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# UK Overseas Trade Statistics September 2016

## Summary

- Total trade exports for September 2016 were £25.5 billion. This was an increase of £2.2 billion (9.2 per cent) compared with last month and a decrease of 0.2 per cent compared with September 2015.
- Total trade imports for September 2016 were £45.6 billion. This was an increase of £4.3 billion (10 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £10.8 billion (31 per cent) compared with September 2015.
- The UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £20.0 billion.

Figure 1: Total UK monthly trade



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
Note: 2016 data is provisional

Years

— Total Imports — Total Exports — Trade Gap

## Trade Trends

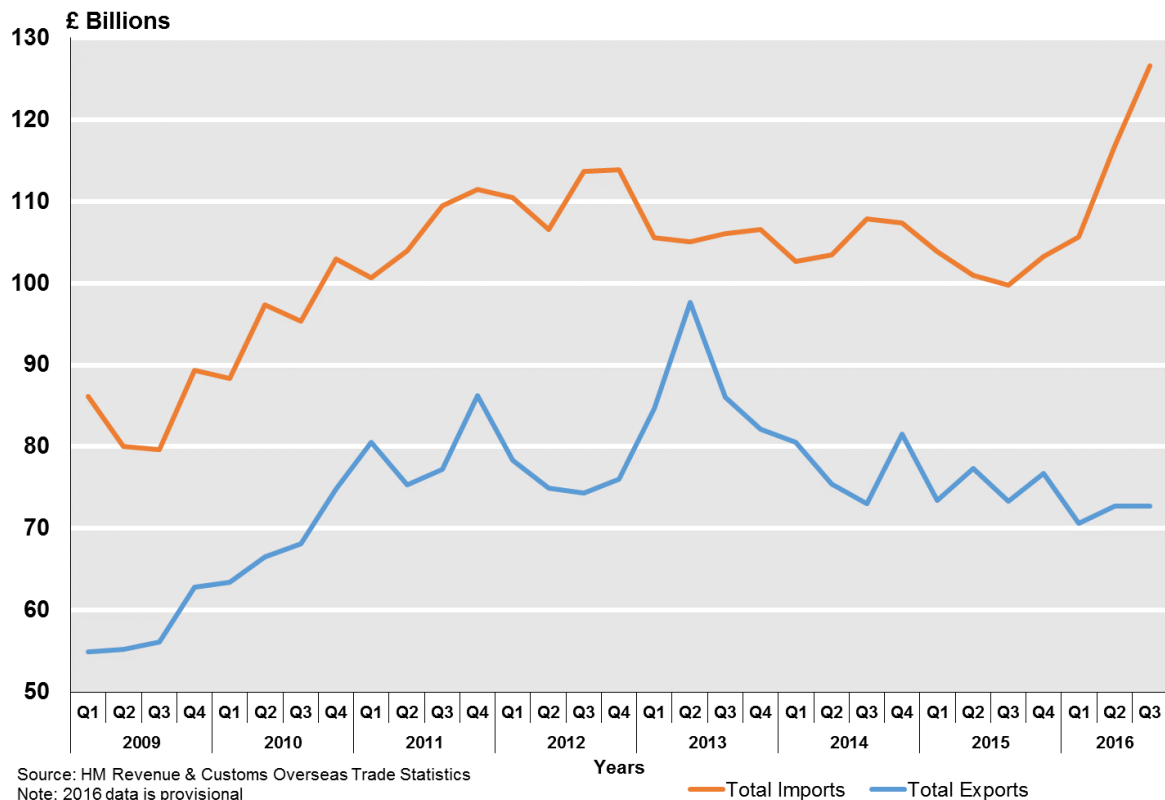
- Following the global economic crisis, UK trade dropped in 2009. Both imports and exports then steadily increased until 2012. From the start of 2013, imports remained relatively flat till a very sharp increase in Q3 of 2016, while exports peaked in Q2 of 2013.
- The total **export** trade for Q3 of 2016 was £72.7 billion, which was a decrease of 0.8 per cent compared with £73.3 billion for Q3 of 2015.
- The total **import** trade for Q3 of 2016 was £127 billion, which was an increase of 27 per cent compared with £99.8 billion for Q3 of 2015.
- There was a trade deficit of £53.9 billion for Q3 of 2016. This doubled on the £26.5 billion deficit for Q3 of 2015. These values were strongly influenced by trade in non-monetary gold.
- For many years Germany has been our largest trading **import** partner by value. The USA has been the dominant trading partner for **exports** for many years.
- Mechanical appliances and Motor vehicles have generally been the largest **import** commodities by value. For **exports**, Mechanical appliances has also predominantly been the largest valued commodity, with occasional peaks for Precious metals.

Exports down  
0.8% for Q3 2016  
on Q3 2015

Imports up 27%  
for Q3 2016 on  
Q3 2015

Trade deficit  
widened, doubled  
for Q3 2016 on Q3  
2015

Figure 2: Quarterly UK trade, 2009 – 2016



## Non-EU & EU Trade

- **Non-EU Exports** for September 2016 were £12.5 billion. This was an increase of £0.3 billion (2.2 per cent) on last month, and a decrease of £1.5 billion (11 per cent) compared with September 2015.
- **Non-EU Imports** for September 2016 were £23.6 billion. This was an increase of £1.1 billion (4.9 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £8.0 billion (51 per cent) compared with September 2015.
- In **Non-EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £11.1 billion.
- **EU Exports** for September 2016 were £13.0 billion. This was a increase of £1.9 billion (17 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £1.5 billion (13 per cent) compared with September 2015.
- **EU Imports** for September 2016 were £21.9 billion. This was a increase of £3.2 billion (17 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £2.8 billion (15 per cent) compared with September 2015.
- In **EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £8.9 billion.
- The proportion of total exports to the EU was 51 per cent in September 2016. Over the past 18 months, this has ranged from 38 per cent to 51 per cent. The proportion of total imports from the EU was 48 per cent in September 2016. Over the same period, this has ranged between 45 per cent and 56 per cent.

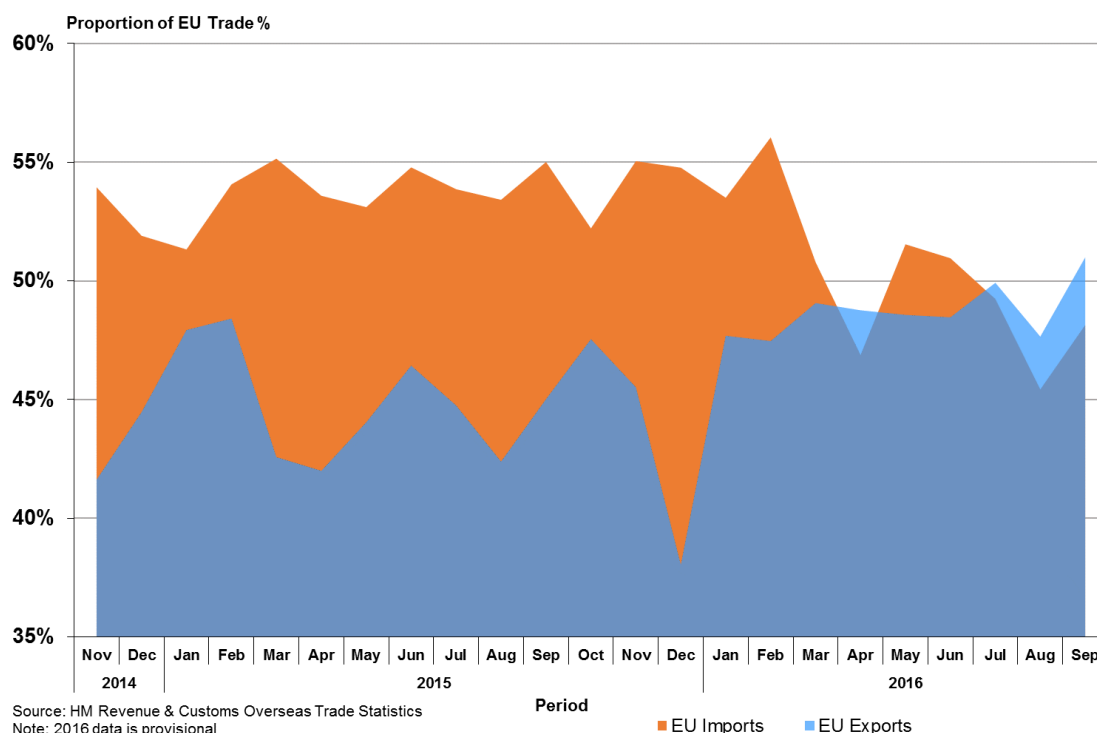
Non-EU exports  
down 11%  
on September  
2015

Non-EU  
imports up 51%  
on September  
2015

EU exports  
up 17% on last  
month

EU imports up  
17% on last month

**Figure 3: Proportion of Total UK Trade with the EU, September 2016**



# Exports

## Country Analysis

**Table 1: UK exports to top 10 partner countries, September 2016**

Partner Country	September 2016 Total (£ millions)	Change from August 2016 (%)	Change from September 2015 (%)	Rank August 2016	Rank September 2015
USA	3,805	9.8	-7.8	1	1
Germany	3,045	24.3	16.9	2	2
France	1,702	30.0	7.9	5	3
Netherlands	1,621	5.3	20.1	3	7
Irish Republic	1,494	9.0	-0.4	4	5
China	1,333	29.6	-13.5	6	4
Belgium	1,106	21.1	3.0	7	8
Italy	899	16.5	22.5	8	10
Spain	826	16.1	11.3	9	9
Hong Kong	511	13.3	22.6	12	13
Others	9,202	-1.9	-7.2	-	-
<b>Total Non-EU</b>	<b>12,518</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>-11.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>13,025</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>25,543</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2016 data is provisional

- The top ten export partner countries (ranked by value) has changed compared with last month, with France overtaking the Irish Republic and the Netherlands. Hong Kong has replaced the UAE in tenth place. The top 3 partners has not changed compared with September 2015.
- All of the top ten countries have experienced increases in value compared with last month. Only three countries showed a decrease compared with September 2015.
- The USA was the largest export partner country and experienced an increase compared with last month, up £338 million (9.8 per cent). It saw the second largest decrease compared with September 2015, down £321 million (7.8 per cent).

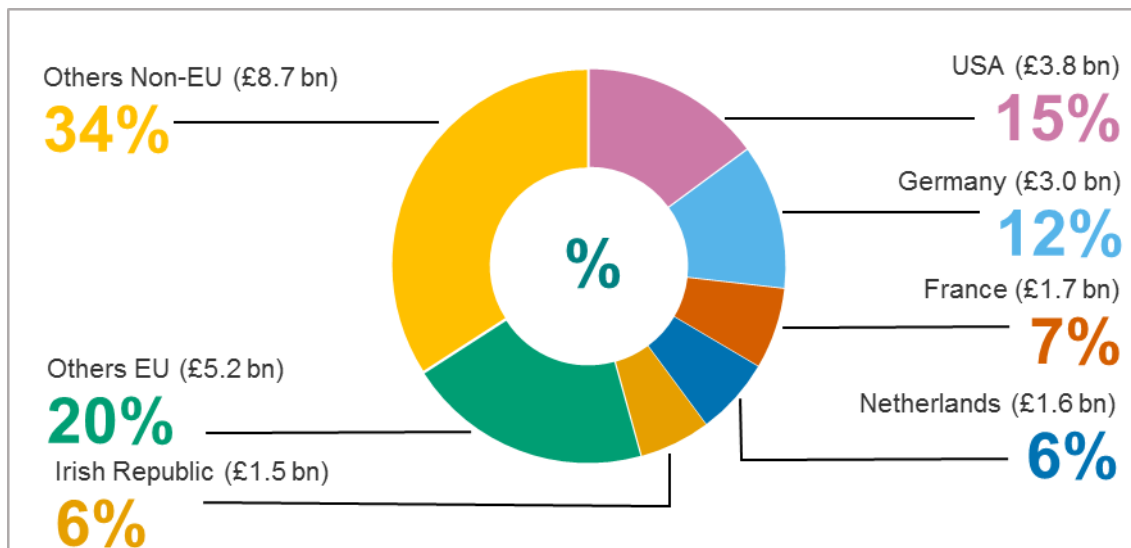
Top export country, USA, up 9.8% on last month

- Germany experienced the largest increases compared with both last month and September 2015, up £595 million (24 per cent) and £441 million (17 per cent) respectively.
- France experienced the second largest value increase compared with last month up £393 million (30 per cent).
- The Netherlands saw the second largest value increase compared with September 2015, up £271 million (20 per cent).
- South Korea experienced the largest value decrease compared with last month, falling by £183 million (44 per cent).
- Switzerland saw the largest value decrease compared with September 2015, a fall of £986 million (66 per cent). It fell out of the top ten export partner countries to eleventh place.

Exports to Germany up 24% on last month

Switzerland exports down 66% on September 2015

Figure 4: UK exports to top 5 countries, September 2016



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
 Note: 2016 data is provisional

- The USA accounted for 15 per cent of the total value of exports from the UK, consistent with last month.
- Germany has the second largest proportion of total exports, accounting for 12 per cent, up from 10 per cent compared with last month.
- The top five export partners accounted for 46 per cent of total exports this month compared with 44 per cent in September 2015.

The USA accounted for 15% of total UK exports

## Commodity Analysis

**Table 2: UK exports by top 5 commodities, September 2016**

Commodity Description	September 2016 Total (£ millions)	Change from August 2016 (%)	Change from September 2015 (%)	Rank August 2016	Rank September 2015
Mechanical appliances	3,982	16.0	13.1	1	1
Motor vehicles	3,336	46.6	18.1	2	3
Pharmaceutical products	2,120	5.9	-1.5	3	4
Electronic equipment	1,812	10.9	12.4	5	5
Mineral fuels	1,707	-1.3	13.4	4	6
Others	12,587	2.2	-9.9	-	-
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>25,543</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2016 data is provisional

- The ordering of the top five export commodities (ranked by value) has changed compared with both last month and September 2015. Most notably, Precious metals fell to seventh from second place in September 2015.
- Mechanical appliances was the largest export commodity by value, accounting for 16 per cent of total exports. This commodity experienced the second largest value increases compared with both last month and September 2015, up £550 million (16 per cent) and £462 million (13 per cent) respectively.
- Motor vehicles saw the largest value increases compared with both last month and September 2015, with rises of £1,060 million (47 per cent) and £512 million (18 per cent) respectively.
- Precious metals saw the largest value decrease compared with September 2015, down £1,816 million (62 per cent). The commodity saw the second largest value decrease compared with last month, falling by £112 million (9.3 per cent).
- Ships, boats and floating structures saw the largest value decrease compared with last month, down £211 million (85 per cent).
- Organic chemicals saw the second largest value decrease compared with September 2015, down £537 million (46 per cent).
- The top five export commodities accounted for 51 per cent of total UK trade exports which is the same compared with September 2015.

Exports of Mechanical appliances up 16% on last month

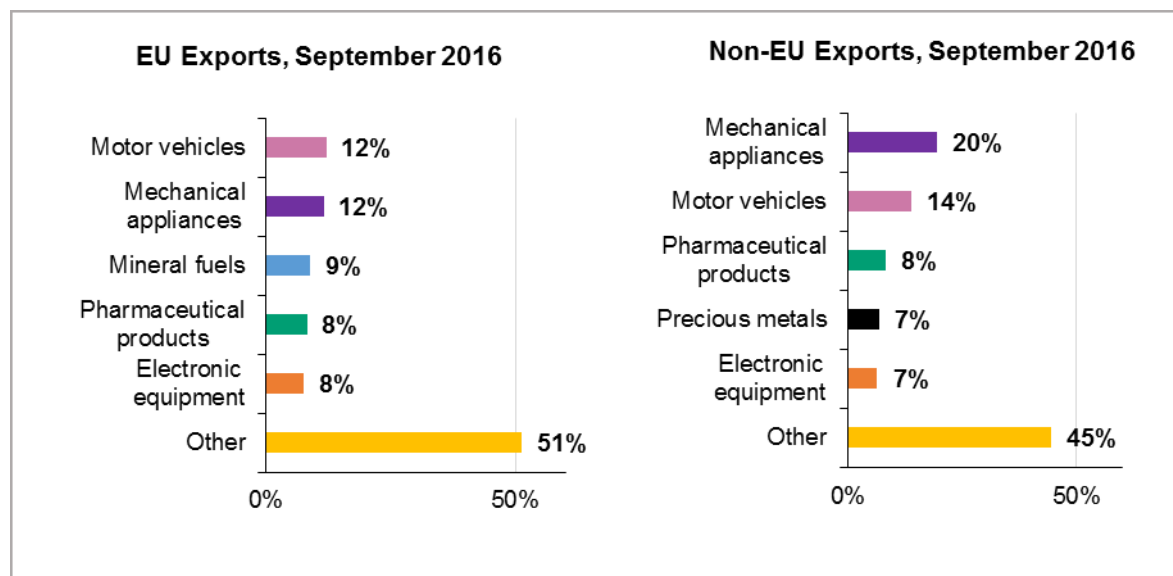
Exports of Motor vehicles up 47% on last month

Exports of Precious metals down 62% on September 2015

Organic chemicals exports down 46% on September 2015

## Combined Commodity and Country Analysis

Figure 5: UK exports to EU & Non-EU by top 5 commodities, September 2016



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
 Note: 2016 data is provisional

- Mechanical appliances, Motor vehicles, Pharmaceutical products and Electronic equipment were in the top five export commodities for both EU and non-EU countries.
- The increase in exports of Mechanical appliances was led by increases to the USA and Germany compared with last month, up £92.8 million (18 per cent) and £87.0 million (28 per cent) respectively. Exports of the commodity also saw large increases to Hong Kong compared with September 2015, up £82.3 million (a twofold increase).
- The increase in exports of Motor vehicles compared with last month was led by an increase to the USA and Germany. This rose by £273 million (61 per cent), and £134 million (61 per cent) respectively.
- The increase in exports to France compared with last month was led by a rise in both Aircraft and Motor vehicles, up by £70.2 million (29 per cent) and £62.7 million (77 per cent) respectively.
- The decrease in exports of Precious metals compared with both last month and September 2015 was led by decreases to Switzerland, down £92.8 million (35 per cent) and £953 million (85 per cent) respectively. Exports of the commodity also saw a large decrease to China compared with September 2015, down £606 million (69 per cent).

Exports of Mechanical appliances to Hong Kong up twofold on September 2015

Exports to USA of Motor vehicles up 61% on last month

Exports of Precious metals to Switzerland down 85% on September 2015

# Imports

## Country Analysis

**Table 3: UK imports from top 10 countries, September 2016**

Partner Country	September 2016 Total (£ millions)	Change from August 2016 (%)	Change from September 2015 (%)	Rank August 2016	Rank September 2015
Germany	6,072	17.9	14.5	1	1
China	4,099	20.9	26.2	4	2
USA	3,638	-17.4	24.5	2	3
Netherlands	3,251	11.4	29.8	5	4
Switzerland	2,686	-22.2	448.7	3	17
Belgium	2,259	19.1	18.6	6	6
France	2,124	13.9	2.1	7	5
Hong Kong	1,652	180.1	226.5	18	15
Italy	1,482	14.8	7.4	8	7
Spain	1,427	30.6	17.4	9	8
Others	16,882	10.8	28.0	-	-
<b>Total Non-EU</b>	<b>23,635</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>51.2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>21,938</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>45,573</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2016 data is provisional

- The ordering of the top ten import partners (ranked by value) has changed compared with both last month and September 2015. Most notably, Hong Kong has risen to eighth place.
- Eight of the top ten import partners increased in value compared with last month, and all ten increased in value compared with September 2015.
- Germany remained the top import partner country with increases of £922 million (18 per cent) compared with last month, and £768 million (14 per cent) compared with September 2015.
- Hong Kong saw the largest value increase compared with last month, up £1,063 million (a twofold increase). Hong Kong also saw the second largest increase compared with September 2015, up £1,146 million (also a twofold increase).

Top import country Germany up 18% on last month

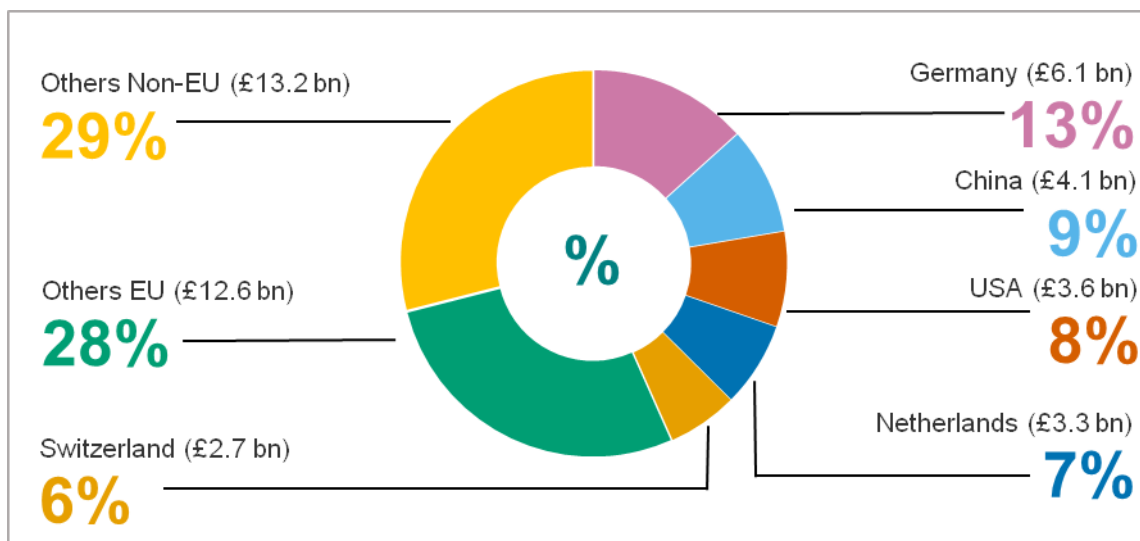


- Switzerland saw the largest value increase compared with September 2015, up £2,197 million (a fourfold increase). However, Switzerland had the second largest decrease compared with last month, down £767 million (22 per cent).
- The USA experienced the largest value decrease compared with last month, down £767 million (17 per cent).
- Algeria saw the largest value decrease compared with September 2015, down by £62 million (49 per cent).

Imports from Switzerland up fourfold on September 2015

Imports from the USA down 17% on last month

**Figure 6: UK imports from top 5 countries, September 2016**



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
 Note: 2016 data is provisional

- Germany accounted for 13 per cent of the total value of imports to the UK compared with 15 per cent in September 2015.
- The USA accounted for 8 per cent of total imports, a slight decrease in market share compared with September 2015.
- The top five partner countries accounted for 43 per cent of total UK import value this month, compared with 46 per cent for September 2015.

Germany accounted for 13% of total UK imports

## Commodity Analysis

**Table 4: UK imports by top 5 commodities, September 2016**

Commodity Description	September 2016 Total (£ millions)	Change from August 2016 (%)	Change from September 2015 (%)	Rank August 2016	Rank September 2015
Precious metals	6,957	1.6	328.1	1	6
Motor vehicles	5,328	29.1	13.9	3	1
Mechanical appliances	4,844	6.1	14.8	2	2
Electronic equipment	3,999	19.5	17.2	4	3
Mineral fuels	2,669	18.7	6.1	5	4
Others	21,775	8.1	19.1	-	-
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>45,573</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
Note: 2016 data is provisional

- All of the top five commodity groups increased in import value compared with last month. The ordering of the top five commodity groups has changed slightly compared with both last month and September 2015.
- Precious metals remained the top import commodity by value, accounting for a 15 per cent share of the total. The commodity experienced an increase of £107 million (1.6 per cent) compared with last month, but the biggest increase compared with September 2015, up £5,332 million (a threefold increase).
- Motor vehicles experienced the largest increase by value compared with last month, up £1,201 million (29 per cent). It also showed an increase compared with September 2015, up £649 million (14 per cent).
- Aircraft experienced the largest decrease by value compared with last month, down £463 million (28 per cent). However, it saw a large increase compared with September 2015, up £292 million (31 per cent).
- Electronic equipment saw large value increases compared with both last month and September 2015, up £653 million (20 per cent) and £587 million (17 per cent) respectively.
- The top five import commodities accounted for 52 per cent of total UK trade imports for this month, compared with 48 per cent for September 2015.

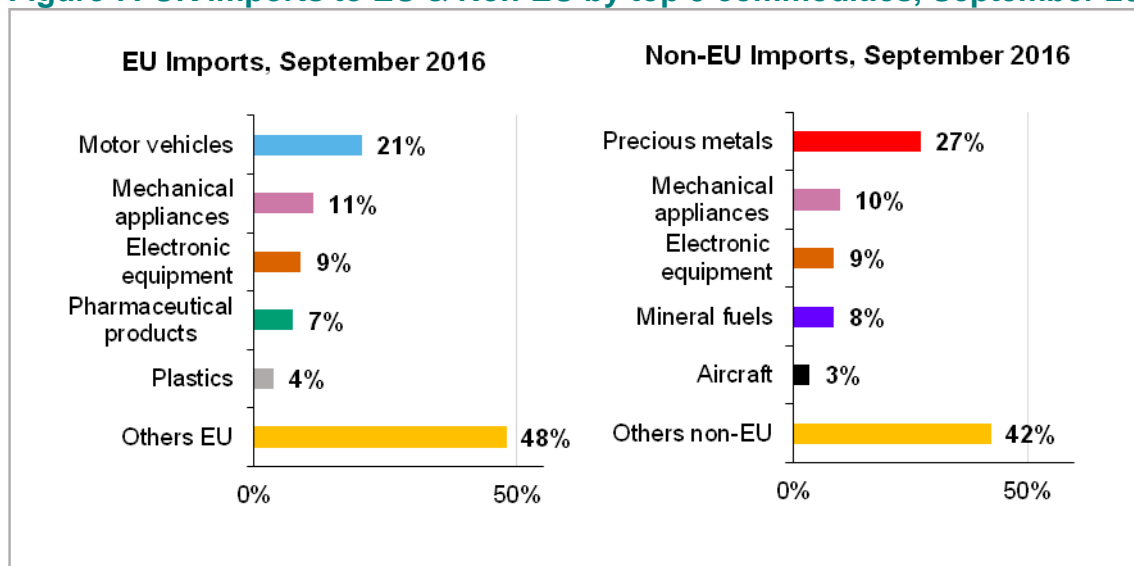
Top import commodity, Precious metals, up threefold on September 2015

Imports of Motor vehicles up 29% on last month

Aircraft imports down 28% on last month

## Combined Commodity and Country Analysis

Figure 7: UK imports to EU & Non-EU by top 5 commodities, September 2016



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade  
 Statistics Note: 2016 data is provisional

- Mechanical appliances and Electronic equipment were in the top five import commodities from both EU and non-EU countries.
- The rise in imports of Precious metals compared with last month was dominated by an increase of £977 million from Hong Kong (up from £72 million). The increase in imports of the commodity compared with September 2015 was led by rises from Switzerland and Hong Kong, up £1,962 million (up from £50 million) and £1,028 million (up from £21 million) respectively.
- The increase in imports of Motor vehicles compared with last month was led by rises from Germany, up £395 million (25 per cent) and Belgium, up £216 million (42 per cent). Germany and Belgium also led the increases compared with September 2015, up £158 million (8.6 per cent) and £118 million (19 per cent) respectively.
- The increase in imports of Electronic equipment compared with both last month and September 2015 was led by increases from China, up £302 million (50 per cent) and £239 million (36 per cent) respectively.
- The fall in imports of Aircraft compared with last month was led by a decrease of £710 million (53 per cent) from the USA. In contrast, imports of the commodity saw an increase from Spain compared with September 2015, up £119 million (doubling in value).

Imports of Precious metals from Hong Kong up thirteenfold on last month

Imports of Motor vehicles from Germany up 25% on last month

Imports of Aircraft from the USA down 53% on last month

## Annex I – Metadata

You can access the data behind this bulletin through our [uktradeinfo web site](#).

- Detailed Trade Statistics data at 8-digit commodity code level is available in our [interactive database](#).
- Aggregate OTS data is available in [pre-prepared Excel tables](#).
- Non-Monetary Gold (NMG) can form a substantial part of the non-EU Overseas Trade Statistics (OTS). For further information, see [Inclusion of Non-Monetary Gold in OTS](#). Data relating to monthly non-EU and EU import and export totals for January 2008 onwards with a breakdown of non-monetary gold and other trade is available in an [OTS time series spreadsheet](#).
- You can find details of how users interested in import and export markets for specific goods make use of the detailed OTS data in '[The User Story](#)'.

## Annex II – Methodological Notes

1. HM Revenue & Customs released these latest statistics on Overseas Trade with countries on 09 November 2016 under arrangements set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). The first release is published on HMRC's trade data website [www.uktradeinfo.com](http://www.uktradeinfo.com).
2. This release includes the first provisional estimates of trade-in-goods between the UK and both countries of the EU and those outside the EU for September 2016. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU and EU data for 2016 are also being released in line with the [HM Revenue & Customs Policy on Revisions](#).
3. The **EU figures** provided in this publication of the September 2016 Overseas Trade Statistics are collected from the Intrastat survey. They will include:
  - a. Estimates for businesses who have yet to submit detailed data on the trade they had with other EU Member States this month.
  - b. Estimates for businesses who do not have to submit detailed data on the trade they have with other EU Member States
  - c. An adjustment for trade associated with Missing Trader Intra Community fraud. More details of this can be found [here](#).

Estimates are included in all high level totals including commodity (HS2) and country totals.

4. The **Non-EU figures** provided in this publication of the September 2016 Overseas Trade Statistics are presented by customs declarations and collected by the CHIEF (Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight) system.
5. Detailed trade information is presented according to the [Harmonised System \(HS\)](#) nomenclature.
6. The aggregate estimates here will differ slightly from those that are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as part of the Balance of Payments (BoP), as the two sets of data are compiled to different sets of rules. The ONS web site provides an overview of BoP at the [Guide to UK Trade](#) as well as the detailed monthly [UK Trade Releases](#). The BoP publication shows a high level picture of UK trade-in-goods, whereas the OTS publication shows a detailed picture of the UK's trade-in-goods by commodity and partner country. [uktradeinfo.com](#) provides more detail about the [differences between BoP and OTS publications](#).

7. The aggregate estimates here will differ from the Eurostat publication [Euro area external trade](#). The OTS was published up until the May 2016 month of account as 'general trade' based upon goods recorded as they enter or leave the UK. This will include goods imported into and exported from a freezone or customs warehouse, regardless of their future use. The Eurostat EU external trade data are published as 'Special Trade' where goods are recorded as trade only when they enter free circulation or are declared to specific Customs regimes such as Inward Processing (IP) or Processing under Customs Control (PCC). Imports from a free zone or customs warehouse are similarly recorded in 'Special Trade'.
8. HMRC publishes [additional information](#) to help support users of non-EU data. Information to help support users of the EU Overseas Trade Statistics can be found [here](#). This includes links to our policies on revision and suppression of data, descriptions of the methodology used to compile the OTS and information on the quality of the data published.
9. From the May 2016 month of account, there was a methodological change to the way our trade-in-goods statistics are compiled. Following a change in legislation, trade-in-goods statistics switched from the 'general trade' system of compilation to the 'special trade' system. More information can be found [here](#).
10. The OTS has been reviewed as part of an assessment made of Overseas Trade Statistics by the [UK Statistics Authority](#). The report of that assessment can be found at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-93---uk-trade-in-goods.pdf>.
11. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:
  - meet identified user needs;
  - are well explained and readily accessible;
  - are produced according to sound methods; and
  - are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

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