

WORLD STEEL REVIEW

Iron & Steel Statistics Bureau, November 2010



Crude steel production in September for the 66 countries reporting to the World Steel Association was 111.7 million tonnes, an increase of only 0.9% over September 2009. The total for the first nine months of 2010 was 1045.9 million tonnes, 19.4% higher than the previous year's January to September total. However, excluding China, the increase in the year to date production was 25.5% with the September total up by 6.7%. Global crude steel production for the full year is estimated to be 1400 million tonnes, compared to 1206 million in 2009.

In the European Union crude steel production for the 27 countries increased by 3.7% in September to 14.3 million tonnes bringing the year to date total up 33% to 130 million tonnes. Germany's September production rose by 4.1%, while the year to date total was 45% up at 33 million tonnes. Italy's monthly production, however, was 20% up bringing the nine months total up 34% to 19.1 million tonnes. French production fell by 0.7% in September, but was 28% higher in the year to date at 11.6 million tonnes. In Spain the month total was 1.2% while the year to date increased by 22.4% to 12.5 million tonnes. The UK monthly total fell by 8.8%, although the nine months total was 8.5% up at 7.5 million tonnes. All the EU countries showed an increase in the year to date except for Greece where production fell by 10.5% compared to 2009. The Swedish nine months total was double what it was for the same period in 2009.

European car registrations in the 28 countries monitored by ACEA fell by 9.2% in September 2010 compared to 2009, bringing the year to date total down by 3.7% to 10.6 million cars. In Germany registrations dropped by 18% in September, and by 27.5% in the nine months to less than 2.2 million cars. French registrations were down by 8.2% in the month, with the year to date total slightly up at 1.66 million cars. Italian registrations also fared badly in September, down by 19%, although the year to date total only decreased by 4.4% to 1.5 million cars. In the UK the monthly total fell by 9%, while the nine months total actually increased by 7.8% to 1.64 million cars. Spanish registrations decreased by 27% in September, but were up by 16% in the nine months to 787 thousand cars.

For further information please contact: Phil Hunt Tel: +44 (0) 20 7343 3916 Fax: +44 (0) 020 7343 3903
e-mail: tradeadmin@issb.co.uk website: www.issb.co.uk or write to:
Publications Dept, Ref: SOTN, ISSB Limited, 1 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5DB, England

Crude steel production in the rest of Europe was dominated by Turkey where September production increased by 18%, bringing the year to date total up 12% to 20.9 million tonnes. Steel production in Serbia, however, only showed a slight increase in September, although the nine months total jumped by nearly 55% to 987 thousand tonnes. This was just ahead of the Swiss year to date total which rose by 44% to 966 thousand tonnes.

While Turkey's production has been rising this year exports have fallen compared to 2009. Steel exports in the first 8 months of 2010 were 10.5 million tonnes, 12% less than the total for the same period in 2009. The largest drop was in deformed reinforcing bars which fell from 6.4 million tonnes exported in January to August 2009 to 4.0 million tonnes in 2010. Exports of semis, however, rose from 1.3 million tonnes in 2009 to 2.4 million tonnes in 2010. Turkey's largest market is MENA which accounted for 62% of total exports in 2010. The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt were the three largest destination countries.

Russian crude steel production in September rose by 3.3% with the nine months total up 14% to 49.5 million tonnes. Ukrainian steel production, however, decreased by 12.3% in September, although the year to date total increased by 8.7% to 23.6 million tonnes. Kazakhstan's nine months total rose by 10% to 3.3 million tonnes.

On the North American continent US September crude steel production was up 15%, bringing the year to date total to 61 million tonnes, an increase of 50%. Canadian production rose by 29% in September, and by 56% in the year to date to 10 million tonnes. In Mexico monthly steel production was 28% up, while the nine months total rose by almost 26% to 12.5 million tonnes, just less than the Spanish total.

US steel exports rose by 45% to 7.9 million tonnes in the first 8 months of 2010 compared to 2009, while steel imports increased by 53% to 15.3 million tonnes. US exports mostly go to Canada and Mexico while those two countries only accounted for 40% of US imports; Asian countries accounted for a further 25% of US imports in 2010.

In South America Brazilian crude steel production decreased by 1.2% in September, but was 34% up in the year to date at 24.8 million tonnes. Argentinian production rose by 15.3% in September, bringing the nine months total to 3.8 million tonnes, an increase of 37%. However, in Venezuela monthly crude steel production fell by 36%, while the year to date total was down 56% to 1.4 million tonnes.

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In Africa and the Middle East, South African crude steel production rose by 5.7% in September, bringing the year to date total to 6.3 million tonnes, an increase of 17%. Iranian monthly production actually rose by 16.5% with the year to date total up 4% to 8.8 million tonnes. In Egypt September production rose by 13%, while the nine months total reached 4.7 million tonnes, an increase of 14.7%. However, in Saudi Arabia, the monthly total fell by 6.6% although the year to date production was up 9.4% to 3.8 million tonnes.

The five major Asian countries - China, India, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan – showed mixed results in steel production. Chinese production actually fell by 5.9% in September which was the fourth consecutive fall since May. However, the year to date total was still up by 12.7% to 475 million tonnes, 45.4% of global steel production. Japanese production, on the other hand, increased by 11.7% in the month, bringing the cumulative total up 34.5% to 81.9 million tonnes. In South Korea production rose by 3.2% in September, and by 20% in the nine months to 42 million tonnes. India's monthly steel production increased by 6.6%, while the year to date total was up 7.8% to 50 million tonnes. Taiwanese production increased by 9% in September, and by 33% in the year to date to 14.6 million tonnes.

Japan's exports of steel rose sharply in 2010 to 28.5 million tonnes, 47% up on the same period in 2009 and 9% higher than January to August 2008. 83% of total exports went to other Asian countries with South Korea alone accounting for 26% (7.4mt); China accounted for 17.4% (5mt) and Thailand 11.3% (3.2mt). Outside of the Asian countries, the USA took 950 thousand tonnes with Mexico a further 567 thousand tonnes. In terms of products, hot rolled coil exports at 7.7 million tonnes accounted for 27% of the total in 2010, with galvanised steel at 3.7 million tonnes, CR at 3.6 million tonnes and semis at 3.3 million tonnes.

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