



About half of the increase in world trade since 1953 occurred in Western Europe. The growth was largest and quickest in the EEC, which more than trebled import values, while purchases by North America nearly doubled and those by developing regions grew by three quarters. Consequently, the EEC's share of world imports rose from 18 p.c. to 25 p.c. Germany and Italy recorded the most rapid increases over the whole period, while the growth for France and the Low Countries has been especially strong since 1958-59.

Imports by FinEFTA (the European Free Trade Association and Finland), which more than doubled in value from 1953 through 1965, nearly maintained their share of the world's total, changing only from 17.9 p.c. in 1953 to 17.1 p.c. in 1965. For both the EEC and EFTA a very appreciable increment stemmed from freer intra-group trade, which grew more rapidly than imports from outside countries. In the case of EFTA, however,