Statistics

in focus

EXTERNAL TRADE

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European trade in transport equipment

In 2003, world trade in transport equipment was worth some 550 billion euros, or one-tenth of the overall trade figure. The European Union is the world's leading exporter of transport equipment and the second–largest importer after the USA. This sector of activity has a structural surplus, enabling the EU-25 to record a surplus of some 55 billion euros in 2003.

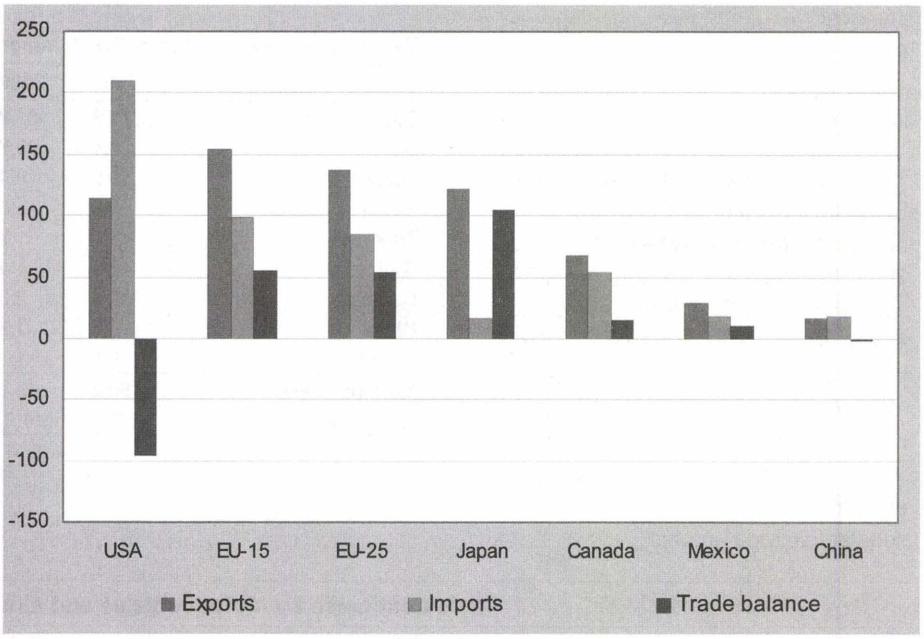

Figure 1 — The European Union and the other main players on the world market in transport equipment, 2003 (€ billion)

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The European Union: the world's leading exporter

With a figure approaching 140 billion euros, the EU-25 is the world's leading exporter of transport equipment. In 2003, 25% of all exports were of Community origin. Hot on the heels of the EU came Japan (23%) and the USA (21%), with Canada (13%) some way behind and Mexico (5%) and China (3%) well back. Between 1999 and 2003, the growth rate in European exports (8%) was more sustained than the world growth rate (5%). The export flows dipped slightly with the enlargement of the EU to 25 Member States due to the importance of intra-Community trade.

Large surplus in this sector for the EU

As the world's second-largest exporter but largest importer, the USA posts a large trade deficit for transport equipment (-95.3 billion euros in 2003). The European Union, as the world's second-largest importer but largest exporter with a flow of around 80 billion euros, recorded higher and higher surpluses up to 2002 (+58.8 billion euros - see Table 2). In 2003, the surplus was lower (+53.6 billion euros) because exports fell while imports continued to rise. Nonetheless, the transport equipment sector remains one of the EU's best performing sectors of activity in terms of trade in goods. In 2003, transport equipment accounted for 16% of the EU's exports and 9% of its imports.

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The USA: the EU's largest trading partner

In 2003, one third of Europe's exports of transport equipment went to the USA. The USA also supplied one third of the EU's imports. Its position as the EU's largest trading partner is undisputed, particularly in terms of exports, as just 6% of the equipment exported went to the next largest partner, Switzerland. By contrast, Japan is a serious competitor to the USA as a supplier to the EU: in 2003, 23% of European imports were of Japanese origin and these imports were 9% up on 2002 whereas imports from the USA had fallen (-14%). There is also a marked increase in imports from South Korea (+18%).

The trade balances recorded by the EU with its main partners are on a downward trend. Between 2002 and 2003, the trade surplus with the USA fell from +19.6 billion euros to +17.6 billion. Over the same period, the deficit widened with Japan (from -10.5 to -12.5 billion euros) and South Korea (from -4.2 to -5.7 billion euros). All in all, however, the transport equipment sector still produces a substantial trade surplus.

Table 1 a — Main destinations for EU-25 exports (€ billion)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	03/02	Share
Total	**102.5**	**127.8**	**137.4**	**140.8**	**137.6**	**-2%**	**100%**
USA	37.2	44.5	49.6	51.8	45.1	-13%	33%
Switzerland	9.9	9.9	9.7	8.2	8.7	7%	6%
Japan	5.8	7.2	6.6	7.1	6.6	-7%	5%
China	2.1	2.4	3.3	4.3	5.9	39%	4%
Turkey	2.9	6.1	2.4	2.8	4.6	63%	3%
Norway	3.1	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.3	-1%	3%
Russia	1.2	1.6	3.1	3.5	4.1	16%	3%
Canada	2.7	3.2	4.2	4.4	3.6	-19%	3%
Main partners	**64.9**	**78.8**	**83.0**	**86.5**	**79.4**	**-8%**	**58%**
(% of total exports)	(61%)	(59%)	(57%)	(58%)	(58%)		

Table 1 b — Main sources of EU-25 imports (€ billion)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	03/02	Share
Total	**73.8**	**81.9**	**81.3**	**82.0**	**84.0**	**2%**	**100%**
USA	28.4	29.7	30.3	32.2	27.5	-14%	33%
Japan	19.0	19.4	17.2	17.6	19.1	9%	23%
South Korea	5.0	5.5	4.9	6.0	7.1	18%	8%
Turkey	1.5	1.7	2.4	2.9	3.8	29%	5%
Switzerland	3.4	4.4	3.5	2.5	2.6	3%	3%
Canada	1.6	2.3	2.8	3.3	2.5	-25%	3%
China	0.8	1.3	1.6	1.5	2.0	39%	2%
Norway	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.7	35%	2%
Main partners	**60.4**	**65.4**	**64.0**	**67.3**	**64.6**	**-4%**	**77%**
(% of total imports)	(81%)	(79%)	(77%)	(80%)	(77%)		

Trade dominated by motor vehicles and aircraft

In 2003, cars and other land vehicles made up two thirds of Europe's exports of transport equipment and half of its imports. The aerospace sector also accounted for a substantial proportion: 22% of exports and 35% of imports. Most of the remaining flows fall to maritime or inland shipping products.

Trade in cars and other land vehicles is the source of the EU's substantial surplus for trade in transport equipment, the bulk of this being in cars designed for transporting fewer than ten people and, to a lesser extent, in car parts and accessories. Up until 2002, "maritime or inland shipping" was also in the black, mainly thanks to exports of vessels primarily designed for passenger transport (liners or cruise ships) and lei-

Table 2 — Extra-EU25 trade in transport equipment, by product (€ billion)

		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	03/02	Share
Exports		**102.5**	**127.8**	**137.4**	**140.8**	**137.6**	**-2%**	**100%**
86	Railway and tramway locomotives and rolling-stock	1.5	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.4	18%	2%
87	Cars and other land vehicles, parts and accessories	61.3	77.9	84.2	92.7	93.9	1%	68%
88	Aerospace	31.2	37.5	39.8	33.3	30.5	-8%	22%
89	Maritime or inland shipping	8.4	10.5	11.4	12.7	10.9	-15%	8%
Imports		**73.8**	**81.9**	**81.3**	**82.0**	**84.0**	**2%**	**100%**
86	Railway and tramway locomotives and rolling-stock	0.7	1.0	0.8	0.8	1.2	48%	1%
87	Cars and other land vehicles, parts and accessories	36.9	39.0	37.6	38.9	41.8	7%	50%
88	Aerospace	32.1	35.4	36.1	34.0	29.0	-15%	35%
89	Maritime or inland shipping	4.1	6.5	6.8	8.3	12.1	45%	14%
Trade balance		**28.7**	**46.0**	**56.1**	**58.8**	**52.6**		
86	Railway and tramway locomotives and rolling-stock	0.8	0.8	1.2	1.3	1.2		
87	Cars and other land vehicles, parts and accessories	24.4	38.9	46.6	53.8	52.1		
88	Aerospace	-0.9	2.1	3.7	-0.7	1.5		
89	Maritime or inland shipping	4.3	4.0	4.6	4.4	-1.2		

sure or sporting craft. On the other hand, aerospace-related trade is more evenly balanced on the whole, with the balance sometimes positive, sometimes negative between 1999 and 2003. Most of this trade is in aeroplanes of an unladen weight exceeding 2000 kg and plane parts other than propellers, rotors and undercarriages.

Whilst the other items have generally recorded sustained growth since 1999, exports and imports of aerospace products have fallen from their 2002 level. One other exception to the growth pattern is exports of maritime or inland shipping products which fell by 15% between 2002 and 2003.

Germany, France and the United Kingdom: the main players

In 2003, Germany, the United Kingdom and France between them accounted for 71% of the EU's exports and 54% of its imports:

- Germany is the main exporter with 40% of all exports, well ahead of France (20%) and the UK (11%).
- The UK is the largest importer, accounting for 20% of imports, closely followed by Germany (18%) and France (16%).

Most Member States record little in the way of extra-Community flows of transport equipment and their trade balances are close to zero. In 2003, only Germany (+39.5 billion euros), France (+14.4 billion euros) and, to a lesser extent, Sweden (+4.2 billion euros), Italy (+1.6 billion euros) and Spain (+1.4 billion euros) posted balances well in the black. The United Kingdom, on the other hand, was to be found in the category of those with slight deficits. The largest deficit in 2003 was recorded by Greece (-4.9 billion euros).

Table 3 — Member States' contributions to intra and extra-EU25 trade in 2003 (values in € billion and % shares)

	Extra-EU25 trade					Intra-EU25 trade				
	Exports		Imports		Bal.	Dispatches		Arrivals		Bal.
Belgium	4.6	3%	5.1	6%	-0.5	27.7	9%	22.1	7%	5.7
Czech Rep.	0.6	0%	0.7	1%	-0.1	6.5	2%	3.8	1%	2.7
Denmark	0.8	1%	1.3	2%	-0.5	1.7	1%	3.8	1%	-2.1
Germany	55.0	40%	15.5	18%	39.5	94.4	31%	55.4	19%	39.0
Estonia	0.0	0%	0.4	0%	-0.3	0.1	0%	0.5	0%	-0.3
Greece	0.2	0%	5.1	6%	-4.9	0.1	0%	2.8	1%	-2.7
Spain	5.7	4%	4.3	5%	1.4	30.3	10%	28.8	10%	1.5
France	27.6	20%	13.2	16%	14.4	56.7	19%	51.3	17%	5.4
Ireland	0.1	0%	1.1	1%	-1.0	0.4	0%	2.6	1%	-2.2
Italy	8.5	6%	6.9	8%	1.6	18.9	6%	29.9	10%	-10.9
Cyprus	0.0	0%	0.1	0%	-0.1	0.0	0%	0.2	0%	-0.2
Latvia	0.0	0%	0.1	0%	0.0	0.0	0%	0.4	0%	-0.4
Lithuania	0.4	0%	0.3	0%	0.1	0.5	0%	1.0	0%	-0.5
Luxembourg	0.1	0%	0.2	0%	-0.1	0.5	0%	1.4	0%	-0.8
Hungary	0.5	0%	0.7	1%	-0.2	2.8	1%	3.1	1%	-0.3
Malta	0.0	0%	0.1	0%	-0.1	0.0	0%	0.1	0%	-0.1
Netherlands	3.4	2%	3.8	4%	-0.4	11.1	4%	14.6	5%	-3.5
Austria	3.3	2%	2.5	3%	0.8	7.9	3%	10.0	3%	-2.1
Poland	1.6	1%	1.9	2%	-0.2	5.8	2%	6.1	2%	-0.3
Portugal	0.4	0%	0.8	1%	-0.4	3.9	1%	4.6	2%	-0.7
Slovenia	0.2	0%	0.2	0%	0.0	1.2	0%	1.3	0%	-0.1
Slovakia	1.3	1%	0.3	0%	1.0	4.3	1%	2.7	1%	1.6
Finland	1.7	1%	0.9	1%	0.8	1.8	1%	3.2	1%	-1.5
Sweden	6.4	5%	2.2	3%	4.2	7.2	2%	7.2	2%	0.0
United Kingdom	15.2	11%	16.5	20%	-1.3	20.5	7%	40.4	14%	-19.9

For the vast majority of the 25 Member States, trade in transport equipment is basically conducted on an intra-EU basis. Almost 70% of exports by the Member States are thus destined for the Community market and 80% of the transport equipment imported by these 25 countries comes from another Member State.

Although minor players in extra-EU trade, Spain, Italy and Belgium play a more significant role in trade between Member States. In so saying, Germany, France and the United Kingdom are still the main players, their joint figures making up 57% of intra-EU dispatches and 50% of intra-EU arrivals.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Statistical sources (data extracted on : : 25/01/2005)

- EU data : Eurostat
- Non-EU data : United Nations (Comtrade database)

Classification of products

Transport equipment encompasses chapters 86, 87, 88 and 89 of the Harmonised System.

Concepts and definitions

EU data are compiled according to Community guidelines and may therefore differ from the national data published by the Member States. For further information, please refer to the following documents:

- Statistics on the trading of goods – User guide
- Metadata available for the theme « External trade »

Further information:

Databases

EUROSTAT Website/External trade/External trade detailed data

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