



Press release

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06 Industry and Services

Retail trade turnover in April 2021

Record rise in Swiss retail trade in April 2021 – also due to the low pandemic-related figure of the previous year

Turnover adjusted for sales days and holidays rose in the retail sector by 34.8% in nominal terms in April 2021 compared with the previous year. This is the sharpest increase since the start of the time series in January 2000 and is in large part due to the weak April 2020, during which the Covid-19 safety measures came into effect. Seasonally adjusted, nominal turnover fell by 4.3% compared with the previous month. These are provisional findings from the Federal Statistical Office (FSO).

Real turnover adjusted for sales days and holidays rose in the retail sector by 35.7% in April 2021 compared with the previous year. Real growth takes inflation into consideration. Compared with the previous month, real, seasonally adjusted retail trade turnover registered a decline of 4.4%.

Changes in the different sectors and comparison with pre-pandemic era

Adjusted for sales days and holidays, the retail sector excluding service stations showed a 35.1% increase in nominal turnover in April 2021 compared with April 2020 (in real terms +36.2%). Service stations recorded a nominal turnover increase of 30.9% (in real terms +13.5%).

If the results of the indices are compared with the results of 2019, i.e. the last April before the outbreak of the pandemic, different rates of change emerge: The two-year comparison for retail trade turnover excluding service stations shows a nominal increase in April 2021 compared with April 2019 of 10.7% (in real terms +12.4%). If this two-year comparison is applied to service stations, however, nominal turnover is seen to have declined by 8.8% (in real terms -9.9%).

Retail trade of food, drinks and tobacco in April 2021 recorded an increase in nominal turnover of 11.8% (in real terms +13.3%) compared with April 2020. With growth of 15.7% (in real terms +16.8%), the two-year comparison shows that turnover in this sector demonstrates a strong growth trend that is not due to a drop in the same month of the previous year. The non-food sector recorded a nominal plus of 73.1% (in real terms +73.5%) in comparison with the previous year. The two-year comparison, however, shows growth of 7.5% (in real terms +9.3%). The turnover increases in the non-food sector are not only the result of a poor month in the previous year.

Excluding service stations, the retail sector showed a seasonally adjusted decline in nominal turnover of 4.6% compared with the previous month (in real terms -4.8%). Retail sales of food, drinks and tobacco registered a nominal minus of 0.8% (in real terms -1.3%). The non-food sector showed a minus of 7.0% (in real terms -7.2%).

Information

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Access to results

This press release has been established on the basis of the European Statistics Code of Practice, which ensures the independence, integrity and accountability of national and community statistical offices. Privileged access is supervised and under embargo.

The Swiss National Bank (exercise of its monetary policy) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (production of quarterly GDP estimate) received the data forming the basis of this press release five working days before publication for the purpose of the tasks mentioned. The press agencies received this press release with an embargo of 15 minutes.

Fundamental revision of results

The indices for the retail trade turnover statistics were revised as of January 2014; the rates of change in the retail trade turnover statistics were revised accordingly in January 2015. The revision includes changes in the calculation methods as well as adjustments to the answers received from businesses. The model for the estimate of calendar adjusted and seasonally adjusted series was also revised.

Pandemic and statistical results

The COVID-19 pandemic is currently affecting all of society and the economy. To measure this impact the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) must continue in these difficult circumstances to provide the public, but in particular the media and decision makers, with reliable data.

The results published in this press release are based on the data currently available. They may need to be corrected or revised.

Methodological notice

Unadjusted, adjusted for calendar effects and seasonally adjusted time series are available and can be consulted on the statistics website: www.dhu.bfs.admin.ch

A breakdown by commodity groups and by business size is also available: only unadjusted figures are calculated for this breakdown.

The results are presented in index form (2015=100) in both nominal and real terms. The real values are obtained by adjusting the nominal values for price changes using the Swiss Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Data are seasonally adjusted in order to exclude seasonal fluctuations from the time series. This is done using the X12-ARIMA method. On each occasion the whole time series is re-calculated. Furthermore all time series are adjusted for calendar effects (not every month has the same number of sales days and holidays). The method used for calendar adjustment is to estimate the calendar effect by means of a regression model.

For each series, the model calculates an average weight for each individual day of the week and applies these weights to each month. The resulting monthly factors are used to adjust turnover accordingly. The adjustment made in December may be somewhat distorted, as the adjustment factor is applied to turnover for the month of December as a whole, despite the fact that the Christmas turnover is not dependent on the number of weekdays. In December 2016 (and in 2011 and 2005) this effect was particularly noticeable, as Christmas Day and Boxing Day fell on a Saturday and Sunday, meaning that the month had more weekdays of high turnover than usual.

Information concerning the survey

The retail trade turnover statistics are based on a random sample of approximately 4000 businesses. It is a monthly survey, with small-sized companies being asked to provide monthly turnover figures on a quarterly basis.

The statistics are based on the General Classification of Economic Activities (NOGA) from the year 2008, which meets international standards and classifies businesses into different economic activities based on their economic activities.
