

Non-EU Overseas Trade Statistics - April 2012

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Summary

- UK's non-EU exports have decreased by £2.4 billion (17.5 per cent) compared to March 2012, to £11.1 billion. Compared to April 2011 exports have increased by £0.2 billion (2.2 per cent).
- UK's non-EU imports have decreased by £0.5 billion (2.8 per cent) compared to March 2012, to £16.5 billion. Compared to April 2011, imports have increased by £1.0 billion (6.7 per cent).
- The monthly export figures return to levels seen at the start of this year. The March 2012 figure was the highest value since the OTS was first published separately for non-EU countries in 1993.
- The UK remains a net importer (imports are greater than exports). The size of the difference between imports and exports has increased by 53.0 per cent compared to March 2012, and has increased from April 2011 by 17.4 per cent.



HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) are responsible for collecting the UK's international trade in goods data, which are published as two National Statistics series - the 'Overseas Trade Statistics (OTS)' and the 'Regional Trade Statistics (RTS)'. The OTS are published monthly, providing detailed data for over 9,000 commodities and 200 partner countries. The RTS are published quarterly showing trade at summary product and country level, split by UK regions.

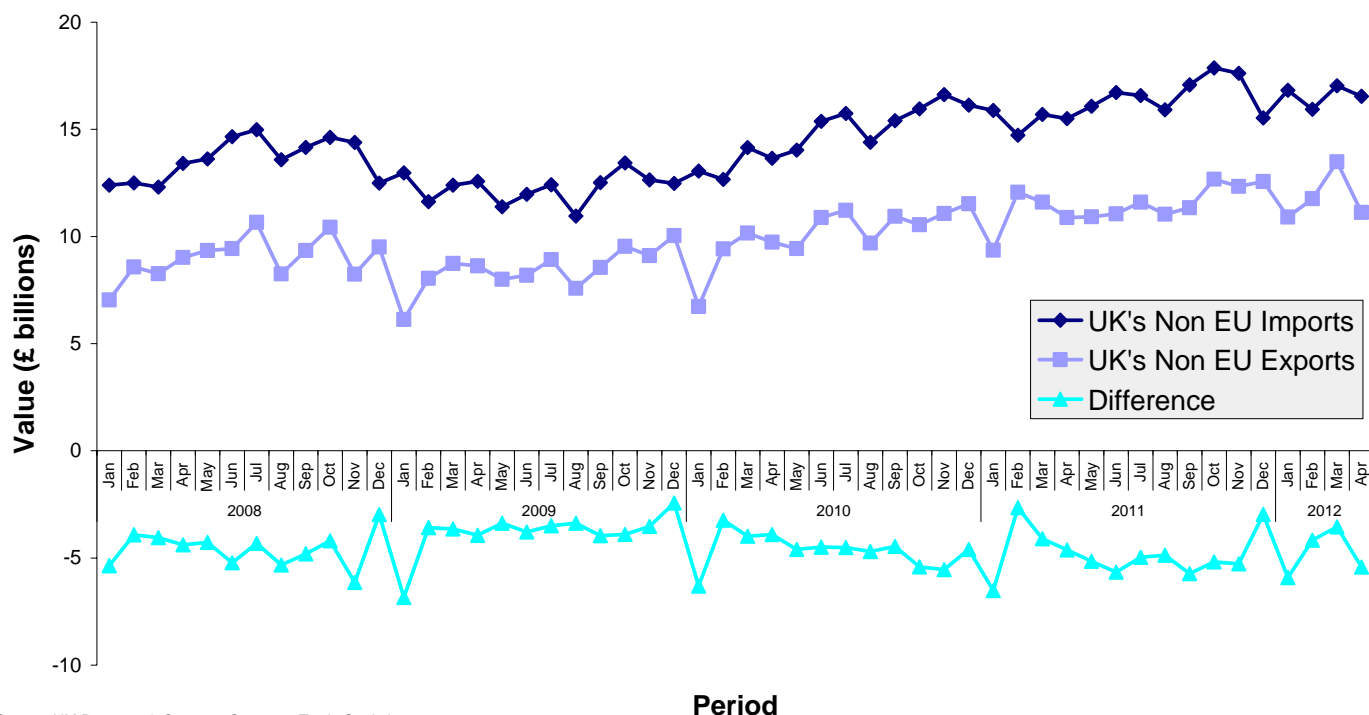
You can find details of how users interested in import and export markets for specific goods make use of the detailed OTS data in '[The Customer Story](#)'. You can also access the detailed data in our interactive database [here](#).

Key Points

For the month of April 2012:

The value of imports and exports both decreased in April 2012, with the value of exports falling more than the value of imports. This has increased the difference between non-EU imports and exports. After last month's record high for the monthly export figures, the return to levels seen at the start of the year has resulted in the largest monthly decrease in exports since January 2010.

Fig. 1: Total Monthly UK Trade with Non EU Countries



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
 Note: 2011 and 2012 data are provisional

Exports

- UK's non-EU exports have decreased by £2.4 billion (17.5 per cent) compared to March 2012, to £11.1 billion. Compared to April 2011, exports have increased by £0.2 billion (2.2 per cent). This is a return to levels seen earlier in the year after last month's record high for exports
- The top five commodities have not changed from last month. However, trade with all of them has reduced. There has been a reduction in export value in over three quarters of commodity chapters since last month.
- The largest contributing commodity group remains HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof). It contributed £2.1 billion, 19.2 per cent of the total value of UK's non-EU export trade.
- The largest value decrease from the previous month was £363.4 million in HS2 87 (Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof), a decrease of 23.1 per cent. In comparison, the largest increase from the previous month was just £73.5 million in HS2 97 (Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques), an increase of 23.0 per cent.
- USA remains the non-EU country for which the value of UK exports is largest, accounting for 28.5 per cent of the total value of UK's non-EU export trade. The USA had the largest decrease, compared to March 2012, in the value of exports by £661.1 million, 17.3 per cent. The largest increase in exports compared to March 2012 was to South Korea which increased by £116.1 million, 31.1 per cent.
- The total 2012 year to date value of UK's goods exported to non-EU countries excluding April 2012 is £36.1 billion, which has been downwardly revised by £14.6 million. This is a decrease of less than 0.1 per cent.

Imports

- The value of the UK's non-EU imports has decreased by £0.5 billion (2.8 per cent) compared to March 2012, to £16.5 billion. Compared to April 2011 imports have increased by £1.0 billion (6.7 per cent).
- The top five commodities remain the similar to the previous month. The largest contributing commodity group remains HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes), contributing £4.1 billion, 24.7 per cent of the total value of non-EU imports to the UK.
- The largest value decrease from the previous month was £310.3 million in HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof) a fall of 18.8 per cent. The largest increase at HS2 level from the previous month was in HS2 29 (Organic chemicals) with an increase of £104.8 million, 46.4 per cent.
- USA is the non-EU country for which the value of UK imports is largest for April 2012, accounting for 16.2 per cent of the total value of UK's non-EU import trade. The largest increase in value of imports to the UK compared to March 2012 was from China, a rise of £363.3 million, 19.0 per cent. The largest decrease in imports compared to March 2012 was from the USA which decreased by £195.6 million, 6.8 per cent.
- The total 2012 year to date value of UK's trade-in-goods imported from non-EU countries excluding April 2012 is £49.7 billion, which has been downwardly revised by £80.0 million. This is a decrease of 0.2 per cent.

Further Analysis: Exports

Table 1 shows a comparison of the top five commodities exported to countries outside the EU for April 2011, March 2012 and April 2012.

HS 2	Description	April 2012 Total £ millions	% Change from March 2012	% Change from April 2011	% of Total April 2012 Exports	Rank March 2012	Rank April 2011
-	Total Exports	11,120.9	-17.5	2.2	100.0	n/a	n/a
84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	2,135.3	-13.0	7.7	19.2	1	1
87	Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof	1,207.7	-23.1	-1.5	10.9	2	2
27	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes	965.1	-10.1	-10.2	8.7	3	3
30	Pharmaceutical products	832.0	-19.6	2.2	7.5	4	4
85	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers, and parts and accessories of such articles	746.0	-19.1	-0.7	6.7	5	5

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

The overall decrease in exports **compared to March 2012** reflects decreases in a little over three quarters of HS2 chapters. All of the top five commodity types experienced decreases in excess of £100 million, totalling £1.2 billion, which accounted for just under half of the total net decrease in export trade.

Five HS2 chapters had decreases of over £200 million with another four having decreases over £100 million. The largest decrease was for HS2 87, down by £363.4 million, a decrease of 23.1 per cent. This is the lowest export value for this commodity type since August 2011 coming after the highest value in recent years in March 2012. Within this chapter, there were decreases in over two thirds of HS4 level commodity types, with the largest decrease being HS4 8703 (Motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of persons, incl. station wagons and racing cars), down £337.0 million, 27.8 per cent. The corresponding decrease in net mass suggests the value of trade decrease is due to a drop in the volume of export trade rather than unit cost price.

The second largest value decrease from the previous month, of £318.7 million, was in HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof). This is a 13.0 per cent decrease compared to March 2012, which had been the highest monthly export value in recent years. The largest contribution to this chapter was £803.6 million from HS4 8411 (Turbo-jets, Turbo-propellers and other gas turbines). Within HS84 it was also HS4 8411 which saw the largest decrease compared with March 2012 of £167.5 million, 17.2 per cent.

In comparison the largest increase since last month was only £73.5 million in HS2 97 (Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques), an increase of 23.0 per cent, driven by increases of £30.3 million in paintings within HS4 9701, and £36.5 million in sculptures within HS4 9703.

There was no other chapter for which the value of exports increased by more than £10 million.

The total export trade value has increased by £0.2 billion (2.2 per cent) **compared to April 2011**. Just over half of HS2 chapters increased with three HS2 chapters showing an increase of over £100 million, and only one with a decrease of over £100 million. The largest increases in the value of exports were in HS2 84 (up by £151.9 million), HS2 97 (up by £109.3 million) and HS2 88 (Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof) up by £108.4 million. The largest decrease was in HS2 27 (down by £109.4 million).

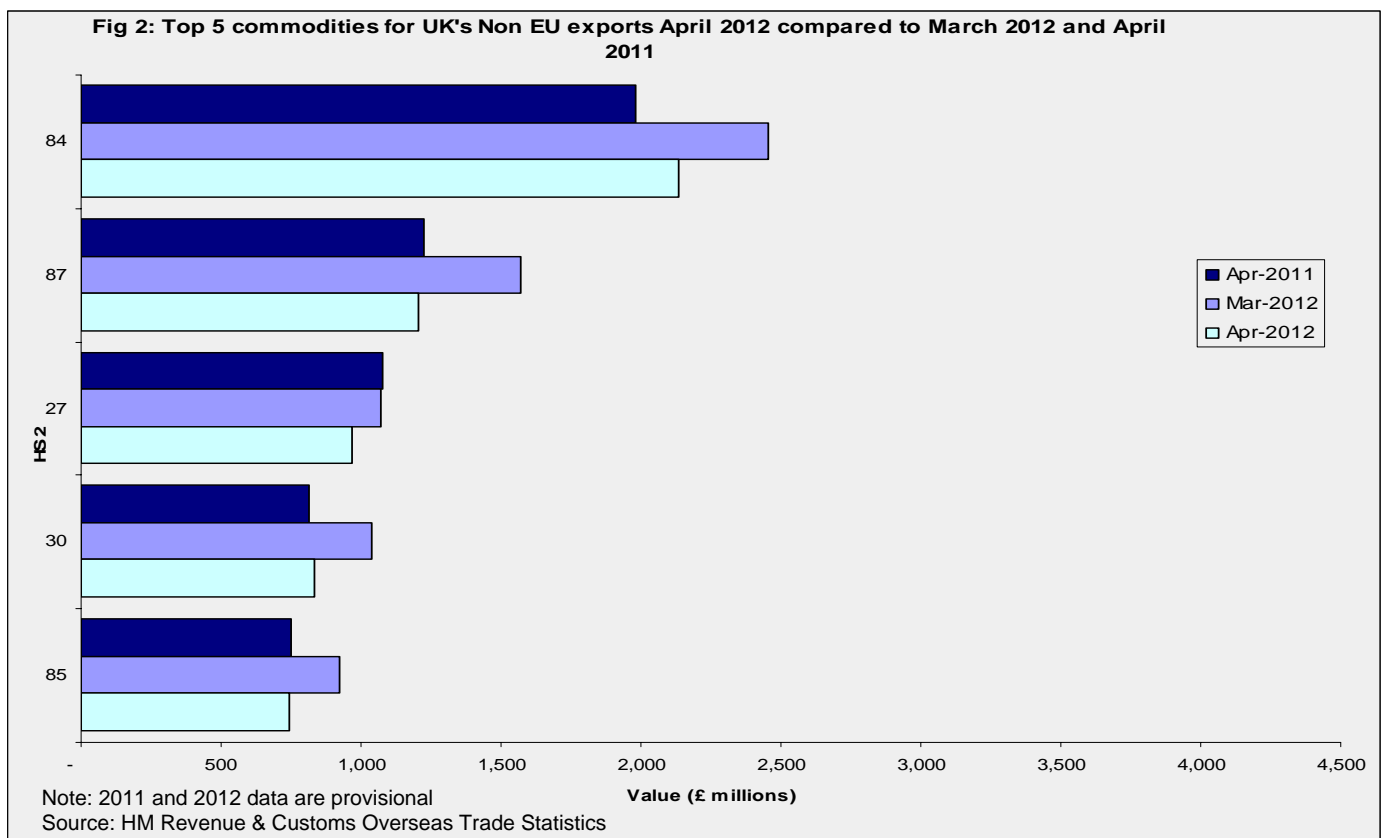


Figure 2 above shows the top five commodities for UK's non-EU exports in April 2012, compared to March 2012 and April 2011. It shows that all the top five commodity types had large decreases compared with March 2012, but relatively smaller changes when compared with April 2011. It also shows how HS2 84 is down compared to March 2012 but up compared to April 2011.

Table 2 below shows a comparison of the value of UK export trade with our top five non-EU export trading partners for April 2011, March 2012 and April 2012.

Country	April 2012 Total £ millions	% change from March 2012	% Change from April 2011	% of Total April 2012 Exports	Rank March 2012	Rank April 2011
Total Exports	11,120.9	-17.5	2.2	100.0	n/a	n/a
USA	3,168.2	-17.3	5.0	28.5	1	1
China	660.4	-18.8	-1.4	5.9	2	2
South Korea	489.7	31.1	178.3	4.4	12	17
Russia	469.0	-21.6	12.1	4.2	3	5
Switzerland	429.4	-18.3	-9.1	3.9	4	3

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

For all three periods, the United States was the UK's largest non-EU exporting partner country and China was the second largest.

The overall decrease in exports compared to March reflects decreases in the value of exports to over 70 per cent of our export partners. In addition the decreases for countries were generally larger than the increases. As the table shows, four of the top five export partner countries had large decreases in the value of goods exported to them from the UK **compared to March 2012**.

The exception to this trend is South Korea, which had the largest change in value of export trade compared with March 2012, an increase of £116.1 million, 31.1 per cent. The value of exports to South Korea in April 2012 of £489.7 million is the second highest value ever. The increase was entirely due to increases in HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes) up by £139.5 million, an increase of 84.4 per cent. Since the [EU-South Korea Free Trade Agreement \(FTA\)](#) was introduced in July 2011, exports to South Korea have been volatile due to the trading pattern in the main export area HS2 27. Nevertheless, exports to South Korea are still higher than before the agreement.

The next largest increase in exports was to South Africa, up by £72.3 million, 31.0 per cent. This increase is mostly due to an increase of £50.0 million in HS2 88 (Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof), an area of trade where just a small number of goods can have a very large value. The largest value decrease was for the value exports to the USA, which fell by £661.1 million, 17.3 per cent. The largest decreases in export value to the USA were in HS2 27 (down £199.2 million), HS2 29 (down £183.9 million), and HS2 84 (down £100.1 million).

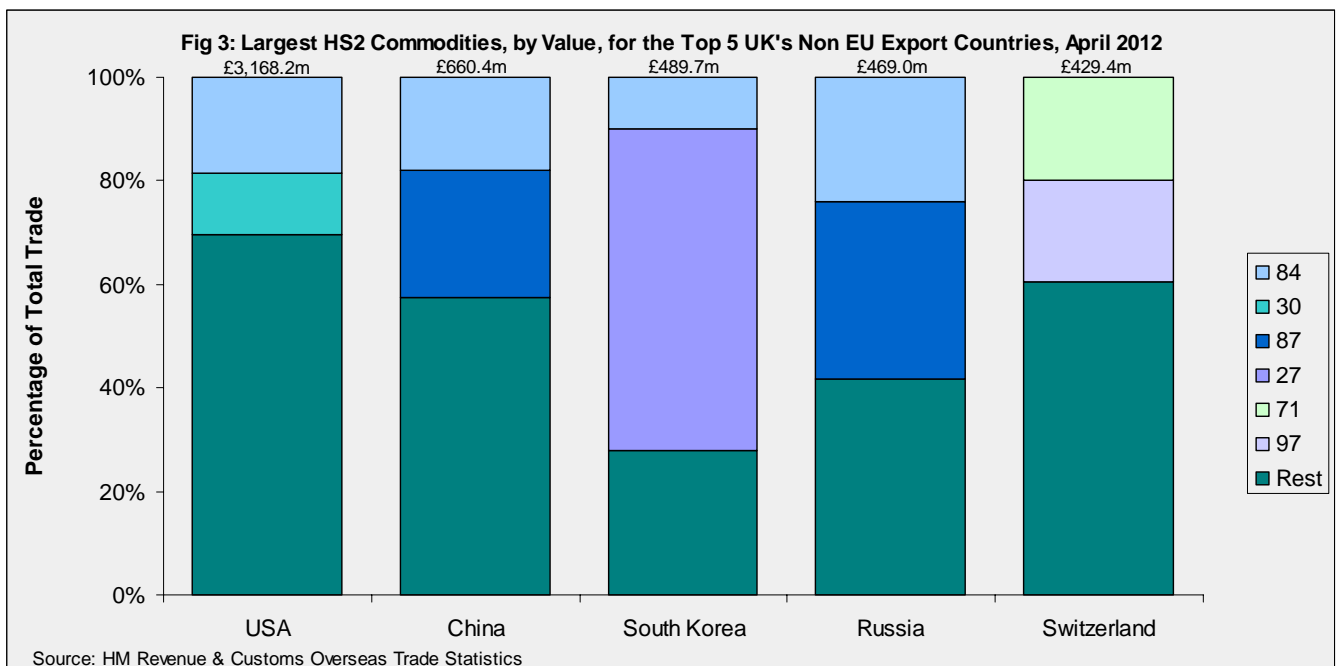
The fall in HS 27 is driven by a decrease of £159.3 million (42.5 per cent) in HS4 2710 (Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (excl. crude); preparations containing >= 70% by weight of petroleum oils or of oils obtained from bituminous minerals). Similar falls in value and mass indicate that the decrease is due to a drop in quantities exported. The fall in HS 29 (Organic chemicals) is driven by a decrease of £112.9 million (78.1 per cent) in HS4 2934 (Nucleic acids and their salts, whether or not chemically defined; heterocyclic compounds (excl. with oxygen only or with nitrogen hetero-atom[s] only)), while the fall in HS 84 is comprised of decreases over several categories.

The second largest decrease by country was to the Netherlands Antilles. This month's exports were down by £195.8 million to return to usual levels after a larger than normal

value last month, due to the export of a high value ship as reported in last month's bulletin.

In all, there were six countries with decreases in exports of over £100 million, the other four were Turkey (down £168.7 million, 43.6 per cent), China (down £152.8 million, 18.8 per cent), Japan (down £137.3 million, 30.7 per cent) and Russia (down £129.1 million, 21.6 per cent).

Figure 3 below shows the largest commodities by value for the top five non-EU export partner countries. Four of the top five countries have HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof) in their top two largest commodities exported from the UK. The trade with these countries accounts for 40.5 per cent of the total value of UK non-EU export trade under this heading. Furthermore, 45.2 per cent of all exports in HS2 30 from the UK go to the USA and 62.2 per cent of the UK's exports to South Korea are in HS2 27, which makes up 31.6 per cent of the UK's total exports in this chapter this month.



Further Analysis: Imports

Table 3 shows a comparison of the top five commodities imported from countries outside the EU for April 2011, March 2012 and April 2012.

HS 2	Description	April 2012 Total £ millions	% Change from March 2012	% Change from April 2011	% of Total April 2012 Imports	Rank March 2012	Rank April 2011
-	Total Imports	16,546.6	-2.8	6.7	100.0	n/a	n/a
27	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes	4,082.5	-2.9	2.9	24.7	1	1
84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	1,947.3	-13.8	4.4	11.8	2	2
85	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers, and parts and accessories of such articles	1,431.9	0.1	6.1	8.7	3	3
71	Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal, and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coin	1,119.4	0.7	25.0	6.8	4	4
30	Pharmaceutical products	541.0	-11.1	38.4	3.3	5	8

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

The decrease of £0.5 billion in the value of imports **compared to March 2012** comprises decreases in just over half of HS2 commodities chapters. There were decreases in imports in three of the top five commodity types imported into the UK, with much smaller increases in the other two.

The decrease was dominated by the fall in imports in HS2 84, down by £310.3 million (13.8 per cent) contributing 64.1 per cent of the total net decrease. This follows an increase of £466.4 million in the previous month.

The largest decrease within the HS2 84 chapter was for HS4 8411 (Turbojets, turbopropellers and other gas turbines), down by £155.3 million (20.6 per cent). Although HS4 8411 showed a decrease of 20.6 per cent in value, there was actually a

slight increase in volume (0.7 per cent), partly due to a change in the make up of the goods involved.

The second largest value decrease from the previous month, of £120.0 million (2.9 per cent), was in HS2 27. This decrease was led by a fall of £71.4 million (16.0 per cent) in HS4 2710 (Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (excl. crude); preparations containing \geq 70% by weight of petroleum oils or of oils obtained from bituminous minerals). As there was a similar percentage decrease in volume, this implies that the decrease was because less of the commodity type was imported rather than a change in price.

The only other commodity group to decrease by over £100million was HS2 87 (Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof) which fell by £104.0 million (18.5 per cent). The vast majority of this decrease is due to HS4 8703 (Motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of persons, incl. station wagons and racing cars) which fell by £91.7 million (41.0 per cent). This is the lowest monthly import value since June 2011.

The commodity group with the largest increase was HS2 29 (Organic chemicals), which increased by £104.8 million (46.4 per cent). This was driven by a ten-fold increase in HS4 2922 (Oxygen-function amino-compounds), which increased by £70.0 million to £76.9 million. No other chapter increased by over £60 million.

The increase in total import trade value **compared to April 2011**, noted above was driven by increases in over 60 per cent of all chapters. The six chapters with the largest increases are the also the top six chapters with the largest value of imports to the UK this month. The largest increases are in imports of HS2 71 (up £223.8 million) and HS2 88 up £222.7 million. The April 2011 value for HS2 88 was the second lowest in recent years, while the current HS2 71 value is just short of its highest ever value.

Within the top five chapters shown in fig 4 below, all of the chapters show increases compared with April 2011 as explained above. Three of the five chapters show decreases compared with March 2012, while for HS 71 and HS 85, there is a marginal increase.

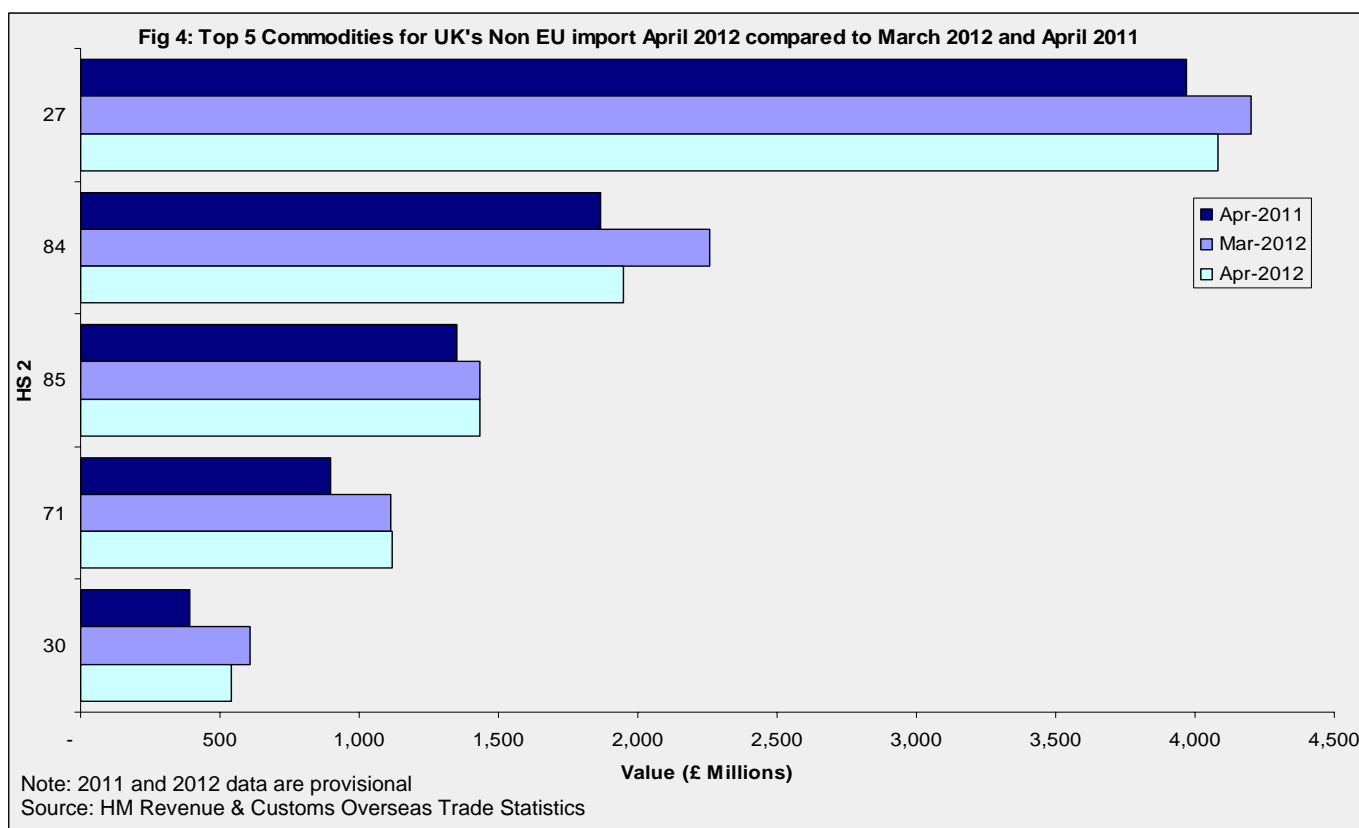


Table 4 below shows comparisons of the value of UK import trade with our top five non-EU import trading partners for April 2011, March 2012, and April 2012. Imports from four of the top five imports trading partners have fallen in April compared to the previous month. The exception to this was imports from China, which experienced a 19.0 per cent increase. This reverses last month's trend, when all the top 5 increased apart from China.

Country	April 2012 Total £ millions	% change from March 2012	% Change from April 2011	% of Total April 2012 Imports	Rank March 2012	Rank April 2011
Total Imports	16,546.6	-2.8	6.7	100.0	n/a	n/a
USA	2,687.2	-6.8	7.2	16.2	1	1
China	2,275.3	19.0	10.1	13.8	3	3
Norway	2,144.8	-5.0	-5.6	13.0	2	2
Russia	708.3	-11.1	-11.8	4.3	5	4
Japan	663.2	-20.2	-7.2	4.0	4	5

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

These changes have moved China back into second place, ahead of Norway. China, the USA and Norway, which includes the Norwegian Continental Shelf, have been our largest import partners for the UK for a number of years with all these having over three times the import value of the next country.

The overall decrease in imports **compared to March 2012** reflects decreases in the value of imports to eight of the top ten of our export partners, with only China and Hong Kong (sixth) showing increases.

The value of imports from China has risen by £363.3 million. The increase this month compared with March is spread across a whole range of HS2 chapters, with the highest rises in HS2 97 (Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques) up £53.8 million, and HS2 94 (Furniture) up £52.7 million.

There was also a large increase in imports from Taiwan, which experienced an increase of £149.1 million (60.9 per cent) compared to March 2012

The increase in imports from Taiwan was driven by a rise in imports to the UK of silver in HS2 7106 which increased from £42.3 million to £105.4 million, an increase of £63.1 million (149.1 per cent). There was a similar increase in the volume of the commodity being imported suggesting that more of the commodity is being imported rather than an increase in prices.

There was also a relatively large increase in imports from Nigeria up by £127.1 million, 78.8 per cent. This was led by an increase of £130.0 million in HS4 2709 (Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude), almost double last month's import value.

Overall the value of imports decreased by over £100 million for five of the UK's import partners. The largest decrease in value of imports was from the USA, which fell by £195.6 million, a decrease of 6.8 per cent. This was spread over a range of commodities, with the largest decreases being in HS2 28, (Inorganic chemicals: organic or inorganic compounds of precious metals, of rare-earth metals, of radioactive elements or of isotopes), down by £52.7 million (80.6 per cent) and HS2 93 (Arms and ammunition; parts and accessories thereof) down by £47.4 million (91.3 per cent).

The second largest decrease in the value of imports was from Libya, down 61.4 per cent, from last month's record high of £306.3 million to £118.3 million. This was almost entirely due to the trade in oil in HS2 2709, (Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude), down by £188.0 million from £306.0 million in March 2012 to £118.1 million this month.

The third largest decrease of imports was from Japan, down by £167.8 million, 20.2 per cent. This is led by a decrease of £107.3 million in HS2 87. Imports from Russia also fell, but only by £88.0 million, 11.1 per cent, resulting in Japan falling behind Russia this month.

There was also a relatively large decrease in imports from Botswana down by £159.2 million, 59.5 per cent; and from Norway down by £112.4 million, 5.0 per cent.

There were increases in the value of imports from just over half of our import partner countries **compared to April 2011**. These were greater in magnitude than the decreases in imports from other countries driving up the value of imports overall. For example, eight countries had increases of over £100 million, while only four had decreases of this magnitude.

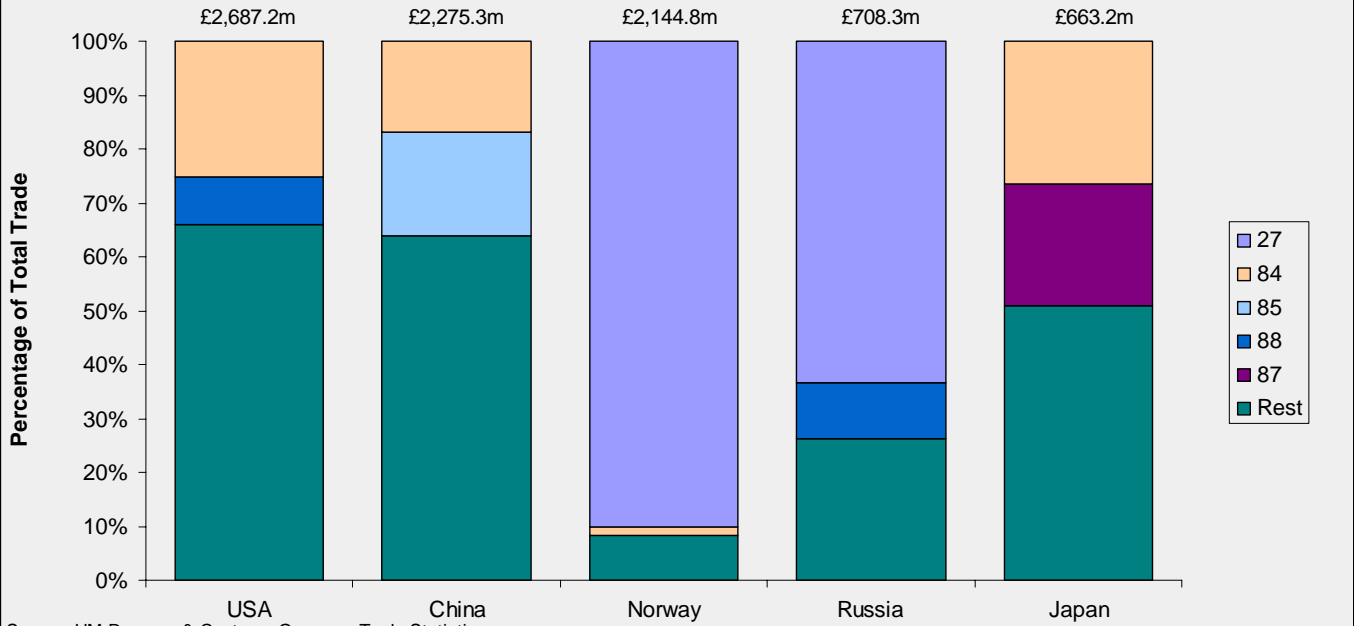
The largest increases in total import trade value compared to April 2011 are driven by increases in imports from China (up by £209.0 million) and the USA (up by £180.2 million). China's increase was spread over a number of chapters, and the United States' increase was driven by rises of £110.6 million in HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof) and £106.6 million in HS2 88 (Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof).

The largest decreases in value of imports were from India, down by £130.0 million to £413.7 million; and Norway, down by 127.8 million to £2.1 billion. The decreases are both due to falls in imports of HS2 27, down by £81.5 million (99.9 per cent) for India, and £160.3 million (7.7 per cent) for Norway.

Figure 5 shows the largest commodities by value imported from the top five non-EU import partner countries. Four of the top five non-EU import trading partners have HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof) in their top two largest commodities exported to the UK. The trade with these countries accounts for 65.6 per cent of the total value of UK non-EU import trade under this commodity heading.

The import trade in HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes) from the Norway, specifically the Norwegian Continental Shelf, accounts for 90.1 per cent of the total imports to the UK from Norway. Russia also has HS2 27 in its top two largest commodity types, with 63.3 per cent of Russian imports being in this category. Together, these two countries account for 58.3 per cent of the total non-EU import trade to the UK under this heading.

Fig 5: Largest HS2 Commodities, by Value, for Top 5 UK's Non EU Import Countries, April 2012



Notes:

1. HM Revenue & Customs released these latest statistics on Overseas Trade with countries outside the European Union (EU) on 12 June 2012 under arrangements set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).
2. This release includes the first provisional estimates of trade-in-goods between the UK and countries outside the EU for April 2012. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU data for 2011 and 2012 are also being released in line with the [Overseas Trade Statistics Policy on Revisions](#).
3. Detailed trade information is presented according to the [Harmonised System \(HS\)](#) nomenclature.
4. 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. More detail about the differences between the BoP and OTS publications can be found [here](#).
5. The aggregate estimates here will differ from the Eurostat publication [Euro area external trade](#). The OTS is published 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 accepted into [Inwards Processing Relief](#) (IPR).
6. Information to help support users of the non-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 Overseas Trade Statistics and information on the quality of the data published.
7. The OTS has recently 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>

8. 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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To access the detailed 8-digit data in our interactive database please log in [here](#).

Please note: there may be a delay between the availability of the aggregated data tables downloadable here and the detailed data in our interactive database. This is because of the time required to upload such a large dataset. Subscribers to our email [Alert Service](#) will be sent an alert when the interactive database has been updated. The OTS Non-EU publication occurs one week prior to the publication of the OTS EU equivalent, to allow for additional processing of the Intrastat survey.

Next release: 10 July 2012 9:30am

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