

WORLD STEEL REVIEW

Iron & Steel Statistics Bureau, January 2009



Crude steel production in the 66 countries reporting to the IISI totalled 89 million tonnes in November 2008, 19% down on November 2007. The eleven months total was 1,225 million tonnes, just 0.9% higher than the same period last year. Excluding China, the monthly fall was 23%, whereas the year to date total was down by 0.2%. All regions showed a drop in the monthly total with nearly all countries recording a fall. The year to date totals showed mixed results with some regions up and some down.

Steel production in the 27 member countries of the European Union decreased by 24.8% in November 2008 compared to the previous November to 13 million tonnes; the eleven months total was only 2.2% lower at 189 million tonnes. German production fell in November by 18.5%, bringing the eleven months total down 3.1% to 43.4 million tonnes. Production in Italy was down 16.5% in November, while the year to date total was only down by 1% to 28.9 million tonnes. French steel production fell by 29.1% in the month, bringing the year to date total down 3.8% to 17.2 million tonnes. Spanish November production showed one of the largest falls at 45.5%, although the eleven months total was actually up by 0.2% to 17.6 million tonnes. UK monthly steel production decreased by 27.5%, while the year to date total was down 1.4% to 13 million tonnes. The largest monthly fall was Luxembourg, down 59%, while the largest drop in the eleven months total was Bulgaria, down 25.4%, followed by Romania, down 13.4%.

Export and import data are only available for the EU27 for the first nine months of 2008. Total imports of steel fell by 20% to 32.7 million tonnes compared to the same period in 2007, although exports increased by 11% to 27.4 million tonnes. There was a fall of 20% in the imports of semis and hot rolled wide strip in the nine months to 6.9 and 5.6 million tonnes respectively, whereas imports of zinc coated steel fell by 26% to 2.4 million tonnes.

In the rest of Europe the largest producer is Turkey, where steel production decreased by 15.4% in November, but was up by 6% in the year to date to 25.1 million tonnes. Although the monthly total in Serbia was down 11.4%, the total for the eleven months increased by 16.1% to 1.6 million tonnes.

According to ACEA, the European car manufacturers' association, European car registrations fell by 25.8% in November, and were down by 7.1% in the eleven months. Registrations in Germany, the largest market, fell by 17.7% in November, while in the United Kingdom they were down by 36.8%. In Italy, the third largest market, monthly registrations fell by 29.5%, while in France they were down 14.1%. Spanish registrations were down almost 50% in November.

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In the CIS countries crude steel production in Russia fell by 36.5% in November bringing the year to date total down 1.3% to 65.2 million tonnes. Ukrainian November production, however, dropped by 54.9% making the eleven months total 35.1 million tonnes, a decrease of 10.3%. Steel production in Kazakhstan decreased by 58.5% in November and by 7.2% in the year to date to 4.1 million tonnes.

Steel production in the USA dropped by 38.4% in November, although the year to date total was down just 2.2% at 87.8 million tonnes. Canadian production increased by 15.2% in November, with the eleven months total up 8.7% at 15.5 million tonnes. Mexican steel production, however, fell by 25.2% in the month, although the year to date total was up 3.1% at 16.5 million tonnes.

In South America, Brazilian crude steel production decreased by 19.1% in November, while the year to date total was up 4.2% to 32.1 million tonnes compared to last year. Argentinian production in November fell by 20.2%, although the eleven months total was up 7.7% to 5.3 million tonnes. Venezuelan crude steel production also showed a significant fall in the month of 18.5%, while the year to date total decreased by 13.9% to 3.9 million tonnes.

Middle Eastern and African steel mostly showed a fall in production although Iran had an increase of 3.6% in November; however, the year to date total for Iran was 1.1% down at 9.1 million tonnes. The South African monthly total was 40% down with the eleven months total down 3.9% to 8.1 million tonnes. In Egypt steel production fell by 26% in the month, but was up by 2.3% in the year to date to 5.8 million tonnes. Saudi Arabian production dropped by 36% in the month bringing the January to November total up 4.7% to 4.4 million tonnes.

In Asia Chinese steel production fell by 12.4% in November, although the eleven months total was up 2.6% to 463 million tonnes. Indian steel production increased by 1.9% in the month, while the year to date total was up 4.6% to 50.6 million tonnes. Japanese production decreased by 12.9% in November, while the year to date total was up 1.3% to 111.3 million tonnes. South Korean steel production almost reached 50 million tonnes in the eleven months, up 6.3%, but showed a drop of 9% in the month. Taiwanese steel production dropped 18.9% in November, and was down by 2.7% to 18.5 million tonnes in the January to November period.

Chinese exports of steel continued to fall in November to a total of 2.9 million tonnes, the lowest monthly figure since February 2006, and some 30% less than the November 2007 total. With a dramatic drop in exports of both hot rolled wide strip and hot rolled plate lengths, seamless tubes was the largest product exported in November followed by welded tubes. Almost half of total Chinese steel exports in the eleven months of 2008, some 27 million tonnes, went to other South East Asian markets, which was down 11.7% on 2007, while exports to the European Union fell by 31% to 7.3 million tonnes. The Middle East accounted for a further 6.7 million tonnes, down 20% on 2007. The USA took nearly 4.5 million tonnes, which was actually an increase of 14.5% on 2007.

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