

WORLD STEEL REVIEW

Iron & Steel Statistics Bureau, June 2011



Production of crude steel for the 64 countries reporting to the World Steel Association in April was estimated to be 126.9 million tonnes, an increase of 5% over April 2010. The total of the 4 months to date was 499.7 million tonnes, 8% above the January to April total in 2010. Excluding China, which accounted for 46% of world production in the first four months of 2011, the increase in April was only 3.2%, with the four months total up by 7.7%.

In the European Union 27, crude steel production was up by 2% in April at 15.8 million tonnes compared to April 2010, and up by 6% in the 4 months to date to 61 million tonnes. 7 EU countries showed a drop in production in April, with just 4 countries showing a drop in the year to date. Monthly production in Germany fell by 2% in April, but was 3% up in the January to April period to 15.2 million tonnes. Italian crude steel production increased by 10% in April, and by 8% in the year to date to 9.4 million tonnes. Steel production in Spain, however, fell by 6% in the month, and was slightly down in the four months to date to 5.9 million tonnes. French production was flat in April, while the year to date rose by 2% to 5.3 million tonnes. In the UK, steel production decreased by 7% in April, bringing the 4 months total to 3.3 million tonnes, a drop of 5%.

In the rest of Europe Turkish production increased by 14% in April and by 26% in the four months to 10.7 million tonnes, outstripping Italy's production by more than one million tonnes. The four months total for Serbia was 623 thousand tonnes, 50% up on the previous year's total.

Turkish steel imports fell by 9% in the first quarter of 2011, but steel exports rose by 17.4%. Almost 43% of exports in the first quarter were deformed reinforcing bars with welded tubes accounting for a further 10%. Hot rolled coil exports accounted for just under 10% of the total in 2011. The Middle East and north Africa accounted for 53% of Turkey's exports in the first quarter of 2011 with the United Arab Emirates being the largest market at 643 thousand tonnes. The European Union accounted for 21.5% of Turkey's exports in 2011 with Germany being the largest market.

New car registrations in Europe fell by 3.8% in April compared to the previous April, according to ACEA, the European Car Manufacturers Association, while the four months total showed a decrease of 2.4% to 4.8 million cars. German registrations rose by 2.6% in April and by 10.7% in the year to date to over one million cars. French registrations, however, fell by 11% in April, although the year to date total was 4% up at 817 thousand. Italian registrations fell by 2.2% in April and were 19% down in the year to date at 672 thousand cars. In the UK the monthly total decreased by 7.4%, and the four months total was down by 8.5% to 696 thousand cars. The Spanish automotive market showed one of the worst drops at 23% in April and 26% in the January to April period to 280 thousand cars. These 5 countries accounted for 72% of the European market.

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Crude steel production in the CIS countries rose by 2% in April, with Russian production up 5% and the Ukraine total down 3%. This brought the year to date for the CIS up 8% with Russia's four month total up 10% to 23.6 million tonnes. Ukrainian steel production rose by 3% in the year to date to 11.6 million tonnes. In Kazakhstan steel production jumped by 13% in April and by 27% in the four months to 1.6 million tonnes.

On the North American continent US steel production rose by 2% in April and by 7% in the year to date, bringing the year to date total to 28.3 million tonnes. Mexican steel production increased by 7% in April, while the four months total was also up 7% to 5.9 million tonnes. Canadian steel production, however, was 2% down in April and 4% down in the year to date, bringing the total to 4.1 million tonnes.

While US exports of steel only rose by 6% in the first quarter of 2011 compared to 2010, US imports rose by 22%. Seamless and welded tubes and pipes accounted for 25% of the total imported in the first 3 months of 2011 at 1.5 million tonnes, with semis accounting for a further 21% at 1.3 million tonnes. Hot rolled coil only accounted for 12% of the steel imported in 2011. Although Canada was the largest supplier of steel at 1.3 million tonnes (22%), and Mexico was the second largest at 829 thousand tonnes, Asian countries supplied 26% of US imports in 2011 with South Korea being the third largest supplier at 591 thousand tonnes. Brazil exported 494 thousand tonnes to the US in the first quarter of 2011.

Crude steel production in South America rose by 18% in April with Brazilian production up 9% and by 7% in the year to date to 11.4 million tonnes. Steel production in Argentina increased by 11% in April, while the four months total was up 10% to 1.7 million tonnes. Venezuelan production, however, almost tripled in April, bringing the year to date total up 122% to 1175 thousand tonnes.

In Africa and the Middle East Iran's production rose by 2% in April, although the year to date total was up by 14% to 4.4 million tonnes. South African steel production, however, decreased by 22% in April, and by 23% in the four months to 2.2 million tonnes. Egyptian production was slightly down in April, but rose by 3% in the year to date to 2.1 million tonnes, while Saudi Arabian steel production was 4% down in April and 1% up in the four months to 1.8 million tonnes.

Turning to the Far East, China's steel production increased by 7% in April, bringing the four months total up 8% to 229.7 million tonnes. Japanese crude steel production actually fell by 6% in April, while the January to April total rose by 2% to 36.1 million tonnes. South Korean production was up 16% in April with the year to date total at 22.3 million tonnes, 20% up on the same period in 2010. In India production rose by 5% in April, bringing the four months total to 24.4 million tonnes, 8% higher than in 2010. Crude steel production in Taiwan was slightly down in April, although the year to date total was 12% higher at 6.9 million tonnes.

China's steel exports dropped slightly in April to 4.7 million tonnes, after the very large increase in the March exports to 4.8 million tonnes. Imports also dropped from 1.6 million tonnes in March to 1.4 million tonnes in April.

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