

## WORLD STEEL REVIEW

Iron & Steel Statistics Bureau, October 2012



Crude steel production in August was estimated to be 124 million tonnes, according to the 62 countries reporting to the World Steel Association, a decline of 1% over August 2011. The total for the first eight months of 2012 was 1023 thousand tonnes, just 0.9% up on the same period in 2011. However, excluding China, the August total fell by only 0.5%, and the year to date total was down by only 0.3%.

In the European Union crude steel production for the 27 member states fell by 4.4% in August compared to August 2011 to 12.2 million tonnes, while the eight months total decreased by 4.6% to 116 million tonnes. German crude steel production dropped by 7.1% in August, while the January to August total was down by 5.3% to 29 million tonnes compared to the same period the previous year. Italian production fell by 15.5% in August, while the year to date total was just 1.9% down at 18.5 million tonnes. Production in France fell by 7.2% in August, although the eight months total increased by 1.6% to 10.8 million tonnes. Spanish production, however, decreased in August by 10.3%, while the year to date total dropped 12% to 9.5 million tonnes. The United Kingdom showed a rise in steel production in August of 4.5%, but the eight months total was down 2% to 6.4 million tonnes. Polish steel production fell by 5% in August, although the year to date total rose by 2.4% to 6 million tonnes.

Exports of steel by the EU27 countries outside the EU rose by 7.6% in the first six months of 2012 compared to 2011. Imports, on the other hand, were 28% down compared to January to June 2011. Although German steel exports rose by 12% to 3.46 million tonnes in H1 2012, Italian exports were up by 30% to 3.12 million tonnes. Italian exports in June 2012 reached 619 thousand tonnes, the highest monthly total in several years. By far the largest customer for Italian exports in 2012 was Algeria taking almost 756 thousand tonnes, some 24% of the total. The USA took 413 thousand tonnes followed by Turkey with 391 thousand tonnes. Italy's largest exports in 2012 were welded tubes and zinc coated steel; however, the exports to Algeria were mostly deformed reinforcing bars and wire rod.

Although the EU27 imports fell by 28% compared to H1 2011, Italian imports were down by 43% at just over 3 million tonnes, some 21% of the total in H1 2012. Belgian imports fell by 28% to 2.1 million tonnes.

In the rest of Europe Turkey's crude steel production was 3 million tonnes in August, a rise of 8.7%; the year to date production, however, was up 9.2% to 24 million tonnes, ahead of both the Ukraine and Brazil. Steel production in Bosnia rose by 4.9% in the eight months to 467 thousand tonnes, ahead of the Norwegian total of 442 thousand tonnes, which was an increase of 21.3% on 2011.

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According to ACEA, the European Car Manufacturers Association, passenger car registrations in Europe fell by 8.5% in August, while the eight months total was down by 6.6% compared to 2011. In Germany registrations fell by 4.7% in August, and were 0.6% down in the year to date to 2.1 million cars. In France, August registrations decreased by 11.4%, while the year to date total was down 13.4% at 1.3 million cars. In the United Kingdom the August total was virtually flat, while the eight months total rose by 3.3% to 1.26 million cars. Italian registrations, however, were 20% down in August, with the year to date total also down 20% to 981 thousand cars. The Spanish eight months total dropped by 8.5% to 520 thousand cars, although the August total increased by 3.4%.

In the CIS countries Russian steel production increased by 1.8% in August, bringing the eight months total to 47.4 million tonnes, 2.8% higher than the 2011 total. In the Ukraine crude steel production actually fell by 13.5% in August, while the year to date was down by 5% to 22.4 million tonnes. Production in Kazakhstan decreased by 19% in the eight months to 2.6 million tonnes.

Russian exports of steel rose by 8.2% in the first seven months of 2012 compared to 2011. However, over half their exports were slabs and billets which showed a 21% increase compared to the same period in 2011. Exports of hot rolled coil, on the other hand, fell by 7.2% in 2012. Italy was Russia's largest market for steel taking 3 million tonnes in 2012. Taiwan was the second largest market at 1.5 million tonnes with the USA third at one million tonnes.

On the North American continent crude steel production in the USA rose by just 1.2% in August bringing the year to date total up 6.2% to 61 million tonnes. Canadian August steel production fell by 3.2%, with the eight months total increasing by 2.7% to 9 million tonnes. Mexican production, however, increased by 2.3% in August, bringing the year to date total to 11.9 million tonnes, 1.9% down on 2011.

In South America, Brazilian crude steel production in August decreased by 6.2%, while the eight months total fell by 3.3% to 23 million tonnes. Argentinian steel production dropped by 22.4% in August, and by 6.4% in the year to date to 3.5 million tonnes. In Venezuela August production fell by 0.8%, while the eight months total decreased by 21.7% to 1.7 million tonnes.

Production in South Africa, the largest steel producing country on the African continent, rose by 24.3% in August, bringing the eight months total down by 14% to nearly 4.6 million tonnes. Egypt's steel production increased very slightly in August, while the year to date total rose by 2.5% to just under 4.5 million tonnes. Steel production in Iran rose by 10.8% in August, while the year to date total was up 9.3% to 9.6 million tonnes, ahead of both Spain and Canada. Production in Saudi Arabia decreased by 2.1% in the eight months to 3.4 million tonnes.

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Steel imports by the MENA region in the first half of 2012 were 9% above the same period in 2011 at 21.3 million tonnes. In 2011 Iran and the United Arab Emirates were the largest importing countries in the region, but Saudi Arabia significantly increased its imports in H1 2012 to almost 4 million tonnes. Semi finished steel accounted for almost one third of the total in 2012, more than double the amount imported in the first half of 2011. Saudi Arabia's largest supplier in 2012 was Turkey which accounted for 35% of the total imported, with Japan, China and South Korea together accounting for a further 40%.

Among the key Asian countries Chinese crude steel production fell by 1.7% to 58.7 million tonnes in August, bringing the year to date total up 2.3% to 482 million tonnes, 47% of the world total. Indian steel production rose by 2.6% in August, and by 2.8% to nearly 51 million tonnes in the eight months. Japan's steel production was up 3.3% in August, while the eight months was up just 0.5% at 72.5 million tonnes. South Korean production increased by 2.8% in August, and by 3.2% in the year to date to 46.6 million tonnes. Taiwanese steel production, however, decreased by 3.9% in the month and by 7.2% in the year to date to 14.3 million tonnes.

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