

WORLD STEEL REVIEW

Iron & Steel Statistics Bureau, November 2007



Crude steel production in September for the 67 countries reporting to the IISI was 110.1 million tonnes, an increase of 6.2% over September 2006. The total for the first nine months of 2007 was 981.2 million tonnes, 7.3% up on the previous year's January to September total. All regions showed an increase in steel production in the year to date except North America. Excluding China, the total rise in the year to date production was 2.5% with September up only 1.6%. The increase in crude steel production for the nine months implies that the full year total will be 1320 million tonnes.

In the European Union crude steel production for the 27 countries increased by 1.5% in September to 17.5 million tonnes, bringing the year to date total up 2.1% to 158 million tonnes. Production in September was very varied with increases in Germany 1%, Spain 6.3%, the UK 1.5%, Slovakia 11.3% and the Netherlands more than doubling. On the other hand French production fell by 3.8% and Italy was down 0.2%. The nine months total mostly showed increases with Germany up 3.8% to 36.6 million tonnes, Italy up 0.8% to 23.5 million tonnes and France up 1.2% to 15.1 million tonnes. Spanish steel production rose by 3.8% to 14.5 million tonnes, while the UK total was up 2.7% to 10.9 million tonnes. Poland's year to date increase was 8.1% to 8.1 million tonnes, although Belgium's total was down 8.8% to 7.9 million tonnes.

European car registrations in the 28 countries monitored by ACEA decreased by 1.5% in September 2007 compared to 2006, although the year to date total rose slightly by 0.8% to 12.2 million cars. In Germany registrations fell 11% in September, and by 8% in the nine months to 2.34 million cars. UK registrations, on the other hand, rose by 1.3% in the month, with the year to date total up 2% to 1.94 million cars. Italian September registrations were flat, although the year to date total increased by 6.6% to 1.92 million cars. In France the monthly total was up by 3.2%, and the nine months by 0.3% to 1.52 million cars. Spanish registrations decreased by 7.7% in September and by 2% in the nine months to 1.22 million cars. Total registrations in ten of the new EU member countries increased by 9.5% in September, and by 15.5% in the nine months to 866 thousand cars.

Crude steel production in the rest of Europe was dominated by Turkey with September production up 4.2%, and the year to date increasing by 9.8% to 19 million tonnes. Steel production in Serbia and Montenegro was down 3.4% in the nine months to 1.3 million tonnes. Swiss production rose by 1.5% to 950 thousand tonnes.

Russian crude steel production in September was flat with the nine months total showing a 2.9% increase to 54.0 million tonnes. Ukrainian steel production rose by 4.7% in September and by 5.2% in the year to date to 31.9 million tonnes. Kazakhstan's nine months total increased by 12.7% to 3.6 million tonnes.

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On the North American continent US September crude steel production fell by 3%, bringing the year to date total to 73.3 million tonnes, a decrease of 3.6%. Canadian production was up 3% in September, while the year to date total increased by 4.2% to 12.2 million tonnes. Although Mexican steel production was down by 2.8% in September, the nine months total was up by 5.7% to 12.7 million tonnes.

US imports of steel in the first eight months of 2007 were 23% down on 2006 at 22.3 million tonnes. Imports of semis were 29% down at 4.2 million tonnes with hot rolled coil down 48% at 2.2 million tonnes. Most products showed a drop in imports; the one main exception was welded tubes which increased by 20% to 3.7 million tonnes. Most of the increase in welded tube imports was in line pipe, particularly the large diameter pipe over 406.4mm.

The two largest suppliers of steel to the USA were Canada at 4.2 million tonnes, and China at 3.3 million tonnes; both increased their exports to the USA compared to 2006. Exports from Mexico (2.1mt) and Brazil (1.6mt), however, both fell in 2007. These four countries accounted for 50% of US imports in 2007.

In South America Brazilian crude steel production increased by 4% in September, and by 9.8% in the year to date to 25 million tonnes. However, Argentinian production fell by 2.3% in September, bringing the nine months total down 8.2% to 3.9 million tonnes. Venezuelan crude steel production decreased by 10.6% in September, although the year to date total was only down 1.9% to 3.7 million tonnes.

In Africa and the Middle East, South African crude steel production was flat in September, bringing the year to date total to 6.8 million tonnes, a decrease of 5.8%. Iran is the largest producer in the region as it saw monthly steel production rise by 4.1% with the year to date up 1.3% to nearly 7.5 million tonnes. In Egypt year to date production rose by 9.2% to 4.9 million tonnes, while in Saudi Arabia, year to date production was up 6.3% to 3.3 million tonnes.

Imports of steel by the Middle East rose by 36% in the first six months of 2007 to 17.7 million tonnes compared to 2006. The largest importer was Iran which showed an increase of 90% to 5.5 million tonnes, accounting for 31% of the total in 2007. The United Arab Emirates reached 4 million tonnes, an increase of 48% on 2006, and Saudi Arabian imports were up 37% to 2.6 million tonnes. These 3 countries accounted for 68% of the total imported by the Middle East in 2007.

Semi-finished steel accounted for 36% of the steel imported by Iran in the first six months of 2007. Deformed reinforcing bars accounted for a further 17% with heavy sections (over 80mm) 14% of the total. Russia was Iran's main supplier at 2.3 million tonnes, 41% of the total, with China exporting 1.9 million tonnes, or 35%. However, in the case of the United Arab Emirates, deformed reinforcing bars were the largest import in 2007 at 1.5 million tonnes, 38% of the total, with heavy sections second at 0.5 million tonnes, or 12.6% of the total. Turkey accounted for 35% of total imports by the UAE with 1.4 million tonnes, followed by China at 1.1 million tonnes, 28% of the total.

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The five major Asian countries - China, India, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan - all showed an increase in steel production in both the month and the year to date except for India. Chinese production grew by 14.8% in September and by 16.7% in the year to date to 362.1 million tonnes, 37% of global steel production. Japanese production increased by 3.4% in the month, bringing the cumulative total up 3.8% to 89.3 million tonnes. In South Korea production rose by 0.5% in September, and by 5.8% in the nine months to 38.1 million tonnes. India's steel production was 6.9% higher in September, but the year to date total was down 2% to 35.8 million tonnes. Taiwanese production increased by 4% in September, and was up 2.6% in the year to date to 15.5 million tonnes.

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