

WORLD STEEL REVIEW

Iron & Steel Statistics Bureau, March 2008



Total crude steel production for the 66 countries reporting to the IISI in January 2008 was estimated to be 113.0 million tonnes, an increase of 4.9% on January 2007. If China is excluded, the remaining 65 countries showed a 3.6% rise in crude steel production. Only the European Union and Africa showed a drop in steel production.

In the European Union crude steel production for the 27 in January fell by 0.4% on January 2007 to 17.9 million tonnes. In Germany steel production was down 4.9% to 4.1 million tonnes, while French production fell by 7% to 1.6 million tonnes. Italy's steel production, on the other hand, increased by 6.6% to 2.85 million tonnes. Spanish steel production also showed an increase, up 2.7% to 1.5 million tonnes. In the UK, however, production fell by 0.5% to 1.1 million tonnes. Dutch steel production showed the largest rise within the EU, up by 15.7% to 706 thousand tonnes.

German steel exports showed a very slight rise in 2007 to almost 30 million tonnes putting it into fourth place in the top exporters ahead of Russia. German imports rose by 6% to 27.4 million tonnes maintaining its position as the second largest steel importer behind the USA.

Outside of the European Union, steel production in Turkey increased by 8.6% to 2.2 million tonnes, while in Serbia production rose by 10.8% to 161 thousand tonnes.

Registrations of new cars in Europe showed a decrease of 0.3% in January 2008. Italian registrations fell by 7.3% to 232 thousand units, while German registrations increased by 10.5% to 221 thousand units. In France registrations decreased by 5.6% to 162 thousand units, while in the UK registrations fell by 2.1% also to 162 thousand units. The Spanish total was down 12.7% to 102 thousand units. Several East European countries showed significant increases: Poland's total was up 24.6% to 28.4 thousand units, while in Romania the total increased by 34.5% to 29.5 thousand units. Although their total registrations were small in comparison, the Czech Republic was up 10.2%, Slovenia was up 24% and Slovakia was up 36.6%.

In Russia crude steel production rose by 3.4% compared to January 2007, to 6.5 million tonnes, with Ukrainian production only up by 0.8% to 3.6 million tonnes. Steel production in Kazakhstan dropped by 13%. Russian steel exports fell by 5.8% in 2007 pushing them from third to fifth place in the top 5 exporting countries. 51% of the 29.6 million tonnes total was ingots and semis. The Ukraine export total of 30.3 million tonnes put it into third place, despite a fall of 1% compared to 2006. Ingots and semis accounted for 39% of total Ukrainian steel exports in 2007.

In North America January crude steel production was up 10.5%, with US production up 11.4% to 8.4 million tonnes. Canadian steel production increased by 9.8% to 1.5 million tonnes, while Mexican production rose by 5.9% to 1.55 million tonnes.

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US steel imports dropped from the high of 42.4 million tonnes in 2006 to 31.4 million tonnes in 2007 which was still over one million tonnes higher than in 2005. Semis accounted for the largest imported product group at 6 million tonnes, down by 28.4% on 2006. However, welded tube imports rose by 12.6% to 5.4 million tonnes. Hot rolled coil imports were down by 46% to 3.3 million tonnes. In terms of the countries of origin Canada strengthened its position by increasing its exports to 6.4 million tonnes accounting for 20% of the US total, up from 13% the year before. China came second at 4.4 million tonnes, 14% of the total, although this was down from the 5.1 million tonnes in 2006. Imports from Mexico dropped to 3 million tonnes, 9.6% of the total, while imports from Russia dropped by over 2 million tonnes to 1.1 million pushing it into seventh place.

South American crude steel production increased by 12.7% in January, with Brazilian production up by 13.6% to 3.1 million tonnes. Venezuelan steel production increased by 3.7% to 440 thousand tonnes, while Argentinian production jumped by 24% to 417 thousand tonnes.

In Africa and the Middle East, Iran's steel production rose in January by 4.4% to 890 thousand tonnes, while Egypt's production decreased by 1.6% to 540 thousand tonnes. South Africa's production, however, fell by 8.8% to 743 thousand tonnes. In Saudi Arabia steel production rose by 23.6% to 444 thousand tonnes.

Asian crude steel production for the five major countries in January was up 5.5%, led by China with an increase of 7.3% to 40.9 million tonnes. Indian steel production rose by 8.8% to 4.8 million tonnes. Japanese production increased by 1.8% to 10.25 million tonnes. South Korean production actually fell by 0.8% to 4.35 million tonnes, while in Taiwan steel production was down 3.4% to 1.7 million tonnes.

South Korean steel imports rose by 18% in the first 11 months of 2007 to 24.2 million tonnes, half of which came from China, an increase of almost 3 million tonnes. Japan accounted for a further 8.7 million tonnes, 36% of the total. Hot rolled coil imports were up 13.5% at 7 million tonnes, while imports of semis increased by 23% to 5.6 million tonnes. Imports of hot rolled plate in lengths jumped by 25% to 4.3 million tonnes.

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