



Logistics Customs Brokerage Services 2023

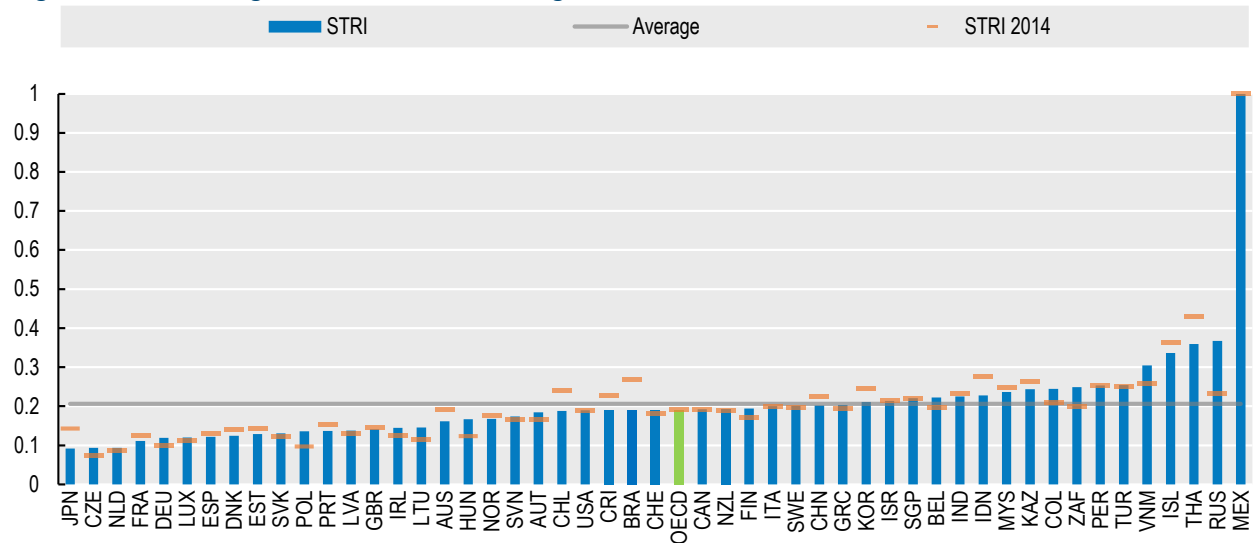
Key findings

- The average 2023 STRI in the logistics customs brokerage sector is 0.21 out of a maximum of 1 (most trade restricted), indicating a relatively low overall level of restrictiveness. However, individual country scores diverge considerably, ranging between 0.09 and 1.00.
- The best performing countries in the sector are Japan, Czechia, and the Netherlands. Most reforms in 2023 were recorded in China, Korea, and Portugal.
- In this sector, barriers related to restrictions on foreign entry are the most prominent and amount to 43% of all restrictions in OECD economies and 50% in non-OECD economies.
- OECD estimates suggest that halving the distance to best practice in this sector is associated with a reduction in the costs of cross-border trade in customs brokerage services between 8% and 21% for the average country included in the STRI database.

Logistics services in the STRI are defined as cargo-handling services (ISIC 5224), storage and warehousing services (including customs warehouse services) (ISIC 5210), freight transport agency services, and customs brokerage services (ISIC 5229). Since the regulatory framework for these four sub-sectors can be different in many countries, separate indices have been developed for each of them.

The 2023 STRIs in the logistics customs brokerage sector range between 0.09 and 1.00, with a sample average of 0.21 (Figure 1). There are 33 countries below and 17 countries above the average. The best performing countries in the sector are Japan, Czechia, and the Netherlands.

Figure 1. STRI in logistics customs brokerage services, 2023

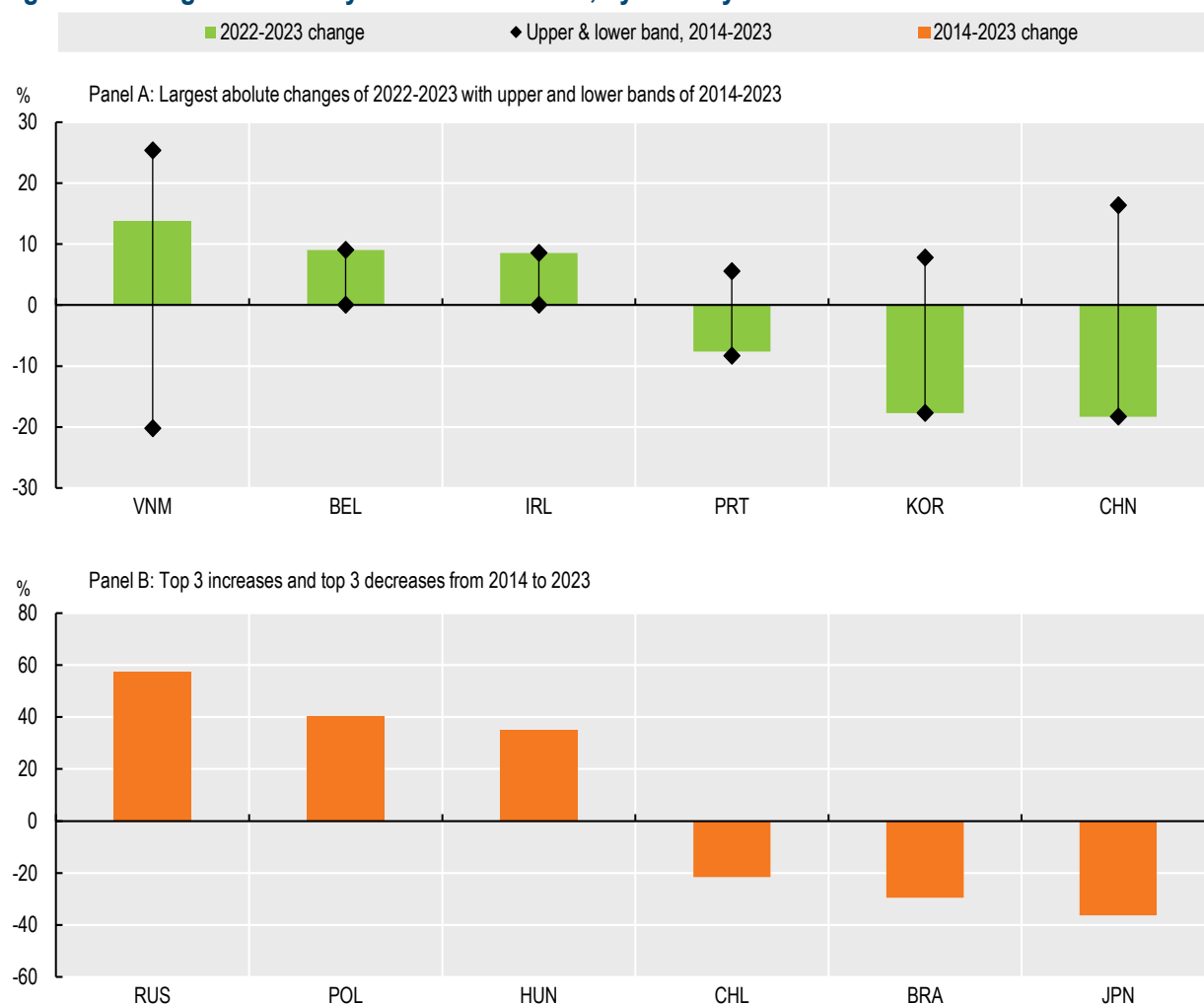


Note: The STRI indices take values between zero and one, one being the most restrictive. The indices are based on laws and regulations in force on 31 October 2023. The STRI regulatory database covers the 38 OECD countries, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Peru, Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Source: OECD (2023). STRI database.

Several countries introduced regulatory changes affecting the STRIs in 2023 and more so since 2014 (Figure 2). In 2023, the STRIs in this sector saw the biggest changes in Viet Nam (14%), Belgium (9%), Ireland (9%), Portugal (-8%), Korea (-18%), and China (-18%). Since 2014, on the one hand, countries that have had the strongest restrictive trends in the logistics customs brokerage sector include the Russian Federation (57%), Poland (40%), and Hungary (35%). On the other hand, strong liberalisation has taken place in Chile (-22%), Brazil (-29%), and Japan (-36%).

Figure 2. Change in the last year and since 2014, by country

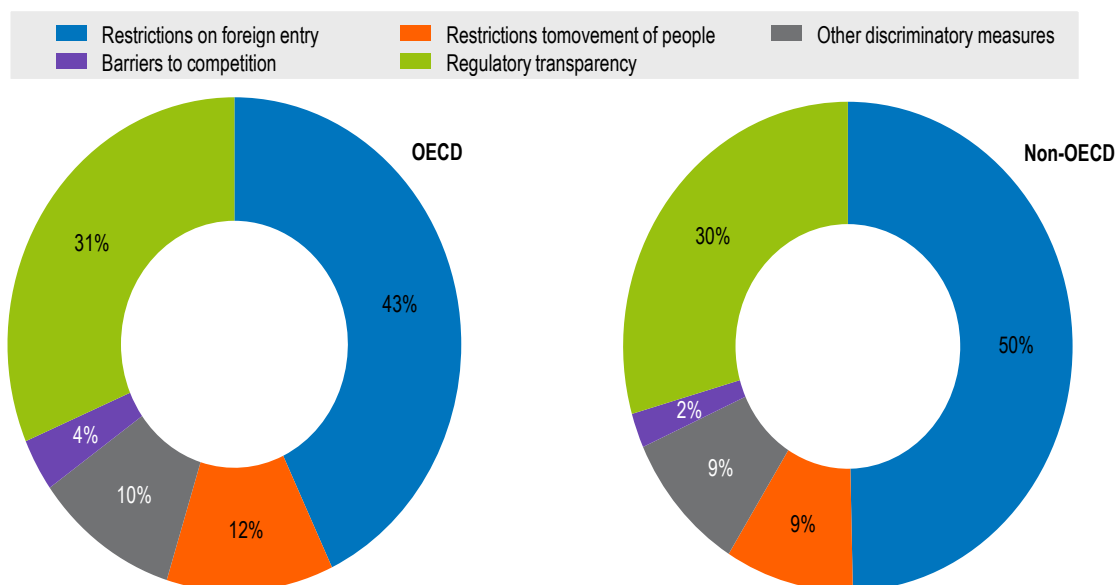


Note: Selection criteria for Panel A were based on largest absolute changes since 2022. Panel B selection is the 3 largest increases, and the 3 largest decreases in the STRI since 2014.

Source: OECD (2023). STRI database.

The measures in the STRI database are organised under five policy areas (Figure 3). Restrictions on foreign entry include barriers related to establishing and operating companies, such as foreign equity limits or requirements on board of directors and cross-border data flows. Restrictions on the movement of people cover barriers that affect the temporary entry of foreign services providers through quotas, labour market tests, and short durations of stay. Other discriminatory measures include discrimination of foreign services suppliers as far as taxes, subsidies, and public procurement are concerned. Barriers to competition include information on anti-trust policy, government ownership of major firms, and the extent to which government-owned enterprises are exempt from competition laws. Regulatory transparency includes information on consultations and dissemination before laws and regulations enter into force. It also records information on obtaining a license or a visa. In this sector, barriers related to restrictions on foreign entry are the most prominent, amounting to 43% of all restrictions in OECD economies and 50% in non-OECD economies.

Figure 3. STRI for logistics customs brokerage by policy area in OECD and non-OECD economies, 2023



Source: OECD (2023). STRI database.

In the logistics customs brokerage sector, Mexico is fully closed to foreign firms, with an STRI index of 1.

Table 1 lists the most relevant restrictions identified in each policy area. Under restrictions on foreign entry, common impediments to trade relate to commercial or local presence requirements for cross-border service provision, acquisition and use of land and real estate, and screening requirements for foreign investments. 29 out of the 50 countries covered maintain foreign investment screening mechanisms that do not explicitly rule out the consideration of economic motives or interests, up from 26 countries in 2022. A licence or authorisation is required to enter the market in 31 countries.

In this sector, temporary cross-border movement of natural persons is often conditional on labour market testing or similar economic considerations, and the initial duration of a work or residence permit is relatively short in many countries. A licence or authorisation is required to practice the customs broker profession in 28 countries, 12 of which condition the licence or authorisation on prior or permanent residency in the country, and 9 on nationality or citizenship.

Under other discriminatory measures, barriers related to accessing public procurement markets for foreign tenderers remain the most common challenge. Additionally, in four countries, foreign firms are not eligible for Authorised Economic Operators Schemes.

Barriers to competition do not appear widespread in logistics customs brokerage. Restrictions related to regulatory transparency, however, are significant in the sector. The most common restrictions in this area relate to the temporary entry/transit of crew. 39 countries do not have visa on arrival or visa exemption for the temporary entry/transit of truck drivers, whereas 17 countries do not offer either option for aircrew. In addition, in 28 countries, individual licences or registration are required for warehousing, freight forwarding, and customs brokerage services, thereby limiting the ability of providers to integrate their activities.

Table 1. Top 5 most relevant measures by policy area, 2023

Policy area	Measure	Countries having a restriction ¹
Restrictions on foreign entry	Commercial presence is required in order to provide cross-border services	36
	Acquisition and use of land and real estate by foreigners is restricted	34
	Memo: Licence/authorisation is required to enter the market	31
	Screening exists without exclusion of economic interests	29
	Local presence is required for cross-border supply	24
Restrictions to movement of people	Labour market tests or similar economic considerations: contractual services suppliers	38
	Limitation on duration of stay for contractual services suppliers (months)	36
	Memo: Licence or authorisation is required to practice	28
	Residency is required to practice	12
	Nationality or citizenship required for licence to practice	9
Other discriminatory measures	Public procurement: Procurement regulation explicitly prohibits discrimination of foreign suppliers	43
	Access to the procurement market is conditional on reciprocity	29
	Public procurement: The procurement process affects the conditions of competition in favour of local firms	24
	Foreign firms are eligible for Authorised Economic Operators Schemes	4
	National standards on transport packages deviate from international standards	3
Barriers to competition	Minimum capital requirements	33
	National, state or provincial government control at least one major firm in the sector	8
	Restrictions on advertising	7
	Geographical restrictions	5
	Other restrictions in barriers to competition	2
Regulatory transparency	Visas on arrival or visa exemption are available for temporary entry/transit of crew: truck drivers	39
	Range of visa processing time	32
	Individual licensing/registration requirements are imposed on warehousing, freight forwarding and customs brokerage services	28
	Number of documents needed to obtain a business visa	26
	Visas on arrival or visa exemption are available for temporary entry/transit of crew: aircrew	17

Note: The count for “memo” type of measures, which are not scored in the STRI, indicates the number of positive answers recorded for that measure across the 50 countries covered. The topmost relevant measures are selected on the basis of the following criteria: (1) most restricted horizontal measures (i.e. same answer across sectors), (2) most restricted sector-specific measures, (3) key measures, or (4) memos affecting the score of other measures through hierarchy rules.

Source: OECD STRI database (2023).

More information

- » Access all country notes, sector notes, and interactive STRI tools at <http://oe.cd/stri>
- » Read more about [Services Trade Policies and the Global Economy](#)
- » Calculation based on: Benz, S. and A. Jaax (2020), "The costs of regulatory barriers to trade in services: New estimates of *ad valorem* tariff equivalents", *OECD Trade Policy Papers*, No. 238, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/bae97f98-en>
- » Contact the OECD Trade and Agriculture Directorate with your questions at stri.contact@oecd.org