

WORLD STEEL REVIEW

Iron & Steel Statistics Bureau, April 2007



Total crude steel production for the 70 countries reporting to the IISI in February 2007 was estimated to be 99.0 million tonnes, an increase of 8.6% on February 2006. The total for the two months to date in 2007 was 10.5% up on the same period in 2006 at 206.0 million tonnes. However, excluding China, global crude steel production only rose by 4.5% in the two months.

In the European Union, crude steel production by the 27, including Bulgaria and Romania, rose by 2.9% in February, and by 6.7% to 34.8 million tonnes in the two months to date compared to the same period last year. German crude steel production rose by 3.1% in February, and by 13.9% in the year to date to 8.1 million tonnes. Production in Italy, on the other hand, decreased by 8.3% in February, while the two months total was down 1.6% to 5 million tonnes. French monthly production was only up by 0.2%, while the year to date was down 0.5% to 3.4 million tonnes. Spanish steel production, however, jumped by 19.5% in February, and by 22.5% to 3.1 million tonnes in the two months. United Kingdom steel production increased by 9.3% in February, bringing the year to date to just over 2.3 million tonnes, an increase of 4.1%. Poland's steel production was up by 18.4% in the two months to 1.7 million tonnes. Austrian production was up 12.5% to 1.2 million tonnes, and Romanian production was up 9.1% to 1.1 million tonnes.

EU25 steel imports from outside the EU rose by 45% in 2006 to 40 million tonnes compared to 2005. Although imports of semis rose by 32.7% to 8.7 million tonnes, hot rolled wide coil imports jumped by 76% to 8.6 million tonnes. Hot rolled plate lengths rose by 63% to 3.1 million tonnes, CR was up 69% to 2.5 million tonnes and zinc coated sheet and strip imports rose by 76% to 2.4 million tonnes. Russia remains the largest supplier at 7.4 million tonnes, up 26%, while imports from China more than tripled to 6 million tonnes. Ukraine was the third largest supplier at 4.6 million tonnes, up 18.5%, with Turkey next at 3.9 million tonnes, an increase of 42%. Imports from Serbia doubled to one million tonnes.

Italy accounted for 31% of total EU25 imports in 2006 at 12.6 million tonnes, which was a 50% increase on the 2005 tonnage. Spain accounted for 12.3% of the total at 5 million tonnes, followed by Germany at 10.6% and Belgium at 10%. These four countries accounted for 64% of total EU imports in 2006.

EU25 steel exports, however, fell by 1.2% in 2006 compared to 2005 to 32 million tonnes. Most products showed a fall in 2006, although exports of seamless tubes rose by almost 10% to 2.6 million tonnes. The EU's largest export was hot rolled wide coil, down 12% at 3.9 million tonnes. The USA remains the largest market at 5.8 million tonnes, up 5.9%, with Turkey next at 2.6 million tonnes and Switzerland at 2.4 million tonnes. Exports to Algeria more than doubled to 1.5 million tonnes, while exports to China fell 18.6% to 1.4 million tonnes.

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Crude steel production in the rest of Europe is dominated by Turkey where production in February rose by 14.6% with the year to date total up 14.2% to almost 4 million tonnes. In Serbia and Montenegro production was up 30% in the month, and by 28% in the year to date to 282 thousand tonnes, ahead of the Swiss total which rose by 5.2% to 226 thousand tonnes.

ACEA, the European car manufacturers association, reported that car registrations in Europe fell by 2.5% in February, while the year to date was down 0.3%, to 2.4 million cars. German registrations were down by 12.8% in the two months to 383 thousand cars, while Italian registrations increased by 4.8% to 473 thousand cars. The French two months total was flat at 329 thousand cars, while in the UK the total increased by 2.5% to 239 thousand cars, just ahead of the Spanish total at 237 thousand cars, a fall of 1.0%. These five countries accounted for 69% of total registrations in Europe.

In the CIS Russian crude steel production increased by 9% in February, with the year to date up 10.3% to 12.2 million tonnes. Ukrainian steel production, however, was up by 18.2% in February, bringing the year to date total up 14.4% to 6.8 million tonnes. In Kazakhstan the two month total increased by 7.6% to 663 thousand tonnes, with Belarus steel production slightly down at 361 thousand tonnes.

Turning to North America, US crude steel production fell by 8% in February, and by 7.4% in the year to date to 14.6 million tonnes. Mexican steel production was up 0.7% in the month, but was flat in the two months to date to 2.7 million tonnes. Canadian production, however, fell by 23.5% in February, and by 21.1% in the year to date to 2.0 million tonnes.

In South America, there was a 17.6% rise in Brazilian crude steel production in February, with the year to date total up 10.7% to 5.2 million tonnes. Argentinian production, however, fell by 6.8% in February, and by 12.5% in the two months to 751 thousand tonnes. Venezuelan steel production also fell by 6.3% in February, bringing the year to date total down 2.6% to 820 thousand tonnes.

South African year to date crude steel production fell in February by 1.1%, while the year to date total was down 4.1% to 1.5 million tonnes. Egyptian steel production, on the other hand, rose by 10.3% in February and by 13.4% in the two months to just over one million tonnes. Production in Iran actually fell in February by 3.7%, bringing the year to date total to 1.6 million tonnes, a rise of 0.6%. In Saudi Arabia steel production increased by 12.2% in February and by 4.3% in the two months to 685 thousand tonnes.

Crude steel production in the Far East showed increases with Chinese production continuing to grow strongly, up 20% in February and by 23% in the two months to 74.3 million tonnes. Japanese production was up by 3.6% in February and by 5.1% in the year to date to 19.3 million tonnes. South Korean production was only up 0.2% in February, but increased by 6.0% in the year to date to 8.1 million tonnes. Indian steel production increased by 2.5% in the month, while the year to date total was up 4.9% to 7.4 million tonnes making it the 7th largest steel producer in the world. Taiwanese production, however, fell in February by 1%, although the two months total was up by 2.9% to 3.3 million tonnes.

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