

WORLD STEEL REVIEW

Iron & Steel Statistics Bureau, November 2013



Crude steel production in September for the 65 countries reporting to the World Steel Association was 132.5 million tonnes, 6.1% above the total in September 2012. The total for the first nine months of 2013 was 1186 million tonnes, which was 2.7% higher than the previous year's January to September total. However, excluding China, the monthly increase was just 1.7% and the year to date production fell by 2%. Global crude steel production for the full year is estimated to be 1590 million tonnes, compared to 1547 million in 2012.

In the European Union crude steel production for the 27 countries increased by just 0.3% in September to 14.3 million tonnes bringing the year to date total down by 4.2% to 124 million tonnes. Germany's September production rose by 1.4%, while the year to date total was down 2.2% at just under 32 million tonnes. Italy's monthly production, however, fell by 10.4%, bringing the nine months total down 13.8% to 18 million tonnes. French production increased by 7.4% in September, while the year to date total fell by 1.3% to 11.9 million tonnes. In Spain the monthly total was up by 5.9%, although the year to date total fell by 2.5% to 10.4 million tonnes. The UK monthly total rose by 24%, and the nine months total also increased by 24% to 8.8 million tonnes. The Polish year to date total fell by 8.8% to 6.1 million tonnes.

European car registrations in the 28 countries monitored by ACEA increased by 5.5% in September 2013 compared to 2012, bringing the year to date total down by 4% to 9.3 million cars. In Germany registrations decreased by 1.2% in September, and by 6% in the nine months to 2.2 million cars. UK registrations, on the other hand, were 12% up in the month, with the year to date total up 10.8% to 1.8 million cars. In France the monthly total also rose by 3.4%, although the nine months total fell by 8.5% to 1.3 million cars. Italian registrations showed a drop of 2.9% in September, while the year to date total decreased by 8.3% to 1.0 million cars. Spain's monthly total jumped by 28.5% in September, while the nine months total fell by 1.6% to 546 thousand cars.

Crude steel production in the rest of Europe is dominated by Turkey where September production decreased by 1.2%, bringing the year to date total down 5% to 25.8 million tonnes, just ahead of the Ukraine and Brazil. Steel production in Bosnia was 1.5% up in the nine months to 535 thousand tonnes. Norwegian steel production was down by 14.3% in the year to date to 432 thousand tonnes.

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Russian crude steel production showed a drop of 6% in September, with the nine months total down by 3.1% to 51.8 million tonnes. Ukrainian steel production, however, increased by 2.7% in September, while the year to date total fell by 0.2% to 25 million tonnes. Kazakhstan's nine months total was down by 23% to 2.3 million tonnes. Belarus had a 12% decrease to 1.8 million tonnes in the nine months.

On the North American continent US September crude steel production increased by 6.3%, bringing the year to date total to 65 million tonnes, a drop of 4%. Canadian production, however, fell by 19.5% in September, and by 13.9% in the year to date to just under 9 million tonnes. In Mexico monthly steel production was 4.5% up, while the nine months total rose by 2.2% to 13.7 million tonnes. Production in Trinidad and Tobago reached 477 thousand tonnes in the year to date, up by 1.6%.

US imports of steel rose to 2.7 million tonnes in August 2013, the highest level since May 2012, and nearly 8% above the August 2012 total. The imports of semis, mostly slabs, rose to 605 thousand tonnes in August with welded tube imports reaching 408 thousand tonnes. Canada remains the largest supplier to the USA followed by Brazil, South Korea and Mexico. These four countries accounted for 55% of US imports in August.

In South America Brazilian crude steel production increased by 5.7% in September, although the year to date total was down 0.6% to just under 26 million tonnes. Argentinian production, however, rose by 16.8% in September, although the nine months total was still down by 1.2% to 3.8 million tonne. In Venezuela monthly crude steel production fell by 0.4%, while the year to date total was 1.7% down at 1.9 million tonnes. Steel production in Chile was 17% lower in the nine months at 1.1 million tonnes, while Colombian production also decreased by 17% to 838 thousand tonnes. Production in Peru rose by 10.5% in the year to date to 795 thousand tonnes.

In Africa and the Middle East, South African crude steel production rose by 1.1% in September, although the year to date total was 7.6% down at 5 million tonnes. On the other hand Egypt's production rose by 15.2% in September, bringing the year to date up 3% to 5.1 million tonnes. Iranian steel production increased by 10.7% in the month, while the year to date total was 4% higher at 11.3 million tonnes, not far below the French total. The Saudi Arabian nine months total rose by 7.4% to 4.1 million tonnes. Production in the UAE jumped by 25% in the year to date to 2.1 million tonnes.

The five major Asian countries - China, India, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan – all showed an increase in steel production except for South Korea. Chinese production rose by 11% in September, bringing the year to date total up by 8% to 587 million tonnes, 49.5% of global steel production. Japanese production increased by 5.5% in the month, while the cumulative total rose by 1.4% to 82 million tonnes. Indian steel production was 4.7% up in the month and 3% higher in the year to date at almost 60 million tonnes. South Korean production, on the other hand, fell by 8.7% in September and by 6.6% in the nine months to 49 million tonnes. However, Taiwanese steel production jumped by 32.7% in the month, and by 9.2% in the year to date to 17 million tonnes.

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Chinese exports of steel in August 2013 reached a peak of 6 million tonnes, the highest monthly total since September 2008, but then fell by 20% to 4.9 million tonnes in September. The increase in August was across several products, although rods and bars in coil showed a particularly large increase to 900 thousand tonnes, some 15% of the total steel exported, and hot rolled bars and flats also showed a significant increase to 800 thousand tonnes, 13% of the total. However, the pattern of Chinese exports by region has not changed significantly with Asia taking 54 to 56% of the total in both August and September. North and South America took 15% and 14% in August and September, respectively, with the Middle East taking 11% in both months. The European Union accounted for less than 6% of the total.

Chinese imports of steel, on the other hand, have remained much more stable at between 1.0 and 1.3 million tonnes per month over the last two years. However, imports of iron ore reached a peak of almost 75 million tonnes in September 2013, the highest monthly total ever. The previous record was 73 million tonnes in July 2013. Australia accounts for just over half the iron ore imported with Brazil at just under 20%. A further 9 countries supplied over one million tonnes in September 2013.

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