

WORLD STEEL REVIEW

Iron & Steel Statistics Bureau, November 2009



Crude steel production in September for the 66 countries reporting to the IISI was 107.0 million tonnes, a drop of only 0.6% over September 2008. The total for the first nine months of 2009 was 866.0 million tonnes, 16.4% down on the previous year's January to September total. However, excluding China, the fall in the year to date production was 30.9% with the September total down by 17.6%. Global crude steel production for the full year may reach 1200 million tonnes, compared to 1326 million in 2008.

In the European Union crude steel production for the 27 countries decreased by 23.7% in September to 13.2 million tonnes, bringing the year to date total down 39.3% to 97.2 million tonnes. Production in the month compared to the previous September was negative in all countries except two: Slovakia and Luxembourg. Germany's production was down by 21.7%, while Italy's dropped by 30.8%. French production fell by 15.3% and in Spain it was down by 34.8%. The UK monthly total fell by 29%. On the other hand, Slovakian production rose by 29.2%, while in Luxembourg it was up 7.6%. The nine months totals were all negative compared to 2008 with German production down 37.5% to 22.6 million tonnes and Italy's down 41.7% to 14.0 million tonnes. Spanish production fell by 36.4% to 9.8 million tonnes, and French steel production was down 37.8% to 9.1 million tonnes. The UK nine months total dropped by 37.9% to 6.9 million tonnes. Polish year to date production was down 35.8% to 5.2 million tonnes.

European car registrations in the 28 countries monitored by ACEA rose by 6.3% in September 2009 compared to 2008, bringing the year to date total down by 6.6% to 10.9 million cars. In Germany registrations jumped by 21% in September, and the nine months total was up 26% to nearly 3 million cars. French registrations rose by 14% in the month, with the year to date total up 2.4% to 1.6 million cars. Italian September registrations were up by 6.8%, although the year to date total decreased by 5.9% to 1.6 million cars. In the UK the monthly total was up by 11.4%, while the nine months total fell by 15.5% to 1.5 million cars. Spanish registrations increased by 18% in September, but fell by 28.6% in the nine months to 677 thousand cars. Total registrations in ten of the new EU member countries decreased by 36.4% in September, and by 28.7% in the nine months to 636 thousand cars.

Crude steel production in the rest of Europe was dominated by Turkey where September production was only down by 1.8%, although the year to date total decreased by 13.5% to 18.5 million tonnes. Steel production in Serbia, however, was up by 75% in September, while the nine months total fell by 53% to 674 thousand tonnes. This was just ahead of the Swiss year to date total which fell by 38% to 672 thousand tonnes.

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Russian crude steel production in September fell by 20% with the nine months total down 26.8% to 41.7 million tonnes. Ukrainian steel production, however, showed a slight increase in September, although the year to date total decreased by 32% to 21.5 million tonnes. Kazakhstan's nine months total decreased by 19.6% to 2.8 million tonnes.

On the North American continent US September crude steel production fell by 31.4%, bringing the year to date total to 40 million tonnes, a drop of 47%. Canadian production was down 53% in September, and the year to date total decreased by 52% to 6 million tonnes. In Mexico monthly steel production was 18.5% down, while the nine months total fell by 30% to 10 million tonnes, just ahead of the Spanish and French totals.

In South America Brazilian crude steel production decreased by 13.7% in September, and by 31.7% in the year to date to 18.3 million tonnes. Argentinian production was down by 20% in September, bringing the nine months total to 2.8 million tonnes, a drop of 37%. However, in Venezuela monthly crude steel production fell by 30%, while the year to date total was down 16.2% to 2.7 million tonnes.

In Africa and the Middle East, South African crude steel production fell 24% in September, bringing the year to date total to 5.2 million tonnes, a decrease of 26%. Iranian monthly production actually rose by 4% with the year to date total up 11.8% to 8.2 million tonnes putting it ahead of the UK. In Egypt, however, year to date production fell by 16.6% to 4.1 million tonnes, while in Saudi Arabia, year to date production was down 6% to 3.5 million tonnes.

The five major Asian countries - China, India, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan □" showed very mixed results in steel production. Chinese production jumped by 28.7% in September, although the year to date total was only up by 7.5% to 420 million tonnes, 48.5% of global steel production. Japanese production, on the other hand, decreased by 18% in the month, bringing the cumulative total down 34% to 60.9 million tonnes. In South Korea production was down just 2.4% in September, and by 14.9% in the nine months to 35.1 million tonnes. India's steel production was flat in September, while the year to date total was up 1.6% to 41.7 million tonnes. Taiwanese production, however, decreased by 25% in September, and by 33% in the year to date to 10.6 million tonnes.

Chinese exports of steel in September reached their highest total in 2009 at 2.4 million tonnes, although this was only just over one third of the total in September 2008. There was a marked increase in the exports of hot rolled plate, reaching 407 thousand tonnes, the highest total since December. Just over half this monthly total went to South Korea with a further 18% going to Vietnam. China's next largest export in September was hot rolled wide strip, at 340 thousand tonnes, although this was down slightly on the August total. Both seamless and welded tubes showed a significant increase in exports, up 20% and 25% respectively on the August total. These four products accounted for just over half of Chinese steel exports in September.

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Japanese steel exports also increased to their highest level since March 2008, reaching 3.5 million tonnes in September. The largest exports in September were hot rolled wide strip (970kt), semis (690kt), CR (391kt), zinc coated steel (382kt) and hot rolled plate (359kt). These five products accounted for 80% of Japan's exports in September. Other Asian countries accounted for 86% of total exports in September with South Korea alone accounting for 29% of the total, and China a further 18%.

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