

WORLD STEEL REVIEW

Iron & Steel Statistics Bureau, June 2013



Production of crude steel for the 63 countries reporting to the World Steel Association in April was estimated to be 132.1 million tonnes, an increase of just 1.2% over April 2012. The total of the 4 months to date was 521 million tonnes, 1.9% above the January to April total in 2012. Excluding China, which accounted for almost 50% of world production in the first four months of 2013, steel production actually fell by 3.7% in both April and the four months. In fact steel production fell in both April and the year to date in every region if China is excluded.

In the European Union 27, crude steel production fell by 4.9% in April to 14.1 million tonnes compared to April 2012, and by 5.7% in the 4 months to date to 55 million tonnes. Most EU countries showed a drop in production in both April and the year to date with only Austria and the UK showing an increase in both. Monthly production in Germany fell by 0.9% in April, and by 0.5% in the January to April period to 14.4 million tonnes. Italian crude steel production, however, decreased by 11.6% in April, and 15.8% in the year to date to 8.3 million tonnes. Steel production in France fell by 12.3% in the month, and by 6.2% in the four months to date to 5.2 million tonnes. Spanish production, on the other hand, increased by 10.3% in April, although the year to date total was down by 1.5% to 4.9 million tonnes. In the UK, steel production actually rose by 37% in April, while the 4 months total was 41% higher at 3.7 million tonnes.

In the rest of Europe Turkish production decreased by 0.7% in April and by 4.6% in the four months to 11.4 million tonnes. The four months total for Norway was 212 thousand tonnes, 8.9% down on the previous year's total, while in Bosnia steel production was 17.5% up in the year to date at 249 thousand tonnes.

New car registrations in Europe rose by 1.8% in April compared to the previous April, according to ACEA, the European Car Manufacturers Association, while the four months total showed a decrease of 7% to less than 4.2 million cars. German registrations actually rose by 3.8% in April but fell by 8.5% in the year to date to 958 thousand cars. UK registrations increased by 14.8% in April, while the year to date total was 8.9% up at 769 thousand. French registrations, however, fell by 5.3% in April and were 12.3% down in the year to date at 592 thousand cars. Italian registrations were 10.8% down in April and 12.3% down in the four months to 472 thousand cars. The Spanish automotive market actually rose by 10.8% in the month, but fell by 6.7% in the January to April period to 243 thousand cars. These 5 countries accounted for 73% of the European market.

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Crude steel production in the CIS countries fell by 6.9% in April, with Russian production down by 4.3%. Ukrainian steel production, however, fell by 8.4%. This brought the year to date total for the CIS down by 4.9% with Russia's four month total also down 4.9% to 22.7 million tonnes. Ukrainian steel production decreased by 1.9% in the year to date to 11.1 million tonnes. In Kazakhstan steel production dropped by nearly 27% in the four months to one million tonnes.

On the North American continent US steel production fell by 7.3% in both April and the year to date, bringing the year to date total to 28.8 million tonnes. Mexican steel production decreased by 1.5% in April, while the four months total increased by 2.1% to 6.1 million tonnes. Canadian steel production only showed a slight fall in April but was 4.3% down in the year to date, bringing the total to 4.5 million tonnes.

Crude steel production in South America declined by 3% in April with Brazilian production down 1.6%. The year to date South American total was 5.2% lower at 15 million tonnes, of which Brazil was 11.3 million tonnes, a fall of 3.6% on 2012. Steel production in Argentina decreased by 10.6% in April, while the four months total was down 15.7% to 1.5 million tonnes. Venezuelan production, however, jumped by 25% in April, bringing the year to date total up 13% to 886 thousand tonnes. The Chilean four month total was 22.6% down at 443 thousand tonnes.

In Africa and the Middle East Iran's production fell by 2.5% in April, while the year to date total was down by 2.7% to 4.8 million tonnes. South African steel production, however, decreased by 15% in April, and by 12.3% in the four months to 2.2 million tonnes. Egyptian production fell by 9.1% in April, but was up 0.6% in the year to date to just over 2.2 million tonnes. Saudi Arabian steel production was 4.1% up in April and 1.5% up in the four months to 1.8 million tonnes. The Qatar year to date total increased by 3.5% to 765 thousand tonnes.

An analysis of countries in the MENA region shows that Saudi Arabia imported the most steel in 2012, some 8.1 million tonnes, up by 30% on 2011. The United Arab Emirates total fell by 5.5% in 2012 to 6.3 million tonnes, while the Iranian total fell by almost 35% to 5.6 million tonnes. Semis accounted for 22% of the total imported in 2012 with deformed reinforcing bars a close second at 21%; hot rolled wide coil accounted for a further 11%. Some 30% of Saudi Arabia's imports in 2012 were semis, while they accounted for nearly 37% of Iran's imports, but only 5% of UAE imports in 2012. Deformed reinforcing bars was the largest single product imported by the UAE, nearly 17% of the total, compared to just 8.5% in Saudi Arabia.

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Turning to the Far East, China's steel production increased by 6.8% in April, bringing the four months total up 8.4% to 258 million tonnes. Japanese crude steel production rose by just 1% in April, while the January to April total increased by 0.5% to 35.8 million tonnes. South Korean production fell by 6.3% in April with the year to date total down 4.8% at 22 million tonnes. In India production rose by 3.5% in April, bringing the four months total to 26.6 million tonnes, an increase of 3.8% over 2012. Crude steel production in Taiwan, however, fell by 10.3% in April, and the year to date total was 8.2% lower at 6.5 million tonnes.

Chinese exports in the first four months of 2013 were almost 20% above the 2012 total at 19.7 million tonnes. The April total was nearly 5.5 million tonnes, the highest monthly total since June 2010. Wire rod and hot rolled bars were China's largest exports in April, together accounting for 28% of total exports. Coated sheets accounted for a further 20% and tubes, pipes and fittings were 17% of total exports. 59% of Chinese exports of steel in April went to other Asian countries and a further 13% went to North and South America. Just 7% went to Africa.

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