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Non-EU Overseas Trade Statistics December 2013

Summary

- The UK's non-EU exports for December 2013 are £12.5 billion. This is an increase of £27.8 million (0.2 per cent) compared to November 2013. However it is a decrease of £0.2 billion (1.4 per cent) compared to December 2012.
- The UK's non-EU imports for December 2013 are £13.9 billion. This is a decrease of £2.1 billion (13.4 per cent) compared to November 2013, and takes the total monthly non-EU import figure to the lowest value since April 2010. It also represents a decrease of £2.5 billion (15.1 per cent) compared to December 2012.
- The UK remains a net importer (imports are greater than exports). The size of the difference between imports and exports is £1.3 billion. This is a decrease of £2.2 billion (61.8 per cent) compared to November 2013. It is also decrease of £2.3 billion (63.1 per cent) compared to December 2012. It is the smallest trade gap since 2003 because of the large decrease in imports.
- The first estimate of total exports for 2013 is £148.5 billion compared with £146.7 billion in 2012. This is an increase of 1.2 per cent.
- The first estimate of total imports from 2013 is £192.3 billion compared with £199.3 billion in 2012. This is a decrease of 3.5 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.

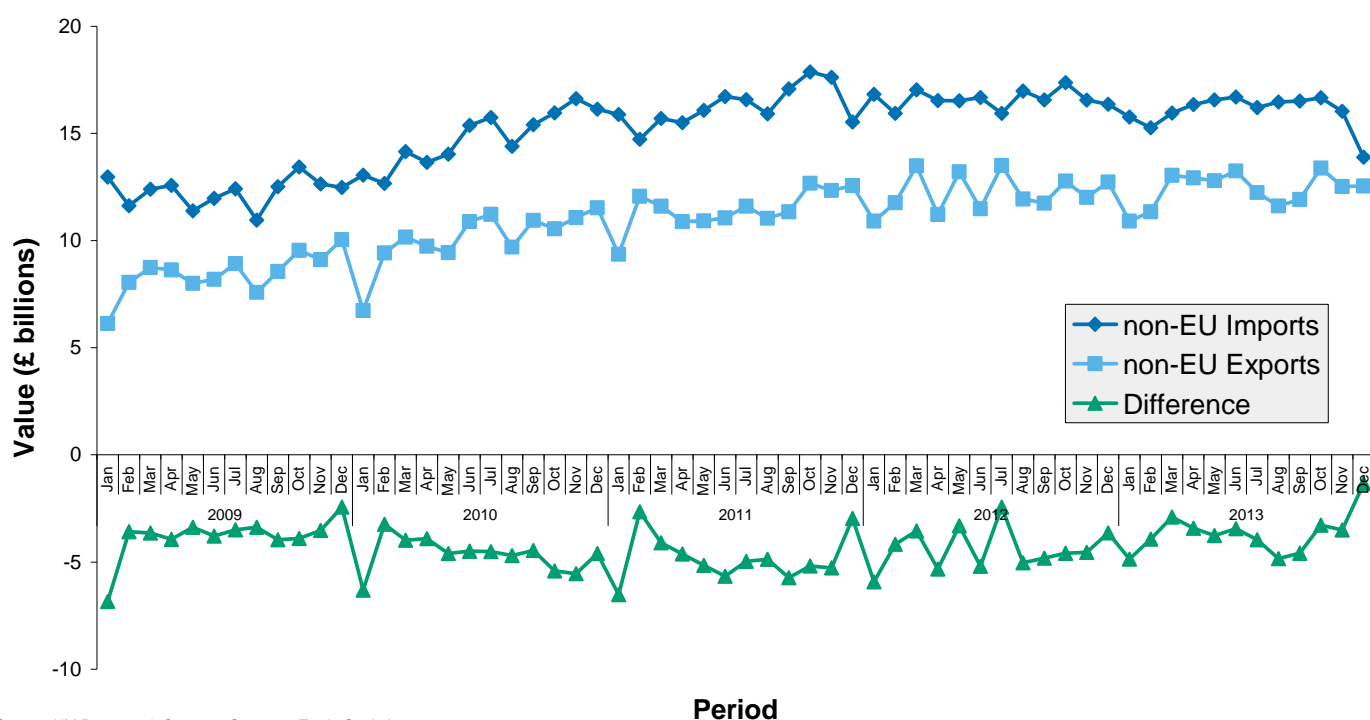
The OTS and RTS data series are published in HMRC's trade data website www.uktradeinfo.com. Detailed data is available within an [interactive database](#) and ['The User Story'](#) explains how users utilise it to analyse import and export markets.

Key Points

For the month of December 2013:

The value of imports fell to the lowest level since April 2010, while exports had a slight increase in December 2013 compared with the previous month. Consequently the difference between non-EU imports and exports (the trade gap) has decreased dramatically, with a fall of 61.8 per cent, to its lowest value since 2003.

Fig. 1: Total Monthly UK Trade with non-EU Countries



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
 Note: 2013 data are provisional

Exports

- The UK's non-EU exports for December 2013 are £12.5 billion. This is a slight increase of £27.8 billion (0.2 per cent) compared to November 2013. However, it is a decrease of £0.2 billion (1.4 per cent) compared to December 2012.
- The top five commodities are the same as last month, although their order has changed. HS2 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) has dropped to fourth place from third.
- The largest contributing commodity group remains HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof). In December it contributed £2.6 billion, 20.9 per cent of the total value of UK's non-EU export trade. The largest contribution to this chapter was £1.1 billion from HS4 8411 (Turbo-jets, Turbo-propellers and other gas turbines).
- There were increases in just 27 per cent of all chapters, although the largest increase drove the overall rise in exports, which was in the sixth biggest chapter by value, HS2 88 (Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof), up £227.5 million (49.9 per cent) to £0.7 billion.
- The largest value decrease from the previous month was in the second biggest export chapter, HS2 87 (Motor vehicles), which fell by £77.1 million (4.2 per cent) to £1.7 billion.
- The USA remains the UK's largest non-EU export partner country, accounting for 25.6 per cent of the total value of UK's non-EU export trade. China remains in second place, with an 8.9 per cent share of exports, while Switzerland has risen to fourth place to enter the top five.
- The largest increase in exports was to Saudi Arabia, up £129.7 million (38.4 per cent) to £467.3 million. The largest decrease was to the third placed country, South Korea, down from last month's record high of £771.3 million to £564.8 million, a drop of £206.5 million (26.8 per cent).
- The first estimate of total exports for 2013 is £148.5 billion¹. This is an increase of £1.7 billion (1.2 per cent) compared with 2012. This continues the upward trend in the annual value of exports of goods from the UK in recent years, only interrupted in 2009 during the period of recession.
- The total 2013 year to date value of the UK's goods exported to non-EU countries, excluding December 2013, is £135.9 billion, which has been downwardly revised by £12.3 million. This is a decrease of less than 0.1 per cent.

Imports

- The UK's non-EU imports for December 2013 are £13.9 billion. This is a substantial decrease of £2.1 billion (13.4 per cent) compared to November 2013, and takes the total monthly non-EU import figure to the lowest value since April 2010. It also represents a very large decrease of £2.5 billion (15.1 per cent) compared to December 2012.
- The top five commodities are similar to the previous month with HS2 87 (Motor vehicles) rising from seventh to fifth. All the top five countries showed a decrease.

¹ The final figure for total exports for 2013 will be published in August 2014 when data is finalised in line with our revisions policy.

- The largest commodity group remains HS2 27 (Mineral fuels). In December 2013 it contributed £2.8 billion, 20.3 per cent of the total value of non-EU imports to the UK. The largest contribution to this chapter was £1.6 billion from HS4 2709 (Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude).
- The largest value decrease from last month was for the second biggest import chapter, HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof), down £317.9 million (13.1 per cent) to £2.1 billion.
- The largest value increase from last month was just £24.8 million (89.6 per cent) for HS2 10 (Cereals).
- China remains the UK's largest non-EU import partner country in December 2013, with a total import trade of £2.6 billion. This accounts for 18.6 per cent of the total value of UK's non-EU import trade. However, China also had the largest fall in imports into the UK of £470.3 million (17.8 per cent).
- The largest value increase in imports compared to November 2013 was from Norway, which rose by £324.5 million (31.7 per cent) to £1.3 billion.
- The first estimate of total imports for 2013 is £192.3 billion². This is a decrease of £6.9 billion (3.5 per cent) compared with 2012. This is the first annual fall in the value of imports of goods into the UK since the period of recession in 2009.
- The total 2013 year to date value of the UK's goods imported from non-EU countries, excluding December 2013, is £178.4 billion, a decrease of £293.5 million (0.2 per cent) since last month.

² The final figure for total imports for 2013 will be published in August 2014 when data is finalised in line with our revisions policy.

Further Analysis: Exports

Table 1 shows a comparison of the top five commodities by value exported to countries outside the EU for December 2013, November 2013 and December 2012.

Table 1: Top 5 commodities in UK's non-EU exports in December 2013 compared to November 2013 and December 2012

HS 2	Description	December 2013 Total £ millions	% Change from November 2013	% Change from December 2012	% of Total December 2013 Exports	Rank November 2013	Rank December 2012
-	Total Exports	12,548.5	0.2	-1.4	100.0	n/a	n/a
84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	2,626.5	3.4	8.7	20.9	1	1
87	Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof	1,762.9	-4.2	19.3	14.0	2	2
27	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes	983.0	2.6	8.4	7.8	4	15
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	818.9	-2.2	-4.7	6.5	3	3
30	Pharmaceutical products	794.6	-7.1	3.3	6.3	5	4

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
Note: 2013 data are provisional

Commodity Analysis: comparison with previous month

The slight increase in exports **compared to November 2013** is composed of increases in just 27 per cent of HS2 chapters, but dominated by one large increase. The total export trade value has risen by £27.8 million (0.2 per cent), remaining at £12.5 billion. Three of the top five commodity types decreased in value, and two increased. There was one chapter with an increase of over £100 million, and no decreases of this magnitude.

The largest increase was £227.5 million in the sixth largest export chapter, HS2 88 (Aircraft and spacecraft), up by 49.9 per cent. This was driven by a seven-fold rise of £164.1 million in exports to Saudi Arabia.

The second largest increase was for the largest export chapter, HS2 84 (Mechanical appliances), up by £85.8 million (3.4 per cent). This was led by increases of £77.9 million (13.0 per cent) to the USA, and £70.3 million (80.4 per cent) to Hong Kong.

The next largest increase was for the ninth biggest export chapter, HS2 22 (Beverages, spirits and vinegar), up £74.6 million.

There were no decreases over £100 million. The largest was £77.1 million (4.2 per cent) in HS2 87 (Motor vehicles). This was led by a fall of £76.4 million (17.4 per cent) in exports to the USA.

Commodity Analysis: Comparison against the same month in the previous year

Compared to December 2012, the total export trade value decreased by £0.2 billion (1.4 per cent), with 52 per cent of all HS2 chapters showing decreases and 48 per cent showing increases. Nevertheless, four of the top five chapters increased in value. There were two decreases and two increases of over £100 million.

The largest value decrease was for the eighth biggest chapter, down from third. HS2 71 (Precious metals, stones, pearls and jewellery) fell by £574.6 million (48.2 per cent), from a record high of £1.2 billion in December 2012. The fall was dominated by a drop of £552.3 million (76.0 per cent) in exports to Switzerland, from £726.4 million to £174.1 million.

The second largest value decrease was in the eleventh biggest chapter, HS2 97 (Art and antiques), which fell by £170.0 million (41.8 per cent). This was more than covered by a fall of £185.6 million (69.8 per cent) in exports to the USA.

There were no other decreases over £100 million. The next biggest was a fall of £46.4 million for HS2 22 (Beverages, spirits and vinegar).

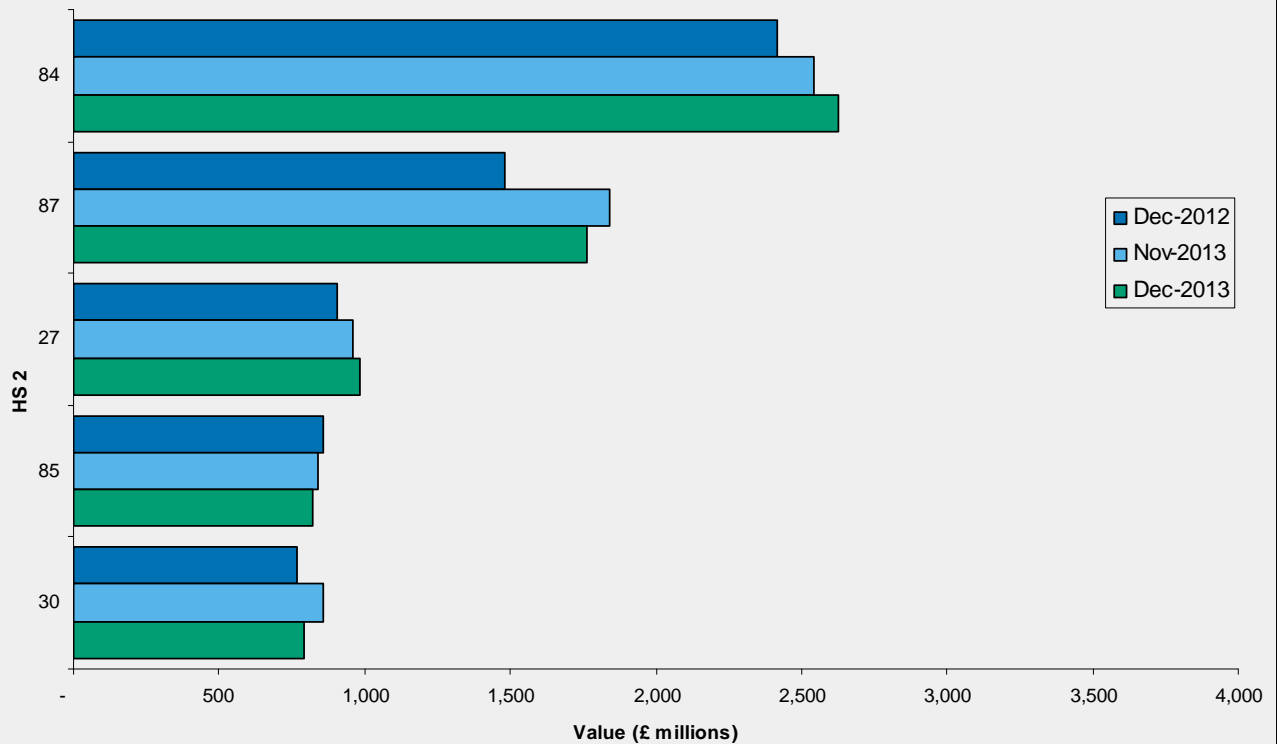
The largest increase was for the second biggest chapter, HS2 87 (Motor vehicles), up £284.6 million (19.3 per cent). This was led by a rise of £224.4 million (82.9 per cent) in exports to China. This month's export value of £495.0 million to China is the second highest on record.

The second largest increase was for the top export chapter, HS2 84 (Mechanical appliances), up by £210.8 million (8.7 per cent). This is led by rises of £112.3 million (19.9 per cent) in exports to the USA, and £61.7 million (more than five-fold) to Qatar.

There were no other increases over £100 million. The next biggest rise was £76.0 million for HS2 27 (Mineral fuels).

Figure 2 below shows the top five commodities for the UK's non-EU exports in December 2013, compared to November 2013 and December 2012. It shows how the relatively small changes when compared to November 2013 tend to balance each other out, while compared to December 2012, the top three chapters had large increases, while the other two changes were much smaller in comparison.

Fig 2: Top 5 commodities for UK's non-EU exports in December 2013 compared to November 2013 and December 2012



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
Note: 2013 data are provisional

Table 2 shows a comparison of the value of UK non-EU export trade with our top five export trading partners for December 2013, November 2013 and December 2012.

Table 2: Top 5 non-EU export countries in December 2013 compared to November 2013 and December 2012

Country	December 2013 Total £ millions	% change from November 2013	% Change from December 2012	% of total December 2013 Exports	Rank November 2013	Rank December 2012
Total Exports	12,548.5	0.2	-1.4	100.0	n/a	n/a
USA	3,214.9	1.5	-0.3	25.6	1	1
China	1,118.3	10.0	26.2	8.9	2	3
South Korea	564.8	-26.8	-2.1	4.5	3	4
Switzerland	540.6	30.4	-52.3	4.3	6	2
Unite Arab Emirates	511.4	-9.3	13.3	4.1	4	6

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
Note: 2013 data are provisional

For all three periods the USA was the UK's largest non-EU export partner country. China remains in second place. This month has seen Switzerland rise to fourth from sixth place, while Russia has fallen from fifth to eighth. Compared to last month there were increased exports to three of the top five partner countries, while compared to December 2012, only China and the UAE had increases in export value.

Country Analysis: comparison with previous month

Compared to November 2013, the slight increase in export value was composed of decreases to 57 per cent of our export partners, offset by a smaller number of larger increases. There were three countries to which exports rose by £100 million or more, and one decrease above this level. Three of the top five countries rose in export value.

The largest increase in exports was to the UK's seventh largest export partner, Saudi Arabia, up from twelfth. Export value rose by £129.7 million (38.4 per cent). This is led by a seven-fold rise of £164.1 million in exports for HS2 88 (Aircraft and spacecraft).

The second largest increase was in exports to Switzerland, up by £126.1 million (30.4 per cent) to climb from sixth to fourth place. This was dominated by a rise of £95.6 million (more than double) in HS2 71 (Precious metals, stones, pearls and jewellery).

The third largest increase was to the UK's second biggest export partner. Exports to China rose by £101.4 million (10.0 per cent). This is a new high for exports to China, and is led by a rise of £62.9 million in exports of HS2 27 (Mineral fuels), from less than £1 million in December 2012. Export trade with China has risen steadily since 2009.

These were the only increases over £100 million. The next highest was £93.8 million (23.0 per cent) to Hong Kong.

The only decrease over £100 million was in exports to South Korea, down by £206.5 million (26.8 per cent). This follows a record high last month, and is dominated by a fall of £209.4 million (42.6 per cent) in exports of HS2 27 (Mineral fuels).

This was the only decrease over £100 million. The next biggest decrease was to Kazakhstan, down by £80.0 million (73.4 per cent), to fall from 25th to 44th place.

Country Analysis: comparison against the same month in the previous year

Compared to December 2012, there was a decrease of £175.3 million (1.4 per cent) in total exports. Just over half (51 per cent) of the UK's export partner countries experienced decreases in export value, but there was one major decrease (nearly £600 million) which influenced the overall fall. This was the only decrease in excess of £100 million, where as there were three increases above this level.

The largest decrease was in exports to Switzerland, down by £592.8 million (52.3 per cent) from the record high of £1.1 billion in December 2012. This was dominated by a fall of £552.3 million (76.0 per cent) in exports of HS2 71 (Precious stones, metals, pearls and jewellery), also down from a record high of £726.4 million in December 2012. The decrease to Switzerland compared with December 2012 is three times greater than the overall net decrease, and takes Switzerland from second largest export partner in December 2012 to fourth this month.

The second largest decrease was for India, down by £99.9 million (21.4 per cent). This was dominated by a fall of £114.8 million (91.7 per cent) in HS2 88 (Aircraft and spacecraft).

The largest increase was for China, which rose by £232.5 million (26.2 per cent). This was driven by an increase of £224.4 million (82.9 per cent) in HS2 87 (Motor vehicles). There has been an upward trend in exports of motor vehicles to China for several years now, and this is more noticeable in the annual analysis than the monthly variations.

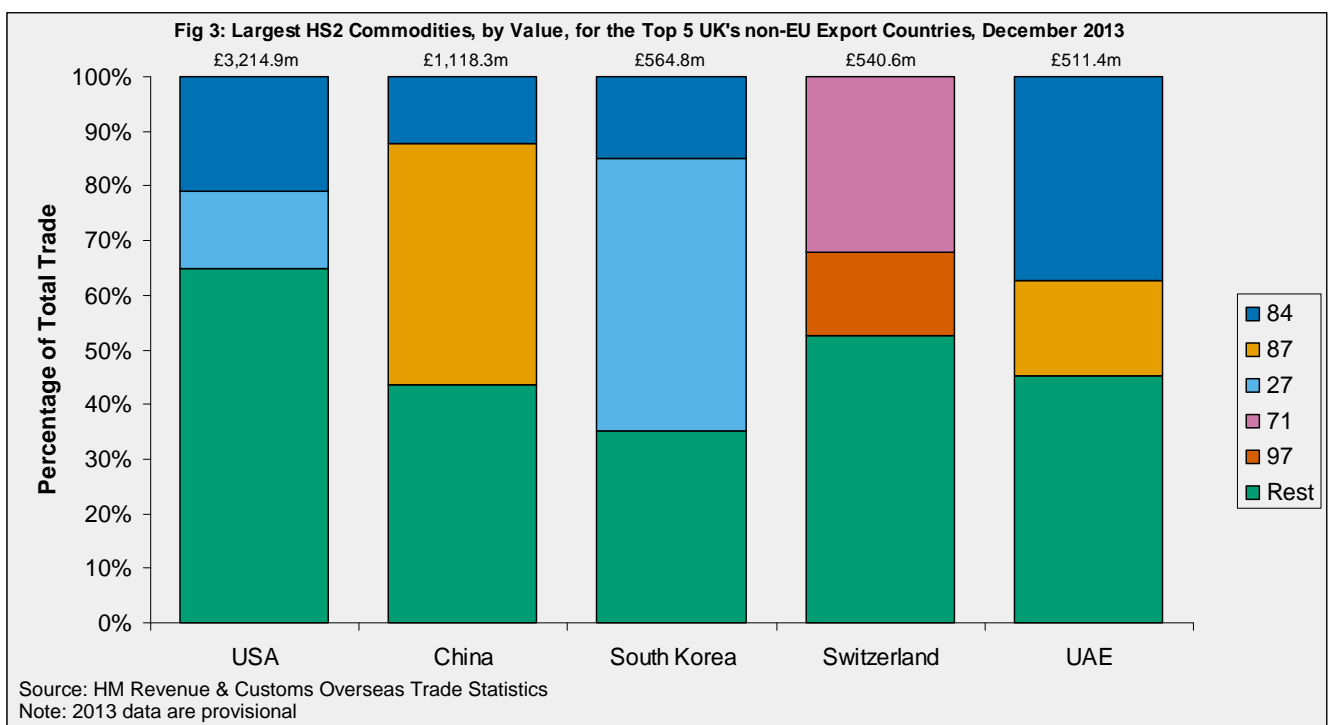
The second largest increase was to Saudi Arabia, up by £229.8 million (96.8 per cent). As with the comparison with last month, this was driven by a twelve-fold rise of £175.6 million in HS2 88 (Aircraft and spacecraft).

The third largest increase was to Russia, up by £105.1 million (34.0 per cent). This was spread over a number of chapters, led by a five-fold rise of £41.7 million in HS2 88 (Aircraft and spacecraft).

These were the only increases over £100 million. The next highest was for Qatar, which rose by £79.1 million (99.7 per cent).

Figure 3 shows the two largest commodities by value exported from the UK to each of its top five non-EU export partner countries. This month, four of the top five countries had HS2 84 (Mechanical appliances) in their top two chapters, accounting for 41.5 per cent of the total value of UK non-EU export trade for this chapter.

Two of the top five countries, the USA and South Korea, had HS2 27 (Mineral fuels) as one of the top two largest exported commodities, accounting for 75.0 per cent of the UK's total exports in this chapter. Also, the export of HS2 87 (Motor vehicles) to China and the UAE accounts for 33.1 per cent of the UK's total exports in this chapter.



Further Analysis: Imports

Table 3 shows a comparison of the top five commodities imported from countries outside the EU for December 2013, November 2013 and December 2012.

Table 3: Top 5 commodities in UK's non-EU imports in December 2013 compared to November 2013 and December 2012

HS 2	Description	December 2013 Total £ millions	% Change from November 2013	% Change from December 2012	% of Total December 2013 Imports	Rank November 2013	Rank December 2012
-	Total Imports	13,888.3	-13.4	-15.1	100.0	n/a	n/a
27	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes	2,817.4	-3.9	-35.5	20.3	1	1
84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	2,115.1	-13.1	5.2	15.2	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	1,444.8	-12.0	1.4	10.4	3	4
88	Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof	508.0	-25.6	0.4	3.7	4	5
87	Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof	465.8	-6.4	-1.0	3.4	7	6

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
Note: 2013 data are provisional

Commodity Analysis: comparison with previous month

The value of imports decreased considerably by £2.1 billion (13.4 per cent) **compared to November 2013**. This overall decrease was spread across the majority of commodities with decreases in over 80 per cent of all HS2 chapters. There were seven decreases and no increases over £100 million. All of the top five import chapters decreased on last month.

The biggest decrease was for the second biggest import chapter, HS2 84 (Mechanical Appliances), down £317.9 million (13.1 per cent) to £2.1 billion. This was driven by a decrease of £105.4 million (17.5 per cent) in imports from the United States.

The second largest decrease was a fall of £197.8 million (12.0 per cent) in the third biggest import chapter, HS2 85 (Electrical equipment). This decrease was spread across a number of import partners.

The third biggest decrease was £174.8 million (25.6 per cent) for HS2 88 (Aircraft). This was dominated by a fall of £211.4 million (44.2 per cent) in imports from the United States.

The fourth largest decrease was in HS2 61 (Knitwear) down by £170.5 million (27.3 per cent). This was driven by a decrease of £87.0 million (41.0 per cent) in imports from China.

The fifth largest decrease was in HS2 95 (Toys, games and sports requisites; parts and accessories thereof) down £134.3 million (34.6 per cent). This was driven by a decrease in imports from China of £116.1 million (40.1 per cent).

Chapter HS2 27 (Mineral fuels) saw the sixth largest decrease in imports down £115.4 million (3.9 per cent). This was driven by decreases in imports from Qatar down £183.3 million and South Korea down £148.4 million, although these were to some extent offset by an increase in imports from Norway up £326.1 million.

The only remaining decrease over £100 million was for HS2 89 (Ships, boats and floating structures) down £113.3 million (91.0 per cent). This was driven by a decrease in imports from Cayman Islands of £88.8 million (92.7 per cent).

In contrast, there were no increases over £100 million. The largest increase in imports was for HS2 10 (Cereals), which rose by just £24.8 million (89.6 per cent).

Commodity Analysis: comparison with the same month in the previous year

When **compared to December 2012**, total import value decreased even more substantially by £2.5 billion (15.1 per cent). However, only 39 per cent of the HS2 commodity chapters decreased in value, but the magnitude of the decreases was much larger than those of the increases. There were two chapters with decreases of over £100 million and one with an increase over this value. Furthermore, the two decreases over £100 million also exceeded £1.0 billion.

The biggest decrease was a fall of £1.5 billion (35.5 per cent) in the top import chapter, HS2 27 (Mineral fuels). This was driven by a fall in imports from Norway, down £406.2 million (26.2 per cent). There were also decreases from Qatar, Nigeria, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates, all of which were between £100 million and £150 million. However, there was also an increase of £103.9 million from Equatorial Guinea.

The second largest decrease was a fall of £1.1 billion (71.6 per cent) in the sixth biggest import chapter, HS2 71 (Precious stones, metals, pearls and jewellery). This was driven by decreases of £675.1 million (81.8 per cent) from Switzerland and £192.4 million from Botswana, which saw a reduction from £192.6 million to less than £1 million.

These were the only decreases over £100 million although there were two decreases just below this level. These were HS2 28 (Inorganic chemicals) down £90.8 million (54.2 per cent) and HS2 30 (Pharmaceutical products) down £81.4 million (24.3 per cent). These were driven by falls of £67.6 million in imports from Russia and £70.0 million in imports from Israel respectively.

The largest value increase from December 2012 was for HS2 84 (Mechanical appliances), up £105.3 million (5.2 per cent). This was driven by a rise of £61.2 million (13.0 per cent) in imports from China.

This was the only increase over £100 million. The next largest increase was £74.0 million (41.1 per cent) for HS2 95 (Toys, games and consoles). This was driven by an increase of £61.2 million (56.7 per cent) in imports from China.

Figure 4 below shows the top five commodities for the UK's non-EU imports in December 2013, compared to November 2013 and December 2012. It shows that chapter 27 has significantly decreased in comparison with December 2012 and had marginally decreased in comparison with November 2013. The remaining four

chapters all show a decrease compared with November 2013 but remain relatively unchanged in comparison with December 2012.

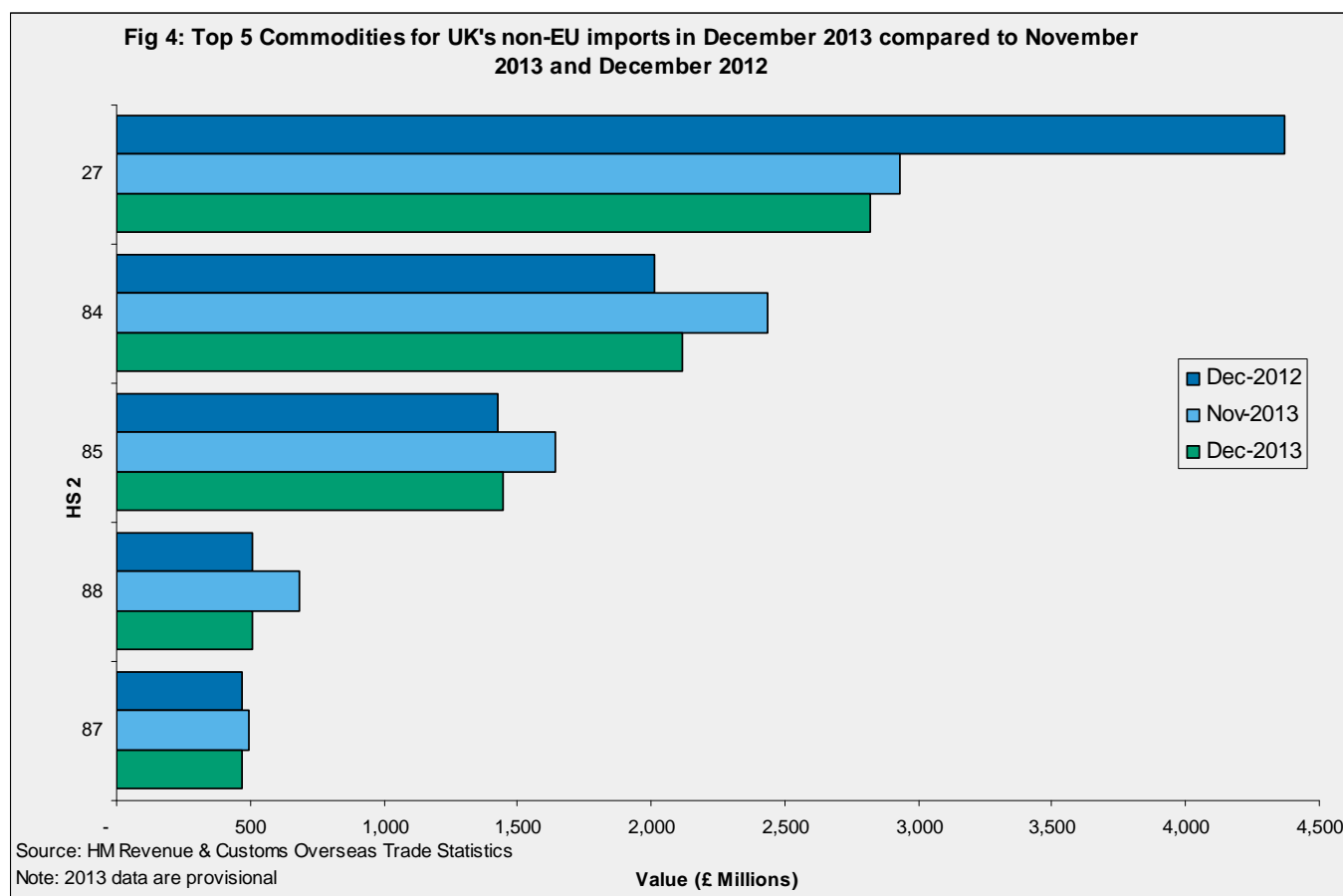


Table 4 shows comparisons of the value of UK non-EU import trade from our top five import trading partners for December 2013, November 2013, and December 2012. Imports from four of the top five trading partners decreased in December 2013 compared to the previous month, the exception being Norway, which experienced a substantial increase. Three countries saw falls in comparison with December 2012.

Table 4: Top 5 Non-EU import partner countries in December 2013 compared to November 2013 and December 2012

Country	December 2013 Total £ millions	% change from November 2013	% Change from December 2012	% of Total December 2013 Imports	Rank November 2013	Rank December 2012
Total Imports	13,888.3	-13.4	-15.1	100.0	n/a	n/a
China	2,576.7	-15.7	10.6	18.6	1	2
USA	2,167.3	-17.8	-8.9	15.6	2	1
Norway	1,345.8	31.8	-21.0	9.7	3	3
Hong Kong	549.7	-9.7	0.5	4.0	4	7
Switzerland	543.1	-10.7	-57.5	3.9	5	4

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
Note: 2013 data are provisional

The positions of all of the top five countries are unchanged from last month despite the substantial changes experienced by all countries. China remains ahead of the USA for a sixth successive month. China, the USA, and Norway have been the UK's largest import partners for a number of years, collectively accounting for 43.9 per cent of the UK's import trade.

Country Analysis: comparison with previous month

Compared to November 2013, the decrease in the value of imports is composed of decreases in 61 per cent of the UK's import partner countries, with the magnitude of the decreases also being greater than that of the increases. Seven countries had decreases of £100 million or more, while only one had an increase above this level.

The biggest decrease in the value of imports was from the top import country, China, down £480.0 million (15.7 per cent) to £2.6 billion. This is spread over several chapters, led by falls in HS2 95 (Toys, games and consoles) and HS2.61 (Knitwear), with falls of £116.1 million (40.7 per cent) and £87.0 million (41.0 per cent) respectively.

The second biggest decrease in the value of imports was from the second largest import country, the USA, down £470.3 million (17.8 per cent) to £2.2 billion. This is led by falls of £211.4 million (44.2 per cent) in HS2 88 (Aircraft and spacecraft) and £105.4 million (17.5 per cent) in HS2 84 (Mechanical appliances).

The third largest decrease in imports was from South Korea, down by £211.3 million (49.6 per cent), from a record high last month of £425.8 million to £214.5 million this month. This is dominated by a fall in imports of HS2 27 (Mineral fuels), down £148.4 million to under £1 million.

The next four biggest decreases in the value of imports were Qatar, down £204.3 million (72.9 per cent); Thailand, down £131.1 million (43.2 per cent); Kuwait, down £113.7 million (55.2 per cent) and Canada, down by £108.9 million (24.5 per cent). These were all driven by falls in HS2 27 (Mineral fuels), of £183.3 million for Qatar; £60.0 million for Thailand; £86.2 million for Kuwait; and £53.3 million for Canada. Canada also had a fall of £55.0 million (81.5 per cent) in HS2 88 (Aircraft).

Just outside the £100 million level, there were also large falls in the value of imports from the Cayman Islands, down by £88.9 million, and Taiwan, down by £87.7 million.

The biggest increase in the value of imports was from the third biggest import country, Norway, up £324.5 million (31.8 per cent) to £1.3 billion. This increase is also driven by rises in HS2 27 (Mineral fuels), up £326.1 million (39.7 per cent).

This was the only increase over £100 million, but just outside this level, the second biggest increase in the value of imports was from the Algeria, up £92.9 million (66.4 per cent). This was also due to imports in HS2 27, up £90.2 million (65.5 per cent).

Country Analysis: comparison with the same month in the previous year

Compared to December 2012 there was a decrease of £2.5 billion (15.1 per cent) in the total value of imports. This was composed of 47 per cent of the UK's import partner countries decreasing in value, but the decreases being generally larger in value than the increases. There were eight decreases and two increases in excess of £100 million. Three of the UK's top five import trading partners for December 2013 have decreased when compared to December 2012, and two have increased.

The largest decrease in the value of imports was for Switzerland, down by £734.8 million (57.5 per cent), accounting for 29.8 per cent of the total net decrease. This is dominated by a fall of £675.1 million (81.8 per cent) in HS2 71 (Precious metals,

stones, pearls and jewellery). December 2012 was a record high both for total imports from Switzerland, and for imports within HS2 71 from Switzerland.

Six of the remaining seven decreases over £100 million were Norway, down £358.0 million (21.0 per cent); Russia, down by £232.8 million (32.4 per cent); the USA, down by £210.9 million (8.9 per cent); Nigeria, down by £184.8 million (62.8 per cent); Qatar, down by £129.9 million (63.1 per cent); and the United Arab Emirates, down by £115.0 million (39.0 per cent). These were driven by falls in HS2 27 (Mineral fuels) of £406.2 million (26.2 per cent) from Norway; £93.5 million (19.1 per cent) from Russia; £68.5 million (23.5 per cent) from the USA; £130.3 million (55.2 per cent) from Nigeria; £139.6 million (78.6 per cent) from Qatar; and £109.6 million (100 per cent) from the UAE.

The only other decrease over £100 million was for Botswana, down by £191.6 million (99.4 per cent). This was led by a fall within HS2 71 (Precious metals, stones, pearls and jewellery), of £192.4 million (99.9 per cent).

Just outside the £100 million level, there were also decreases of £89.7 million (21.1 per cent) in imports from Canada, and £82.8 million (63.1 per cent) from Angola.

The largest increase in the value of imports was from China, up by £246.3 million (10.6 per cent). This was spread over several chapters, led by two rises of over £60 million, for HS2 95 (Toys, games and consoles), and HS2 84 (Mechanical appliances).

The only other increase over £100 million was for Equatorial Guinea, up by £102.1 million, from £1.9 million. This was driven by a rise of £103.9 million in HS4 27 (Mineral fuels), from zero.

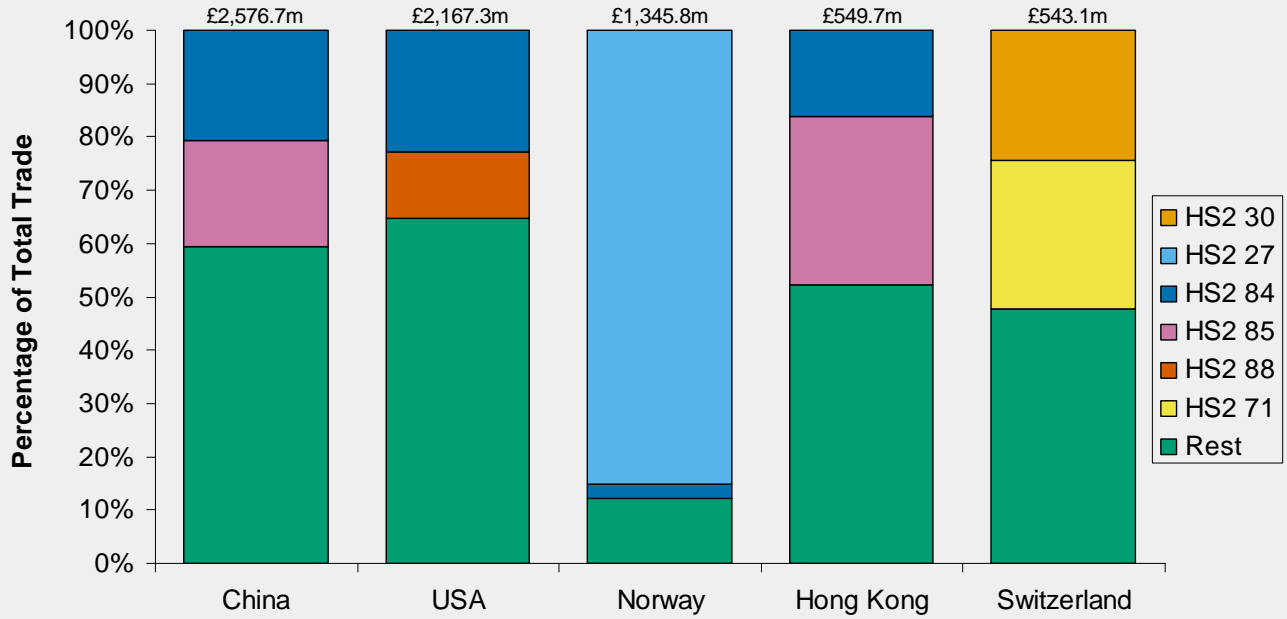
Just outside the £100 million level, the third largest increase in the value of imports was from Singapore, up by £79.8 million (40.4 per cent). Again, this is due to imports of HS2 27 (Mineral fuels) rising by £62.4 million, from less than £1 million.

Figure 5 shows the two largest commodities by value imported from each of the top five non-EU import partner countries. This month, HS2 84 (Mechanical appliances) is in the top two chapters for four of the top five importing countries, with the trade with China, the USA, Norway and Hong Kong accounting for 54.3 per cent of the total import value in this chapter.

Two countries, China and Hong Kong, both have HS2 85 (Electronic equipment) in their top two largest imported commodities, accounting for 47.4 per cent of the total import value for this chapter.

The trade in HS2 27 (Mineral fuels) accounts for 85.2 per cent of the total imports from Norway, specifically the Norwegian Continental Shelf; and the trade with the USA in HS2 88 (Aircraft) accounts for 52.5 per cent of the UK's total import value for this chapter.

Fig 5: Largest HS2 Commodities, by Value, for Top 5 UK's non-EU Import Countries, December 2013



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
 Note: 2013 data are provisional

Notes:

1. HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) released these latest statistics on Overseas Trade with countries outside the European Union (EU) on 7 February 2014 under arrangements set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). The first release is published in HMRC's trade data website www.uktradeinfo.com.
2. This release includes the first provisional estimates of trade-in-goods between the UK and countries outside the EU for December 2013. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU data for 2013 are also being released in line with the [HM Revenue & Customs 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. uktradeinfo.com provides more detail about the [differences between BoP and OTS publications](#).
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 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'.
6. HMRC publishes [additional information](#) to help support users of this data. 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.
7. 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>
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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The OTS and RTS data series are published in HMRC's trade data website www.uktradeinfo.com. Detailed data is available within an [interactive database](#) and ['The User Story'](#) explains how users utilise it to analyse import and export markets.

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