

## East German Foreign Trade (1956–85)

### Abstract

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East Germany's external economic relations showed both its strong trade dependency on the Soviet Union, the dominant player in COMECON, and its politically willed isolation from international markets. From the 1970s onward, East Germany—like nearly all COMECON states—expanded its trade with the West to close gaps in its domestic market and to acquire the technology it lacked.

### Source

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#### Regional Breakdown of GDR Foreign Trade (Percentages)

##### Imports: Five-Year Average

Country or country category	1956–60	1961–65	1966–71	1971–75	1976–80	1981–85
<b>Socialist countries</b>	72.7	75.9	72.2	64.9	65.9	66.9
of these:	--	--	--	--	--	--
COMECON countries	65.4	71.6	68.4	62.1	62.8	64.1
USSR	43.6	47.5	42.3	33.9	35.2	40.4
Remaining COMECON countries	21.8	24.1	26.1	28.2	27.7	23.7
<b>Western industrial countries</b>	23.3	20.1	23.9	30.9	29.0	28.9
<b>Developing countries</b>	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.0	5.1	4.2

##### Exports: Five-Year Average

Country or country category	1956–60	1961–65	1966–71	1971–75	1976–80	1981–85
<b>Socialist countries</b>	75.9	76.9	74.6	72.7	72.6	64.9
of these:	--	--	--	--	--	--
COMECON countries	68.3	72.9	69.3	68.9	68.9	62.3
USSR	43.0	44.7	39.9	36.6	35.2	36.2
Remaining COMECON countries	25.3	28.2	29.5	32.3	33.7	26.1
<b>Western industrial countries</b>	20.3	18.9	20.8	23.2	21.9	29.3

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**Developing  
countries**

3.8

4.1

4.6

4.1

5.5

5.8

Source: Bundesministerium für Innerdeutsche Beziehungen, ed., *Materialien zum Bericht zur Lage der Nation im geteilten Deutschland*. Bonn, 1987, p. 607.

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