

WORLD STEEL REVIEW

Iron & Steel Statistics Bureau, July 2015



Production of crude steel for the 65 countries reporting to the World Steel Association in May was estimated to be 139 million tonnes. This was 2.1% lower than in May 2014, and the year to date was 1.9% below the total for the same period in 2014 at 676 million tonnes. Excluding China, however, the May total was 2.5% lower than May 2014 and the 5 months total was 2.3% down on 2014. China accounted for 50% of world steel production in the first five months of 2015.

In the European Union crude steel production for the 28 rose by 0.7% in May to 15.1 million tonnes, compared to May 2014. This left the five months year to date total virtually flat at 73.2 million tonnes. German steel production fell by 5.4% in May, bringing the year to date total to 18.4 million tonnes, 2.9% down on the previous year. Italian steel production, however, fell by 12.6% in May, and by 10.2% in the five months to 9.8 million tonnes. French production, on the other hand, increased by 5.8% in May, while the year to date total fell by 1.8% to 6.8 million tonnes. Spanish steel production also rose in May by 1.9%, bringing the year to date total up by 4.9% to 6.6 million tonnes. In the United Kingdom steel production increased by 10.2% in May, and by 0.5% in the five months to 5.2 million tonnes.

Turkish steel production fell by 4.3% to 2.9 million tonnes in May and by 5.9% to 13.3 million tonnes in the five months. Serbia's production in the five months jumped by 81% to 403 thousand tonnes compared to 2014. Bosnian steel production rose by 2.1% in the year to date to 352 thousand tonnes, while in Norway steel production fell by 4.9% to 237 thousand tonnes.

According to ACEA, the European car manufacturers association, car registrations rose by 1.4% in May, and the five months total increased by 6.7%. German registrations actually fell by 6.7% in May, bringing the year to date total to 1.3 million cars, 3.6% above the 2014 total. UK car registrations were 2.4% up in May, and 5.7% up in the year to date to 1.1 million cars. Registrations in France fell by 3.5% in May, but increased by 3.8% in the first five months to 792 thousand cars. In Italy, on the other hand, registrations increased by 10.8% in May, bringing the year to date total to 725 thousand cars, an increase of 15.2%. The Spanish five months total jumped by 21.7% to 444 thousand cars.

Russian crude steel production was 1.9% down in May at 6.1 million tonnes, while the year to date total was up 3.2% at 30.3 million tonnes. Ukrainian monthly production, however, decreased by 23%, bringing the five months total to 9.3 million tonnes, a drop of 28%. In Kazakhstan the year to date total was up by 6% to nearly 1.6 million tonnes, while in Belarus it rose by 14.5% to 1.1 million tonnes.

On the North American continent US crude steel production fell by 8.5% in May and by 8.6% to 33 million tonnes in the year to date. Canadian steel production was 8.3% up in the month, and 3.1% higher in the five months to 5.3 million tonnes. In comparison Mexican steel production decreased by 7.9% in May, and by 6.8% in the year to date to 7.5 million tonnes.

US imports of steel in the first 4 months of 2015 rose by 13.5% to 14.25 million tonnes compared to the same period in 2014. Semis were the largest single product group at 2.3 million tonnes, although the total fell by 27% compared to 2014. However, welded tube imports jumped by 48% to nearly 2.2 million tonnes. Hot rolled wide strip imports were 2 million tonnes, up 22.7% compared to 2014. Although the first four months imports were up compared to 2014, imports have declined in every month from the January peak of 4.1 million tonnes. According to the American Institute for International Steel US imports declined again in May.

Asian countries supplied 37% of US imports in 2015 with South Korea by far the largest single source of steel at 2.2 million tonnes. Canada exported nearly 1.9 million tonnes and Brazil accounted for 1.75 million tonnes. US imports from the EU28 totalled 2.1 million tonnes in 2015.

Crude steel production in the South American countries was slightly up with Brazilian production up by 3.8% in May, and the year to date total up 1.9% at 14.3 million tonnes. Argentinian steel production, however, decreased by 14.9% in the month, bringing the five months total to almost 2 million tonnes, a drop of 10.4%. In Venezuela the monthly total fell by 20%, while the year to date total was down by 6.2% to 602 thousand tonnes. Peruvian steel production, on the other hand, was 16% up in May and 7.6% up in the five months to 489 thousand tonnes. Chilean year to date steel production fell by 5.8% to 442 thousand tonnes, while Colombian production was down by 9.9% to 449 thousand tonnes.

In Africa, South African steel production was flat in May but was 9.3% down in the year to date to 2.7 million tonnes. Egyptian production decreased by 0.7% in May and by 0.5% in the five months to 2.7 million tonnes. In the Middle East, Iran showed a 2.4% increase in steel production in May with the year to date total up by 5.1% to 6.9 million tonnes. Saudi Arabian steel production, however, fell by 1.9% in the year to date to just under 2.6 million tonnes. Production in the United Arab Emirates rose by 10% in the five months to 1.2 million tonnes.

Turning to the Far East, Chinese steel production decreased by 1.7% in May to 70 million tonnes, bringing the year to date total down 1.6% to 340 million tonnes, 50% of world production. Japan's May production, however, fell by 7%, while the year to date total was 4.4% lower at 44 million tonnes. Crude steel production in South Korea was down 2.6% in the month, making 28.7 million tonnes in the five months, a drop of 5.1% on the previous year. India's production, however, increased by 4% in May, while the year to date total was up by 6.1% to 37.7 million tonnes, ahead of the USA, making it the third largest steel producing country in the world. Taiwan's monthly production increased by 1.2%, bringing the year to date total to 9.7 million tonnes, an increase of 5.1%.

Despite the decrease in May steel production, Chinese steel exports increased to 9.1 million tonnes, 14.7% higher than in May 2014, although still below the 10.2 million tonnes total in January 2015. Long products accounted for almost half the total exports in May with hot rolled bars and flats alone accounting for 26% of the May total at 2.37 million tonnes. Coated sheet and strip exports were almost 1.6 million tonnes; hot rolled wide strip and rods and bars in coil each accounted for a further 1.1 million tonnes exported in May.

63% of Chinese exports in May went to other Asian countries, almost 10% went to the Middle East and 7.4% to the EU28. South Korea was the largest single market followed by Vietnam and the Philippines.

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