital. It provides users also with detailed data by sector of activity. This article looks at the geographical and sectoral breakdowns of the EU FDI position outside the Union at the end of 1996.

**EU countries held ECU 543 bn FDI assets outside the Union at end-1996. USA and Switzerland are major partners.**

At the end of 1996, the European Union held foreign direct investment assets outside the Union worth ECU 543 bn (see figure 1 & table 3).

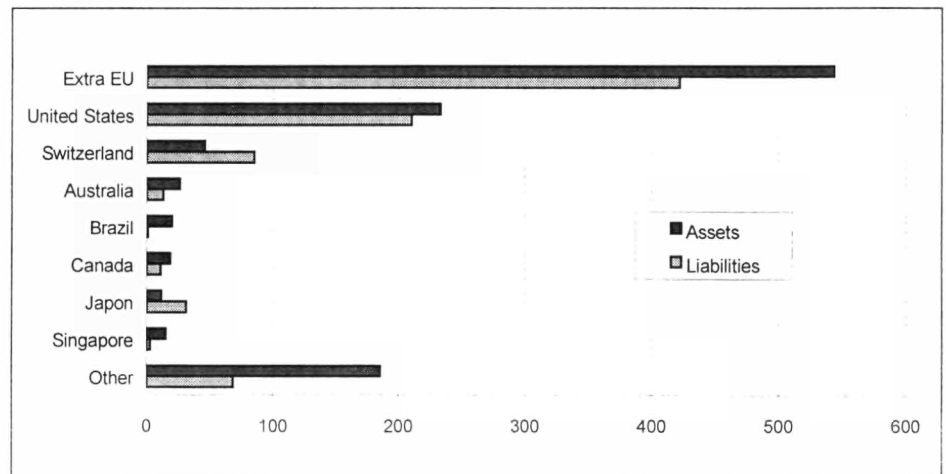


Figure 1: EU's FDI assets and liabilities at end-1996 by major partners (ECU bn)

EU FDI liabilities to countries from outside the EU reached ECU 422 bn, generating a net foreign direct investment position (i.e. assets minus liabilities) of roughly 121 bn vis-à-vis the rest of the world. In comparison, the US managed 620 bn worth of FDI assets abroad while it recorded 474 bn of liabilities in 1996 (see US Department of Commerce: Survey of Current Business October 1998).

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The EU's net FDI exporter position (as declared by the EU Member States) was partly established through strong investment links with the United States, which accounted for half of the foreign direct investment in the EU. At the same time, the US hosted some 43% of the EU's investment assets, thereby allowing the EU to establish a marginally positive net position vis-à-vis the US (ECU 22 bn).

A strong investment relationship also prevailed with Switzerland, which attracted a quite remarkable 9% of the EU's FDI assets and accounted for 20% of total Extra EU FDI liabilities of the Union. However, the EU had its largest net liability position (ECU 39 bn) with Switzerland.

This was also the case for Japan, with whom the EU had its second largest net liability position in absolute terms (ECU 20 bn). Interestingly, Singapore ranked ahead of Japan in terms of accommodating EU investment, but it owned only a small fraction of the EU's FDI liabilities.

Australia, Brazil and Canada all hosted between 4-5% of the EU's foreign direct investment assets in 1996. Conversely, Australia and Canada accounted each for roughly 3% of the EU FDI liabilities, while Brazil invested only negligible amounts in the EU up to 1996.

### Other selected partners: Hong Kong ranks first

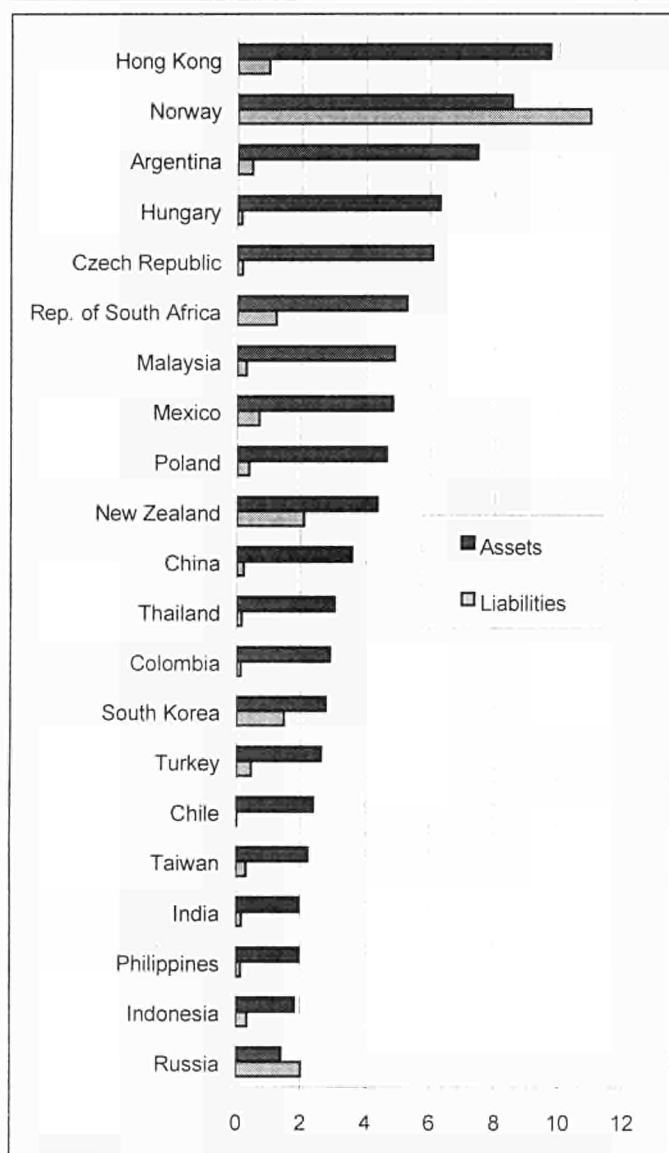


Figure 2: EU's FDI positions vis-à-vis other selected partners at end-1996 (ECU bn)

Around one third of the total FDI assets held by the EU abroad and roughly one seventh of the liabilities were not located or the property of an investor from one of the seven countries mentioned above (US, Switzerland, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Singapore and Japan).

Apart from these major partners, the EU had comparatively large FDI assets in Hong Kong and Norway. Argentina followed next together with Hungary, the Czech Republic and the Republic of South Africa (see figure 2 & table 3). With few exceptions, there was strong dominance on the part of EU assets over liabilities.

A more balanced investment relationship between assets and liabilities existed with Norway. To a lesser extend this also held true for South Korea, where the EU's assets outnumbered its liabilities by a comparatively small factor. Countries with similar investment pattern vis-à-vis the EU were for example New Zealand, Venezuela and Egypt (see table 3).



## EU net FDI liabilities: the EU is a net importer of Swiss FDI capital

The EU enjoyed a net asset investment position with almost all countries in the world. However, there were some exceptions of greater importance (see table 1).

It was particularly the case with Russia, which hosted investment assets of ECU 1.42 bn from the EU, but invested itself around 2.01 bn in the Union. The FDI pattern with Iran revealed roughly three times more Iranian assets in the EU than vice versa.

Almost the same ratio existed with Japan, since Japanese FDI assets in the EU were almost three times as high as the EU's investment assets in Japan. It needs to be pointed out, however, that the FDI relationship with Japan was in terms of sheer amount (8% of total liabilities versus 2% of total assets) on a different scale than with Russia or Iran (less than half a percent for both assets and liabilities). The same holds true for the EU's direct investment links with Switzerland, where roughly one fifth of the EU's total

	Assets	Liabilities	Net
Switzerland	46.41	85.07	38.66
Japan	12.06	31.92	19.85
Norway	8.51	10.97	2.46
Russia	1.42	2.01	0.60
Israel	0.43	0.67	0.24
Iran	0.41	1.25	0.84

Table 1: EU's negative net FDI position end-96 (ECU bn)

liabilities outside the Union were owed to Swiss companies, while around one eleventh of the EU's total FDI assets were located in Switzerland. Norway also managed larger amounts of FDI in the EU than the EU did in Norway. A further exception was Israel, which also had more FDI stocks in the EU than it hosted in its own country in 1996.

## FDI positions by geographic and economic zones

When analysing the EU's foreign direct investment relationship with some geographical and economic zones, it appears that the NAFTA (Canada, USA and Mexico) came in first and outstripped by far the EFTA (Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway) both in terms of assets and liabilities (ECU 257 bn versus 56 bn on the assets side and 223 bn versus 98 bn on the liabilities side).

However, whereas the NAFTA's investors engaged more FDI in the EU than the EU's investors did in the NAFTA, the opposite investment relationship may be observed between the EU and the EFTA. Here, liabilities outnumbered assets to the tune of ECU 43 bn (see figure 3 & table 2).

The so-called Offshore financial centers proved also to be a very attractive destination for EU FDI: up to 1996, they accommodated a similar amount of EU FDI assets than the EFTA, but less than half of this amount found its way back into the EU in the form of FDI.

Comparatively large net assets prevailed with the MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), the NICs1 (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan) and the ASEAN (Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei and Vietnam) which accommodated EU FDI assets worth between ECU 27 bn and 30 bn.

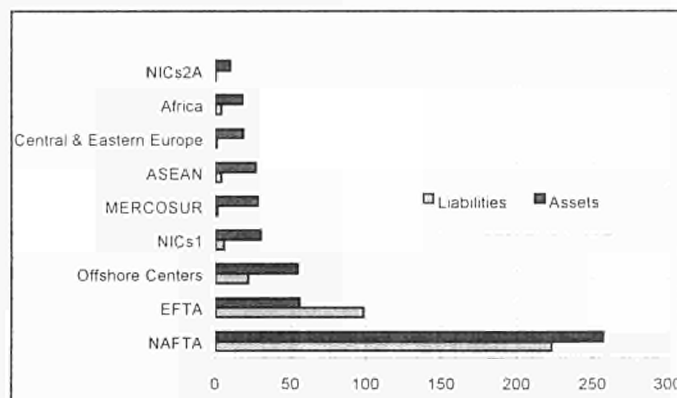


Figure 3: EU's FDI assets and liabilities at end of 1996 by zones (ECU bn)

In contrast, FDI liabilities vis-à-vis these countries remained low, the NICs1 coming top with roughly 6 bn.

Central and Eastern Europe (ECU 19 bn of assets vs 1 bn of liabilities), followed by the whole continent of Africa (18 bn vs 4 bn) and the NICs2 Asia (Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines with 10 bn vs 0.6 bn) registered a relatively high ratio between assets and liabilities.

## EU Member states - who invested where

	NAFTA	EFTA	Offshore C.	NICs1	Mercosur	ASEAN	CEEC	Africa	NICs2A
DK	1.54	2.36	0.35	0.20	:	0.38	0.77	:	0.27
DE	51.65	10.00	6.24	3.91	:	3.56	7.71	2.09	1.41
FR	33.36	6.45	3.40	3.37	5.54	2.16	1.51	3.21	0.04
NL	42.23	12.29	11.11	5.63	3.23	5.73	2.76	1.82	2.41
AT	0.61	0.81	0.36	0.01	:	0.05	2.86	0.02	0.02
FI	2.36	0.58	0.17	0.13	0.11	0.08	0.14	:	0.02
UK	84.18	3.72	24.77	14.91	4.05	13.54	0.79	6.67	4.97
EUR15	256.98	55.99	54.99	30.18	28.34	26.94	18.88	18.17	9.90

Table 2: Assets in selected markets at end-1996 (ECU bn)

Amongst the different geographic and economic zones above-mentioned, where did investors from individual EU Member states seek their fortune?

Investment positions in the NAFTA were largely dominated by British assets (see table 2), which amounted to 30% of what the EU had invested in the region by end of 1996. Germany, the Netherlands and France came respectively second, third and fourth, having invested roughly between 40% and 60% of what investors from the United Kingdom had performed.

22% of the EU FDI assets hosted by EFTA countries at end 1996 were due to Dutch investments. German and French investors positioned themselves in this area with 18% and 12% stakes respectively.

British assets in the Offshore financial centers represented 45% of what the EU had invested and roughly twice and four times the amounts Dutch and German investors respectively owned there. The investment positions within the NICs1, the ASEAN and the NICs2A zones revealed a similar structure at end 1996, but on a different scale. While EU assets in the Offshore financial centers amounted to ECU 55 bn, the three other areas accommodated respectively 30 bn, 27 bn and 10 bn.

The MERCOSUR attracted a large share of EU FDI from France. The United Kingdom followed together with the Netherlands, who also had noteworthy interests in the region up to 1996. Germany was the largest European investor in the region: figures for Uruguay and Paraguay are not available, but German FDI assets in Argentina and Brazil alone came close to ECU 7.35 bn.

A different investment structure existed in Central and Eastern Europe, where the investment positions featured large German assets, which amounted to roughly 40% of what the EU had placed there. This was almost three times the amount Austria, which held the second largest stake, had invested. The Netherlands followed third with ECU 2.76 bn worth of FDI assets, while France recorded 1.51 bn. The remaining EU Member states only had FDI assets worth less than one billion within the CEEC area.

The United Kingdom had a dominant position within the continent of Africa as a whole, with 37% of the EU FDI assets. France followed with 18%, then Germany and the Netherlands next together with roughly 10%.

	Assets	Liabilities
<b>Extra EU</b>	<b>543.174</b>	<b>421.927</b>
United States	232.967	210.585
Switzerland	46.410	85.074
Australia	26.502	13.580
Brazil	20.417	0.948
Canada	19.174	11.379
Singapore	15.458	3.007
Japan	12.062	31.915
Hong Kong	9.714	1.008
Norway	8.515	10.972
Argentina	7.447	0.476
Hungary	6.305	0.158
Czech Republic	6.087	0.173
Rep. of South Africa	5.285	1.226
Malaysia	4.901	0.299
Mexico	4.841	0.712
Poland	4.643	0.384
New Zealand	4.373	2.099
China	3.565	0.231
Thailand	3.031	0.161
Colombia	2.895	0.143
South Korea	2.771	1.482
Turkey	2.619	0.479
Chile	2.393	0.029
Taiwan	2.237	0.325
India	1.964	0.175
Philippines	1.963	0.153
Indonesia	1.827	0.358
Russia	1.417	2.014
Morocco	1.264	0.401
Venezuela	1.029	0.442
Slovakia	0.851	0.022
Slovenia	0.617	0.094
Egypt	0.548	0.272
Israel	0.434	0.673
Iran	0.415	1.250
Croatia	0.333	0.064
Romania	0.298	0.055
NAFTA	256.982	222.676
EFTA	55.991	98.525
Offshore Centers	54.992	22.018
NICs1	30.180	5.822
MERCOSUR	28.338	1.483
ASEAN	26.944	4.329
CEEC	18.883	1.194
Africa	18.172	4.331
NICs2A	9.896	0.613

Table 3: The EU's FDI position at end-1996 (ECU bn)

## Major investment sectors: EU manufacturing accounts for 44% of EU FDI assets abroad

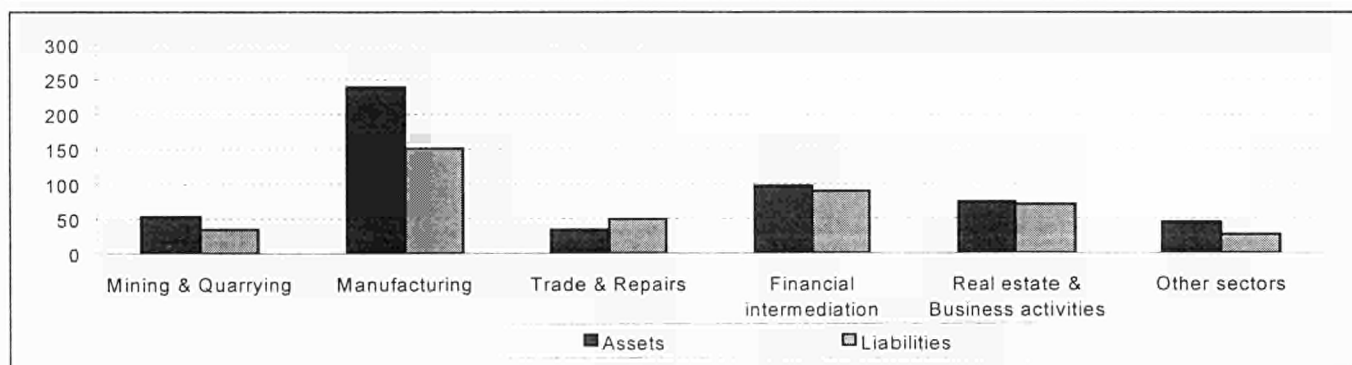


Figure 4: EU's FDI assets and liabilities at end-1996 by major sectors (ECU bn)

The manufacturing sector, which accounted for almost half of the EU's total assets abroad, was by far the largest owner of FDI assets outside the Union with ECU 239 bn at end-1996 (see figure 4 & table 4).

Financial intermediation also proved to be an important actor in the EU's FDI activities: around one fifth of total EU assets were due to investments from this sector. Real estate and business activities which owned roughly one seventh of the total EU investment assets abroad, were the third most important investing sector.

The mining and quarrying sector had FDI stakes worth ECU 53.7 bn (or around 10%) placed outside the Union. Trade and repairs followed next with a share of around 6%.

A very similar investment pattern can be observed in the structure of the EU FDI liabilities. More precisely, 36%

of the EU liabilities to non-EU countries or around ECU 150.3 bn were invested into the European Union's manufacturing sector, allowing thus a net asset investment position of 88.5 bn for this sector at end-1996.

Next stood a 21% share of foreign owned investment assets in financial intermediation, thus almost striking a balance between EU FDI assets and liabilities. Investments into real estate and business activities amounted at the end of 1996 to around 17% of total EU FDI liabilities, which was marginally higher than the relative EU asset position in this sector abroad. Trade and repairs in the EU attracted a larger slice (12%) of FDI than it had invested outside the Union. The mining and quarrying industry more or less held its position when one compares its EU FDI assets and liabilities in proportional terms of the respective totals (10% vs. 8%).

## The manufacturing sector - a closer look

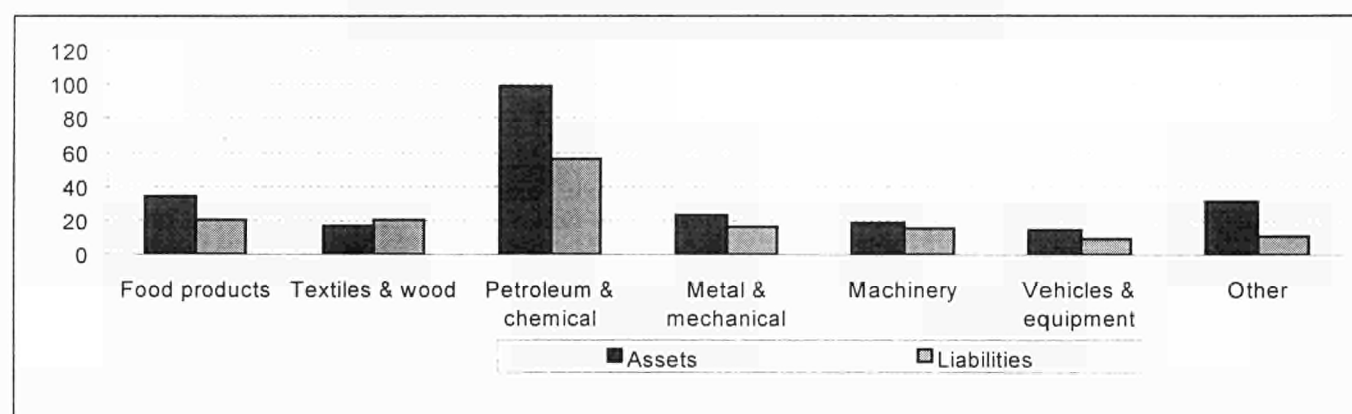


Figure 5: The manufacturing sector at end 1996 (ECU bn)

Manufacturing was one of the most interesting sectors of investment activity in terms of FDI. At the end of 1996 it managed to establish a net asset investment position in almost all of the sub-sectors displayed here (see figure 5 and table 4). The manufacturing industry of petroleum, chemical, rubber and plastic products held

FDI assets outside the EU worth ECU 98.8 bn or 41% of total assets. This was followed by the food product industry, which called around 34.4 bn of FDI assets their own. In relative terms both industries conceded to foreign direct investors similar FDI assets as they invested abroad.

The textiles and wood sector, the manufacturing of machinery, computers, RTV and communication equipment as well as vehicles and other transport equipment manufacturing each all owned between ECU 14 bn and 19 bn of Extra EU FDI assets. While the last two of these sub-sectors accommodated similar relative

shares of foreign owned investment capital in their respective industries within the European Union as they had invested abroad, the textiles and wood sector recorded a slightly more lopsided investment pattern, showing a net FDI liabilities position.

### The EU's financial sector: a small net FDI asset position

While overall FDI assets and liabilities of the financial sector were more or less balanced, some noteworthy differences emerge when one examines its sub-sectors. Here, insurance and related activities lead total Extra EU assets, while the corresponding liabilities amounted to a mere fourth of assets. A very different distribution existed for other financial intermediation (i.e. financial intermediation other than that conducted by monetary institutions): here, Extra EU investors had placed in the Union almost twice the amount of assets the Unions' investors placed outside. Assets in monetary intermediation were closer to the corresponding liabilities which gave rise to a more balanced net position.

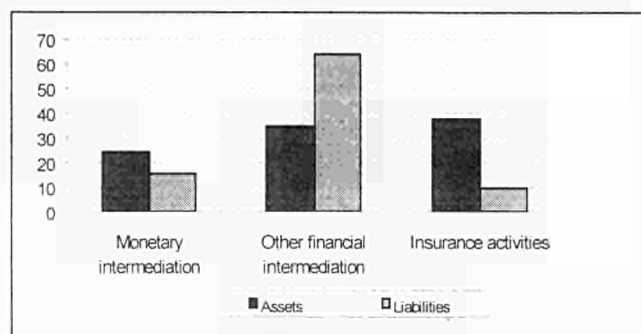


Figure 6: EU financial intermediation at end-1996 (ECU bn)

### Services<sup>1</sup> versus manufacturing

While the manufacturing sector accounted for nearly three quarters of the total EU FDI net asset position (around ECU 121 bn), the services sector reached barely 5% of net EU FDI assets.

The services sector saw a more level investment relationship: at end-1996, the service sector called ECU 236 bn worth of FDI assets outside the Union its own. Conversely, investment liabilities owed to foreign investors seeking their fortune in the EU services sector amounted to 230 bn. Hence the EU managed a comparatively small net asset position of around 6 bn.

This was mainly due to negative net positions in both trade and repairs and hotels and restaurants sectors. All other services sub-sectors represented between 2 and 7% of the total EU net asset position.

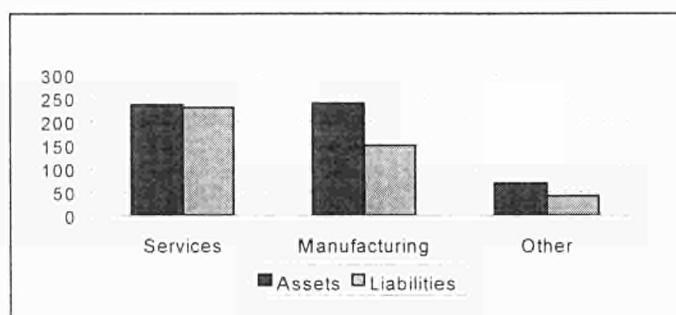


Figure 7: Services and manufacturing at end-1996 (ECU bn)

Amongst the other sectors, mining and quarrying revealed the largest net asset position with ECU 18.6 bn or 15% of the total EU net asset position.

### FDI links with major partners

The EU's FDI assets abroad were mostly invested by the manufacturing sector. It had substantial stakes in the United States, which amounted to roughly ECU 112 bn at the end of 1996.

The EU services sector invested worldwide almost as much as the manufacturing sector did, in particular in the US where the FDI assets amounted to ECU 99.5 bn.

The amounts of FDI assets held in the EFTA by both sectors represented 14% and 8% of the respective totals. However, the slight dominance by the manufacturing sector did not prevail here: services outspent manufacturing by roughly ECU 14 bn. With around two percent of the respective total assets, a comparatively small amount of FDI belonging to the EU manufacturing or services sectors was hosted by Japan.

<sup>1</sup> Sum of trade and repairs, hotels and restaurants, transports and communication, financial intermediation, real estate and business activities, other services

The mining and quarrying sectors also played an important role, having placed ECU 35.3 bn on FDI in countries other than the US, Japan and the EFTA.

At end-1996, EU FDI liabilities in the manufacturing and services sector owed to non-EU investors fitted into a different structure - in particular services were more attractive.

The United States, as the EU's main FDI partner, managed half the foreign direct investment in the EU. However, US investors preferred to invest into the EU's services enterprises (to the tune of ECU 93.3 bn at end 1996). This stood against 83.4 bn worth of US owned capital in manufacturing.

Investments from Japan and the EFTA were dominated by FDI links with the services sector. Japanese investors had roughly four times more FDI capital tugged away in services than in manufacturing. In particular investments into trade and repairs and financial intermediation did more than to offset the modest negative stocks registered by other services sub-sectors with Japan. EFTA investors also sought their fortune more in services than manufacturing: a quite remarkable ECU 67.6 bn had found its way into this particular sector in the EU by end of 1996.

(ECU bn)	Assets				Liabilities			
	Extra EU	US	Japan	EFTA	Extra EU	US	Japan	EFTA
AGRICULTURE AND FISHING	0,88	0,37	0,00	0,08	0,41	0,18	0,01	0,11
MINING AND QUARRYING	53,66	15,29	0,31	2,75	35,03	29,16	0,04	2,50
SERVICES*	235,93	99,53	4,72	33,28	230,04	93,34	25,44	67,60
MANUFACTURING	238,77	112,09	6,95	19,12	150,26	83,37	6,69	27,09
Food products	34,42	12,60	0,76	4,01	20,40	10,74	0,47	7,20
Textiles + wood activities	16,99	10,96	0,12	1,86	20,47	4,60	0,45	1,63
Petroleum, chemical, rubber, plastic products	98,82	48,07	3,22	4,10	56,39	34,68	1,01	10,42
Metal and mechanical products	23,26	10,24	0,63	3,25	16,66	9,76	0,89	4,32
Machinery, computers, RTV, communication	18,96	7,33	0,55	1,94	15,70	9,49	2,66	0,99
Vehicles + other transport equipment	14,65	4,61	0,20	1,95	9,54	7,24	0,97	0,76
ELECTRICITY, GAS AND WATER	6,52	2,06	0,01	0,33	3,26	3,37	-0,24	0,26
CONSTRUCTION	6,84	3,42	0,07	0,29	2,88	1,08	-0,06	0,62
TRADE AND REPAIRS	34,46	9,52	2,44	5,80	49,20	17,02	12,49	10,95
HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS	2,91	0,87	0,00	0,27	4,97	1,35	-0,61	0,46
TRANSPORTS AND COMMUNICATION	9,37	-0,75	0,01	0,83	6,70	3,20	-0,23	1,68
Land, sea and air transport	5,77	1,15	-0,03	0,54	2,68	0,96	-0,34	0,78
Telecommunications	2,15	-2,31	0,03	0,09	2,39	1,44	0,04	0,33
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIATION	96,78	35,73	1,55	13,67	89,40	25,08	11,71	31,92
Monetary intermediation	24,30	1,41	0,65	3,76	15,53	3,01	3,15	7,43
Other financial intermediation	34,87	13,16	0,35	8,05	64,11	18,92	8,01	18,53
Insurance & activities auxiliary to insurance	37,83	21,18	0,40	1,71	9,76	3,16	0,55	5,96
Other financial intermediation + insurance	72,70	34,34	0,75	9,76	73,87	22,07	8,57	24,49
REAL ESTATE & BUSINESS ACTIVITIES	74,32	44,66	0,44	11,90	70,75	40,73	1,60	21,89
Real estate	9,70	5,82	0,02	1,32	6,64	3,09	0,06	1,34
Computer activities	0,58	0,40	0,00	0,07	2,42	1,86	0,07	0,06
Research and development	0,78	0,66	0,00	0,02	0,60	0,72	0,00	0,05
Other business activities	62,91	37,61	0,39	10,41	60,84	34,84	1,44	20,40
Total computer, research, other business activities	64,27	38,67	0,40	10,49	63,87	37,42	1,51	20,51
OTHER SERVICES	18,09	9,51	0,28	0,80	9,02	5,96	0,48	0,71
Not allocated	0,58	0,21	0,01	0,15	0,04	0,08	0,03	0,35
TOTAL	543,17	232,97	12,06	55,99	421,93	210,59	31,92	98,53

Table 4: EU FDI stocks at end-1996 by sectors

\* Sum of trade and repairs, hotels and restaurants, transports and communication, financial intermediation, real estate and business activities, other services

## ➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

**Foreign direct investment (FDI)** is the category of international investment that reflects the objective of obtaining a lasting interest by a resident entity in one economy in an enterprise resident in another economy. The lasting interest implies the existence of a long-term relationship between the direct investor and the enterprise, and a significant degree of influence by the investor on the management of the enterprise. Formally defined, a direct investment enterprise is an unincorporated or incorporated enterprise in which a direct investor owns 10% or more of the

ordinary shares or voting power (for an incorporated enterprise) or the equivalent (for an unincorporated enterprise).

**FDI flows and positions** Through direct investment flows, an investor builds up a foreign direct investment position, that features on his balance sheet. This FDI position (sometimes called FDI stock) differs from the accumulated flows because of revaluation (changes in prices or exchange rates, and other adjustments like rescheduling or cancellation of loans, debt forgiveness or debt-equity swaps).



# Further information:

## ➤ Reference publications

Title European Union Foreign Direct Investment Yearbook 1998  
Analytical aspects  
Catalogue No CA-17-98-596-EN-C Price EUR 20

## ➤ Databases

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