

## THE STUDY OF EVALUATION OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES BASED ON THE ENABLING TRADE INDEXES



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### Abstract

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36-member countries, was established in Paris, 1961. OECD aims to stimulate sustainable economic growth and improve social well-being in many of the world's most advanced countries but also emerging countries. It provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems. The Global Enabling Trade Report was first published in 2008 by the World Economic Forum. It has become a powerful tool for alliances about improving trade facilitation by focusing on the right countries and the right projects, quickly and efficiently. Co-published by the World Economic Forum and the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, the report features the Enabling Trade Index which measures the factors, policies and services in economies that facilitate the flow of goods over borders and to their destination. This study aims to classify OECD member countries including Turkey, based on the data of the Enabling Trade Index 2016. For the process of entering the data, Excel and the statistical software program SPSS have been used. In the process of analyzing the data, cluster analysis has been used and Ward's hierarchical clustering method has been chosen. In conclusion, the result indicates that OECD member countries generate five clusters.

### 1. Introduction

Facilitation of trade is defined in its widest meaning as simplification and harmonization of all processes and procedures which the commodity is subject to from the production to the delivery to the end user, and decrease of formalities. In this scope, the concept of facilitation of trade involves the strengthening of foreign trade and logistics infrastructure by implementing information technologies and automation in addition to simplification of procedures related to trade, including the customs procedures.

Countries which aim at reaching the growth objectives are required to increase foreign trade, and for this, to strive towards decreasing the commercial costs. The concept of facilitation of

trade acquires a meaning beyond the reduction of rates with global and regional efforts under today's conditions. Countries which could manage this issue well will reach lower trade costs and have important contributions in the way of economic growth/development. This of course is an issue which has an importance to be one of the basic fundamental areas of interest of policy makers as well as the economists for our country. For that reason, it becomes further important to direct the investments to be made in the field of trade facilitation, which includes various precautions and implementations from infrastructure investments in foreign trade to the modernization of customs processes, which would mitigate trade costs, to areas which require priority from the point of view of our country (Cakmak, 2016: 5).

With the realization of targets determined within the framework

of Turkish Strategy for Facilitation of Trade, thanks to the development of effective customs and trade procedures, use of advanced technology and development of infrastructure, it is aimed at ensuring the increase of flow of goods passing from the customs in unit time, facilitating the entry of SMEs to the export markets with the mitigation in trade costs as a result of facilitation of trade, and ensuring cheaper access to additional different products on the side of consumers as the trade costs decrease (Turkish Strategy and Action Plan for Facilitation of Trade, 2018 – 2022)

The purpose of this study is to classify the OECD member countries, which include Turkey, by their trade facilitation index indicators for year 2016, and to examine how the reshaping of the paradigm shift and comparative superiority forms experienced in the global trade within the context of trade facilitation affect the production and foreign trade structure of economies of OECD Countries and of Turkey in particular, and to analyze with which country economies Turkey has similar trade values among OECD countries.

## 2. OECD Countries

Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is the successor of the OEEC (Organization of European Economic Organization) which was constituted in 1947 in order to ensure collaboration of Marshall Plan created by the United States of America and Canada for the restructuring of Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War ([oecd.dt.mfa.gov.tr](http://oecd.dt.mfa.gov.tr)) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is an international economic organization ([www.tech-worm.com](http://www.tech-worm.com)). Within the framework of new developments, OECD was established which was aimed at directing to new areas of collaboration with the Paris Contract signed on 14 December 1960, and it has launched its activities officially on 30 September 1961. The objectives of the organization are listed as follows ([www.ekodialog.com](http://www.ekodialog.com)):

- Improving the living standards of people in member countries where the financial stability is simultaneously protected and also in the developing countries, support and assistance to policy which provides for continuous and balanced economic development, abolishing the unemployment;
- Stimulating economic enlargement policies and supporting socio-economic collaborative development;
- Supporting development of global trade which does not make any separation between countries and is multilateral in accordance with international obligations.

- Countries which are members of OECD or apply for membership have adopted the following three principles as indispensable values in the socio-politic and economic life:

- Democracy;
- Loyalty to human rights and citizen freedom ([www.csgb.gov.tr](http://www.csgb.gov.tr)).

While, on one hand, contributing in the strengthening of these principles in member countries, OECD also engages in the promotion of its principles in countries which are not its members on the other hand. ([www.tech-worm.com](http://www.tech-worm.com)). OECD member countries include: USA, Germany, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Netherlands, UK, Ireland, Spain, Israel, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Iceland, Japan, Canada, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Chile, Turkey, New Zealand, Greece, consisting of 36 countries ([www.mfa.gov.tr](http://www.mfa.gov.tr)). Fields of interest and activity of OECD, which has an expansionist policy, are not only limited to its members, covering around 100 countries that are within its membership perspective.

Turkey is among the founding members of OECD. Turkey closely follows the economic developments in the world and their consequences also within the framework of OECD and contributes in the studies being carried out. OECD studies and the best practices of the countries provide Turkey with an opportunity to create and exemplify a good ground for legislative and implementation changes which it has foreseen to undertake in the process of development and reform which it currently undergoes. Issues within the scope of the wide activity range of OECD, are being closely followed by our various organizations and institutions that act in collaboration ([oecd.dt.mfa.gov.tr](http://oecd.dt.mfa.gov.tr)).

## 3. Trade Facilitation Index

Facilitation of trade, which is a process that aims at better management of trade, could be defined as systematically making more effective the presentation of documents and information required in the movement of commodities between countries (Unsal, 2007: 2).

Facilitation of trade is defined as the whole of activities related to simplifying, harmonizing and standardizing the trade processes and accompanying financial processes by means of improving administrative, legal and technological infrastructure by increasing the efficiency from the point of time and cost during the whole

international supply chain and to maximize the transparency and projectability in this field ([www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)).

Trade Facilitation Index (ETI) measures the extent to which the organizations, policies and services that exist in the body of each economic system make the free circulation of commodities that are the subject of foreign trade easier (Global Trade Facilitation Report, 2016). World Economic Forum (WEF) is an international Public – Private Collaboration Organization. The forum deals with the leading political, business and other leaders of the society in order to shape the global, regional and industrial agendas. It was established as a non-profit organization in 1971, and its headquarters is located in Geneva, Switzerland. It is independent, impartial and not affiliated to any special interest. While the forum protects the highest governance standards, it also encourages entrepreneurship for the benefit of global public ([www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org)). World Economic Forum (WEF) prepares a report on the extent to which the actions and regulations of 138 countries to facilitate trade are realized efficiently. It was developed in order to measure the level of development of the eco-system which will be a subject of international trade in particular. The first of the report was presented to public in 2008. The lower index value is calculated by taking the arithmetic average of the indicators. Calculation of general index value from the lower indexes is also made by taking the arithmetic average of lower index values. The component values are structures so as to take a point between 1 and 7 (1 the worst, 7 the best). World Economic Forum, which is an independent international organization, put the countries into a list with Trade Facilitation Index according to the extent to which the commodities that are the subject of foreign trade make free circulation easy (Besel, 2016: 9).

Global Trade Facilitation Report has become an important source of reference since its publishing as the first time in 2008. The report, which is published biannually, has been a bag of stuff for many countries for their efforts towards facilitation of trade and has been assisting the companies in their investment decisions. From the beginning onwards, the evaluations were made on the basis of ETI (Enabling Trade Index). This index has been developed within the framework of Trade Facilitation Program of World Economic Forum with the supports of leader academicians, partners and companies. Trade Enabling Index measures the degree of organizations, policies, infrastructure and services developed by countries for facilitating the free circulation of commodities that are the subject of trade, from the borders of countries to their destination. The structure of the index comprises fundamental enabling elements of trade divided into 4

fundamental areas as well as sub-indexes.

1. “Market Access Sub-Index”, evaluates on one hand the policy framework adopted by the country at the point of meeting the commodity that enters the country, and on the other hand the obstacles and easiness that the country exporters encounter at the entrance to foreign markets.
2. “Border Management Sub-Index” evaluates the level at which the border management facilitates entry and exit of commodities.
3. “Infrastructure Sub-Index” considers whether the required transportation and communication infrastructure to facilitate the movement of goods within and outside the country, is ensured.
4. “Business Environment Sub-Index” is an index that considers the quality of governance as well as the regulatory and safety framework that affects the activities of exporters, importers and transporters operating in the country.

Each of these four sub-indexes comprises a series of elements that facilitate trade. These elements are specified as follows.

1. Access to Internal Market (6 indicators)
2. Access to External Market (2 indicators)
3. Efficiency of Customs Administrations (13 indicators)
4. Existence and Quality of Transportation Infrastructure (7 indicators)
5. Existence and Quality of Transportation Services (6 indicators)
6. Existence and Use of Information and Communication Technologies (7 indicators)
7. Business Environment (16 indicators) (Global Enabling Trade Report, 2016).

The principle of trade facilitation is collected under 3 headings: simplification, harmonization and standardization ([www.istemiparman.com.tr](http://www.istemiparman.com.tr)):

- Simplification; removing all unnecessary stages and repetitions in procedures, applications and processes;
- Harmonization; making the national procedures, processes and documents compliant with international contracts, standards and applications;
- Standardization; is the process of developing and implementing formats that are internationally accepted for the procedures, applications and documents.
- Practices of facilitation of trade increase the global

trade volume, and the increase of global trade volume creates wealth and richness in the countries that increase their foreign trade levels.

The decrease to be provided in commercial costs by means of facilitation of trade, will create important impacts for both the enterprises and the national economy. For example, by means of simplification of customs and trade procedures, less efficient companies will find it more profitable to start export together with a decrease in the export costs, and thus the entry of SMEs to export markets will become easier (Trade Facilitation Turkey Strategy and Action Plan, 2018).

The Customs Union (CU) process carried out with the EU has been an important factor within the trade facilitation experience of Turkey. Agreement was signed with the World Bank in 1995 for the modernization of customs system and also a technical assistance agreement was signed with IMF in the same year. In this scope, customs reform and modernization action plan was created in order to carry the customs regulations and administrative structure to the level of EU standards. Within the framework of the plan in question, it was aimed at reshaping the customs administration by making the customs regulations in accordance with GB needs and international standards, developing and dissemination a computer system, creating a balance between customs control and trade facilitation and ensuring compliance with the international agreements to which Turkey is a party. Although it is accepted that in the process of Customs Union, Turkey has significantly become in harmony with European Union in the practices of customs administrations, it is necessary to reevaluate the requirements and priorities that will be revealed from the point of TFA (Cakmak, 2016: 7).

#### 4. Method

In this study, it was aimed at classifying OECD member countries, which include Turkey, from the point of trade facilitation index indicators for year 2016.

Clustering Analysis is a multi- variable statistical analysis group which includes grouping the individuals or objects based on the characteristics they have (Kangalli et al, 2014: 102). It is expected that the clusters to be obtained as a result of clustering analysis have homogenous character within themselves and heterogenous structure among themselves to the extent possible (Akoglu and Tuna, 2016: 3). Clustering Analysis is a method that ensures collecting the units that are examined in a research under certain groups according to their similarities and thus making

classifications, demonstrating the common features of the units and making general definitions in relation to these classes (Erili and Karakoy, 2015: 306). In other word, clustering analysis is a group of methods that helps dividing the units and variables which are included under X data matrix and of which natural groupings are not known, into sub-clusters which are similar to one another (Özdamar, 2004: 377).

In the clustering analysis, distance measurements, correlation measures or similarity measures of categoric data are used in order to calculate the values of the individuals or objects observed (in this research, countries) over all variables measured and determine the similarities (Turanlı et al, 2006: 97).

There are two methods in the implementation of clustering analysis. One of these is the hierarchical clustering analysis and the other is the k-means clustering, which is a non-hierarchical clustering analysis (Nakip, 2006: 438). In this study, the hierarchical clustering analysis has been preferred. In general two methods, hierarchical and non-hierarchical, could be used consecutively. Number of clusters is determined relying on the knowledge and experience of the researcher (Ariç and Erkekoğlu, 2013: 296).

In this study, statistical analysis was done using SPSS 19 Package Program without determining the number of clusters beforehand. First, Trade Enabling Index data for 2016 was entered using Excel and SPSS package program. After the data was entered, it was made suitable for applying clustering analysis. In this study, hierarchical clustering, which is one of the clustering analyses, was used and Ward method as selected as the method. Hierarchical clustering is made in cases where the number of clusters is not determined by the researchers in advance. Since the data used in the analysis take standard values between 1-7, there was no need for any standardization.

**Table 1.** Aggregation Table

Stage	Combined Cluster		Coefficient	Next Stage	Stage	Combined Cluster		Coefficient	Next Stage
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2				Cluster 1	Cluster 2		
1	28	29	,030	2	18	2	3	4,855	30
2	26	28	,100	4	19	16	17	5,473	22
3	9	31	,180	12	20	5	14	6,133	29
4	13	26	,263	8	21	8	24	7,022	30
5	2	21	,413	12	22	6	16	7,951	28

6	10	30	,568	25	23	11	32	8,937	27
7	11	23	,753	11	24	12	33	9,976	31
8	13	20	,950	28	25	10	19	11,314	27
9	6	15	1,155	22	26	1	18	12,799	32
10	18	35	1,400	26	27	10	11	14,599	32
11	11	34	1,722	23	28	6	13	16,409	29
12	2	9	2,072	18	29	5	6	18,659	31
13	12	22	2,447	24	30	2	8	22,455	33
14	8	25	2,832	21	31	5	12	27,541	34
15	3	7	3,232	18	32	1	10	35,470	33
16	17	27	3,727	19	33	1	2	45,935	34
17	1	4	4,282	26	34	1	5	79,742	0

The first column in the aggregation table demonstrates the stages of clustering analysis. Under the cluster combined heading, 28th observation in Cluster 1 (Slovakia) and 29th observation in Cluster 2 (Slovenia) are the closest two observations to one another (.030). As a matter of fact, the next coefficients column measures the distance between the observations. The next stage column demonstrates the stage at which two observations on that line combine with another observation to become a cluster. It could be seen that the next stage in the first line is the second stage. In this direction, the 28th observation (Slovakia) and 29th observation (Slovenia) in the first line combine with the 26th (Poland) observation in the second stage to create the first cluster. It could be seen that the next stage in the second line is the fourth stage. At this stage, Slovakia, Slovenia and Poland combined with the 13rd observation (Hungary).

Similarly, it could be seen that the next stage in the fourth line is the eighth stage and when this line is examined, it could be seen that Lithuania (20th observation) is added to Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland and Hungary. Clustering continues in this way until the 34th stage. The coefficients between the countries increased further while approaching last stages and finally 35 countries have been combined under a single cluster. It is possible to make the explanations related to the aggregation table above by reading the dendrogram graphic from left to right. Whereas countries which look similar to each other and could create a cluster create a cluster at a distance of 0 to 5 units, countries which look like the

least create cluster at a distance of 25 units.

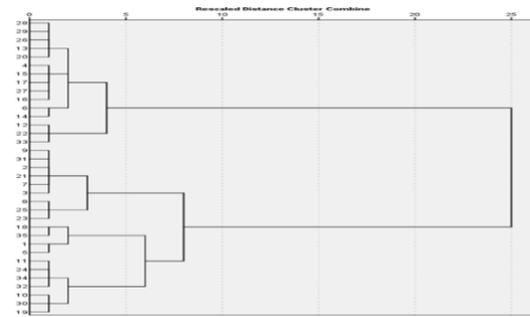


Figure 1. Dendrogram For Ward's Method

Table 2. Distribution of Countries by Clusters According to Ward's Method

Cluster 1	Japan (18), United States of America (35), Australia (1), Chile (5)
Cluster 2	Finland (9), Sweden (31), Austria (2), Luxembourg (21), Belgium (3), Denmark (7), Estonia (8), Norway (25), Netherlands (23)
Cluster 3	Slovak Republic (28), Slovenia (29), Poland (26), Hungary (13), Lithuania (20), Czech Republic (6), Ireland (15), Italy (17), Portugal (27), Israel (16) . Canada (4), Iceland (14)
Cluster 4	Germany (11), New Zealand (24), United Kingdom (34), Switzerland (32), France (10), Spain (30), South Korea (19)
Cluster 5	Greece (12), Mexico (22), Turkey (33)

If we read the dendrogram from left to right, it could be seen that OECD countries fundamentally divide into five clusters. The first cluster comprises Japan, United States of America, Australia and Chile. Whereas the second cluster includes a total of 9 members including Belgium and Finland; the third cluster includes 12 countries including Italy, Canada and Portugal. The fourth cluster comprises Germany, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, France, Spain and South Korea. Our group which constitutes the fifth and last cluster in this clustering is Turkey, Greece and Mexico.

When we examine Figure 1, we can see that the ideal number of clusters is five. However, if we examine the graphic in detail, the number of clusters by index value could be expressed as minimum 3 and maximum 5.

**Table 3.** Members of Cluster in the Analysis Where Number of Cluster Is Specified

Case	5 Clusters	4 Clusters	3 Clusters
Australia	1	1	1
Austria	2	2	2
Belgium	2	2	2
Canada	3	3	3
Chile	1	1	1
Czech Republic	3	3	3
Denmark	2	2	2
Estonia	2	2	2
Finland	2	2	2
France	4	4	1
Germany	4	4	1
Greece	5	3	3
Hungary	3	3	3
Island	3	3	3
Ireland	3	3	3
Israel	3	3	3
Italy	3	3	3
Japan	1	1	1
South Korea	4	4	1
Leetonia	3	3	3
Luxembourg	2	2	2
Mexico	5	3	3
Holland	2	2	2
New Zealand	4	4	1
Norway	2	2	2
Poland	3	3	3
Portugal	3	3	3
Slovakia	3	3	3
Slovenia	3	3	3
Spain	4	4	1
Sweden	2	2	2
Switzerland	4	4	1
Turkey	5	3	3
UK	4	4	1
USA	1	1	1

In Table 3, analysis was made such that the number of clusters is minimum 3 and maximum 5. When the results obtained are examined, the results obtained from the tree graphic are confirmed. When the number of clusters is 5, the countries are clustered as in the tree graphic; and the new cluster distribution obtained when the number of clusters decreases to three is as

follows:

Cluster 1: Japan (18), United States (35), Australia (1), Chile (5), Germany (11), New Zealand (24), United Kingdom (34), Switzerland (32), France (10), Spain (30), South Korea (19).

Cluster 2 : Finland (9), Sweden (31), Austria (2), Luxembourg (21), Belgium (3), Denmark (7), Estonia (8), Norway (25), Netherlands (23)

Cluster 3: Slovak Republic (28), Slovenia (29), Poland (26), Hungary (13), Lithuania (20), Czech Republic (6), Ireland (15), Italy (17), Portugal (27), Israel (16) , Canada (4), Iceland (14), Greece (12), Mexica (22), Turkey (3).

### Result and Conclusion

Parallel to the increasing weight of our country in the international arena in the last period and the development and transformation it has been undergoing in the field of economy, there is a need for a comprehensive reform and this issue has been pronounced insistently in various platforms. Within this framework, it is required to use the tools and mechanisms owned by OECD, which is an organization constituted by develop country democracies and provides positive contributions in the reform processes of countries if used appropriately, at a maximum level. For this, there is a need to review the relationships with the organization, the organizational structure and its operations from a visionary point of view. Whereas OECD affects the organization and operation of Turkish public administration on one side, it also will bring new expansions in its international relations on the other ([www.igb.gov.tr](http://www.igb.gov.tr)).

There is a need for the countries to combine the formalities and procedures in foreign trade operations and to constitute a more effective structure in the foreign trade process in order to increase their international competitive powers and ensure participation of all enterprises with required potential to foreign trade. In this context, facilitation of the trade is characterized as one of the basic elements for investment environment and international competitive power (Unsal, 2007: 3). It is demonstrated that all sections of trade will win from the facilitation of trade. Public sector, efficient customs and trade procedures, use of advanced technology and development of infrastructure will ensure increasing the flow of commodities passing at a unit time, controls in the supply chain will be made more efficient and there will be an increase in the tax incomes. Besides, optimum benefit will be acquired from limited human resources with the effective

use of technological tools.

As a result of the research conducted, it could be seen that Greece, Mexica and Turkey among OECD countries are included under the same cluster. Whereas these three countries are included in the developing countries category, they have similar degree of being affected from economic, social and political events in the world and they also demonstrate similarities from the point of trade policies they have been implementing for the sake of economic growth.

Within the framework of the concept of facilitation of trade, there is a need to make comparisons with other countries in order to accurately determine the earnings that could be acquired in the field in question in addition to the steps taken and point reached in Turkey, and to specify the priorities. It becomes further important to direct the investments to be made in the field of trade facilitation, which includes various precautions and implementations from infrastructure investments in foreign trade to the modernization of customs processes, which would mitigate trade costs, to areas which require priority from the point of view of our country.

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