



HM Revenue  
& Customs

# UK Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics September 2017

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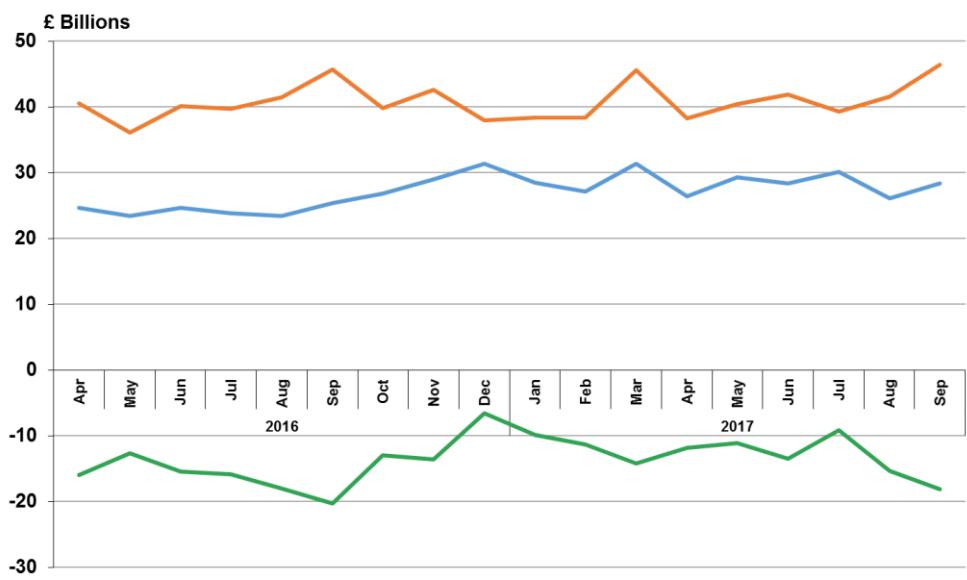
**Website:**  
<http://www.uktradeinfo.com>



## Summary

- Total trade in goods exports for September 2017 were £28.4 billion. This was an increase of £2.2 billion (8.4 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £2.9 billion (12 per cent) compared with September 2016.
- Total trade in goods imports for September 2017 were £46.5 billion. This was an increase of £4.9 billion (12 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £0.8 billion (1.8 per cent) compared with September 2016.
- The UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £18.1 billion.

**Figure 1: Total UK monthly Trade in Goods**



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
Note: 2017 data is provisional

— Total Imports — Total Exports — Trade Gap

## Trade Trends

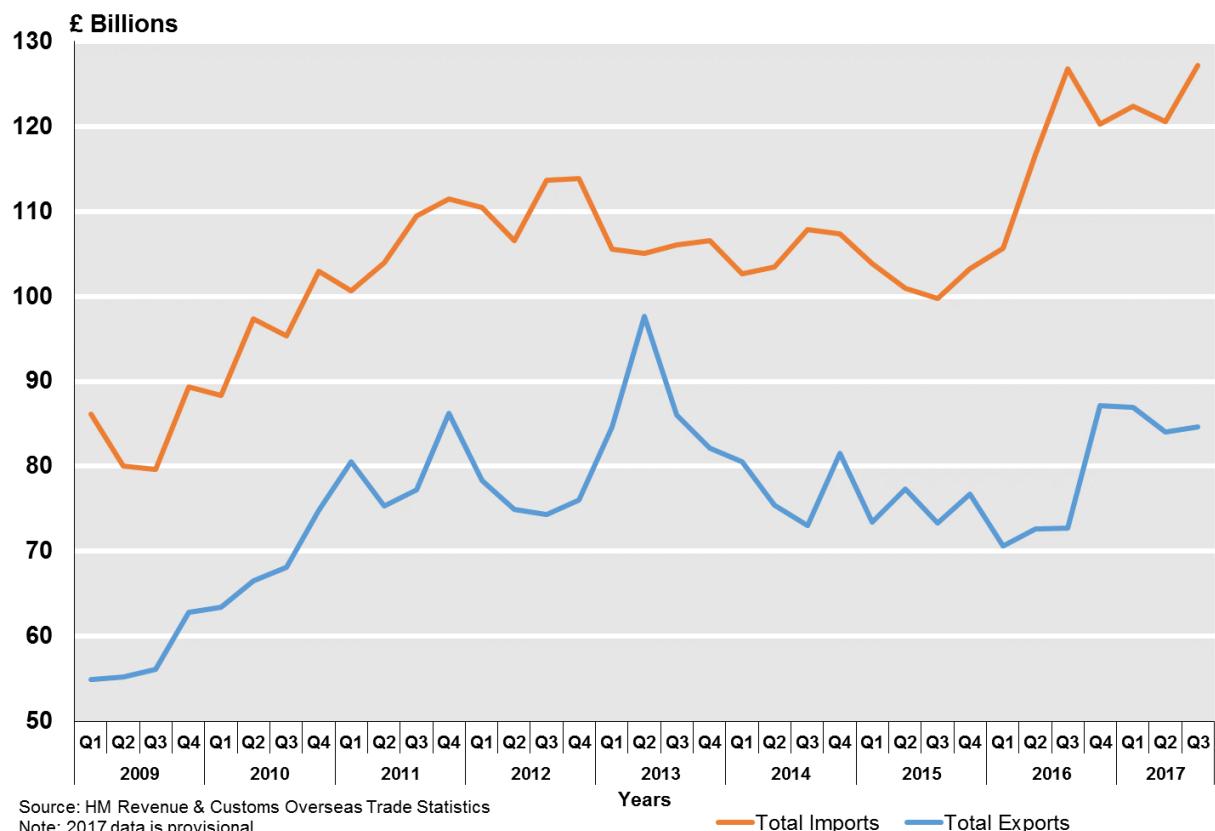
- Following the global economic crisis, UK trade in goods dropped in 2009. Both imports and exports then steadily increased until 2012. From the start of 2013, imports remained relatively flat until a very sharp increase in Q3 of 2016, while exports peaked in Q2 of 2013, with a further peak in Q4 of 2016.
- The total **export** trade for Q3 of 2017 was £84.6 billion, which was an increase of 16 per cent compared with £72.8 billion for Q3 of 2016.
- The total **import** trade for Q3 of 2017 was £127 billion, which was a slight increase of 0.3 per cent compared with Q3 of 2016.
- There was a trade deficit of £42.6 billion for Q3 of 2017. This was a narrowing of 21 per cent compared with Q3 of 2016. 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 up 16%  
for Q3 2017 on  
Q3 2016

Imports up 0.3%  
for Q3 2017 on  
Q3 2016

Trade deficit  
narrowed by 21%  
for Q3 2017 on Q3  
2016

**Figure 2: Quarterly UK Trade in Goods, 2009 – 2017**



## Non-EU & EU Trade

- **Non-EU Exports** for September 2017 were £13.8 billion. This was an increase of £0.6 billion (4.2 per cent) on last month, and an increase of £1.3 billion (10 per cent) compared with September 2016.
- **Non-EU Imports** for September 2017 were £23.8 billion. This was an increase of £3.2 billion (16 per cent) on last month, and a slight increase of £0.2 billion (0.8 per cent) compared with September 2016.
- In **Non-EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £10.1 billion.
- **EU Exports** for September 2017 were £14.6 billion. This was an increase of £1.6 billion (13 per cent) on last month, and an increase of £1.7 billion (13 per cent) compared with September 2016.
- **EU Imports** for September 2017 were £22.6 billion. This was an increase of £1.7 billion (8.2 per cent) on last month, and an increase of £0.6 billion (2.8 per cent) compared with September 2016.
- In **EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £8.1 billion.
- The proportion of total exports to the EU was 51 per cent in September 2017. Over the past 18 months, this has ranged from 39 per cent to 51 per cent. The proportion of total imports from the EU was 49 per cent in September 2017. Over the same period, this has ranged between 46 per cent and 54 per cent.

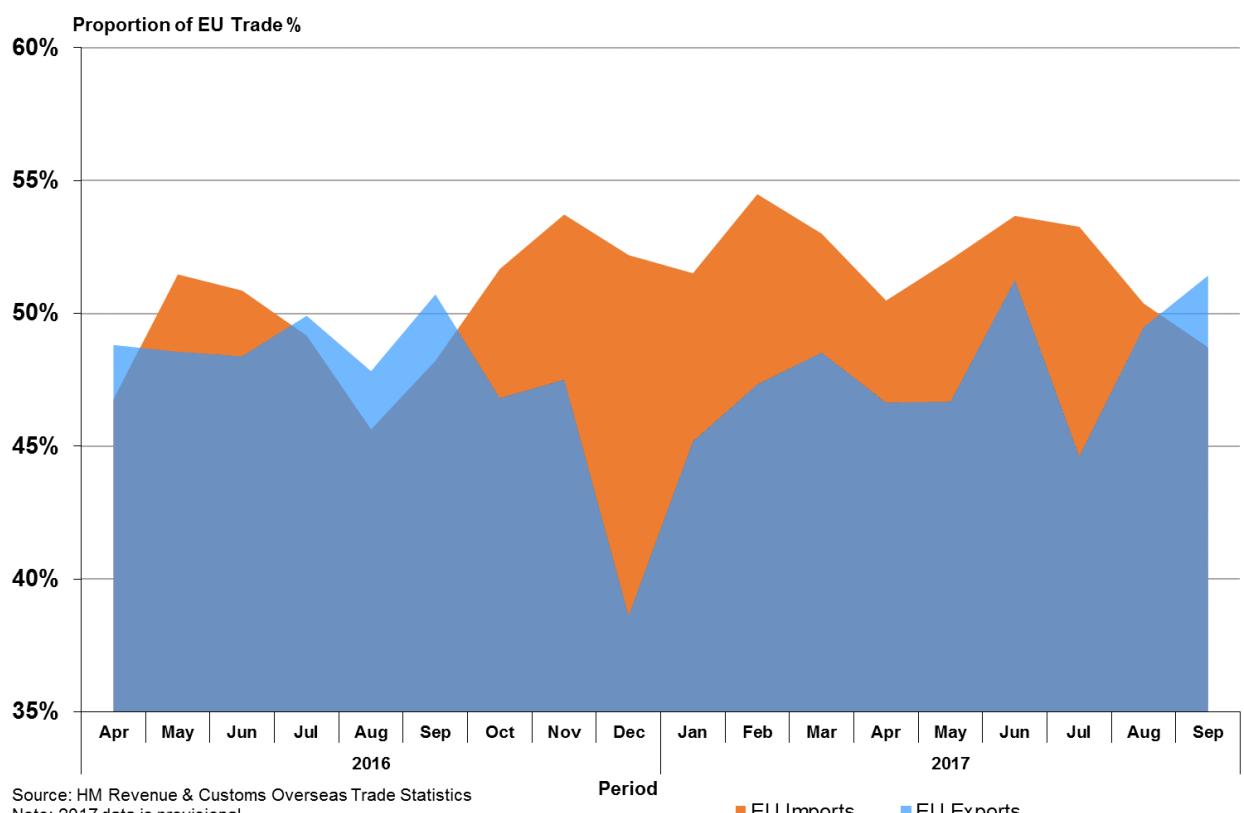
Non-EU exports  
up 10% on  
September 2016

Non-EU imports  
up 16% on  
last month

EU exports  
up 13% on  
September 2016

EU imports up  
8.2% on  
last month

**Figure 3: Proportion of total UK Trade in Goods with the EU, September 2017**



# Exports

## Country Analysis

**Table 1: UK Exports of goods to top 10 partner countries, September 2017**

Partner Country	September 2017 Total (£ millions)	Change from August 2017 (%)	Change from September 2016 (%)	Rank August 2017	Rank September 2016
USA	3,498	-0.2	-8.2	1	1
Germany	3,170	7.8	6.8	2	2
France	2,404	38.6	38.0	3	3
Netherlands	1,814	5.6	16.8	4	4
Irish Republic	1,694	3.9	14.7	5	5
Belgium	1,274	4.1	16.1	6	7
China	1,247	29.0	-6.4	7	6
Italy	896	38.8	-0.5	9	8
Spain	868	19.8	5.5	8	9
Hong Kong	797	60.9	55.8	12	10
Others	10,696	1.2	16.3	-	-
<b>Total Non-EU</b>	<b>13,774</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>14,582</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>28,356</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2017 data is provisional

- The order of the top ten export partner countries (ranked by value) has changed compared with both last month and September 2016, though the top five remain unchanged.
- Nine of the top ten countries have experienced increases in value compared with last month, the USA being the exception. Compared with September 2016, seven of the top ten countries experienced increases.
- The USA remained the largest export partner country, despite experiencing a slight decrease of £7.2 million (0.2 per cent) on last month. It saw the largest decrease compared with September 2016, down £310 million (8.2 per cent).
- France experienced the largest value increases compared with both last month and September 2016, up £670 million (39 per cent) and £662 million (38 per cent), respectively.

Top export country USA down 8.2% on September 2016

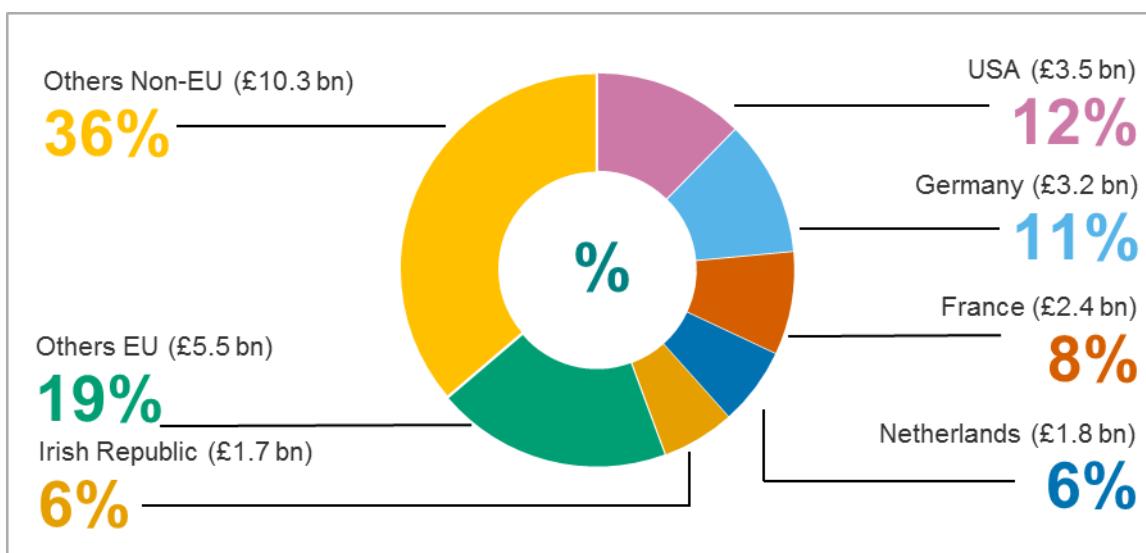
- Hong Kong experienced the second largest value increases on both last month and September 2016, up £302 million (61 per cent) and £285 million (56 per cent), respectively.
- Oman (46<sup>th</sup> place) saw the largest decrease compared with last month, down £202 million (76 per cent).
- China experienced the third largest increase on last month, up £280 million (29 per cent). Conversely it saw the third largest decrease on September 2016, down £86 million (6.4 per cent).
- Germany showed increases compared with both last month and September 2016, up £229 million (7.8 per cent) and £201 million (6.8 per cent), respectively.
- Netherlands experienced the third largest increase on September 2016, up £261 million (17 per cent).
- Italy saw an increase on last month, up by £250 million (39 per cent).
- South Korea (20<sup>th</sup> place) experienced the second largest decrease on last month, down £187 million (32 per cent). In contrast, it saw an increase of £162 million (70 per cent) compared with September 2016.

Exports to Hong Kong up 61% on last month

Exports to Germany up 7.8% on last month

Exports to South Korea up 70% on September 2016

**Figure 4: UK exports of goods to the top 5 countries, September 2017**



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
Note: 2017 data is provisional

- The USA accounted for 12 per cent of the total value of goods exports from the UK, compared with 15 per cent in September 2016.
- Germany had the second largest proportion, accounting for 11 per cent, a decrease compared with 12 per cent in September 2016.
- The top five export partners accounted for 44 per cent of total exports in goods this month, compared with 45 per cent in September 2016.

The USA accounted for 12% of total UK exports

## Commodity Analysis

**Table 2: UK exports of goods by top 5 commodities, September 2017**

Commodity Description	September 2017 Total (£ millions)	Change from August 2017 (%)	Change from September 2016 (%)	Rank August 2017	Rank September 2016
Mechanical appliances	4,518	10.4	14.1	1	1
Motor vehicles	3,479	35.7	4.6	2	2
Mineral fuels	2,275	2.1	40.0	3	5
Pharmaceutical products	2,009	7.7	-6.0	4	3
Electronic equipment	1,923	11.0	7.5	5	4
Others	14,153	3.5	12.6	-	-
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>28,356</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2017 data is provisional

- The top five export commodities (ranked by value) is unchanged compared with last month. Compared with September 2016, Mineral fuels rose into third place from fifth.
- The top commodity, Mechanical appliances, saw the second largest increases compared with both last month and September 2016, up £427 million (10 per cent) and £559 million (14 per cent).
- Motor vehicles experienced the largest value increase compared with last month, up £915 million (36 per cent). It also saw an increase on September 2016, up £152 million (4.6 per cent).
- Organic chemicals (12<sup>th</sup> place) showed the largest decrease compared with last month, down £114 million (15 per cent).
- Mineral fuels experienced the largest increase on September 2016, up £650 million (40 per cent).
- Art and antiques (13<sup>th</sup> place) saw increases on both last month and September 2016, up £206 million (62 per cent), and £248 million (86 per cent), respectively.
- Similarly, Electronic equipment experienced increases on both periods, up £190 million (11 per cent) and £134 million (7.5 per cent), respectively.
- Pharmaceutical products saw an increase compared with last month, up £143 million (7.7 per cent), but a decrease compared with September 2016, down £129 million (6.0 per cent).
- The top five export commodities accounted for 50 per cent of total UK trade in goods exports this month, compared with 51 per cent for September 2016.

Exports of Mechanical appliances up 14% on September 2016

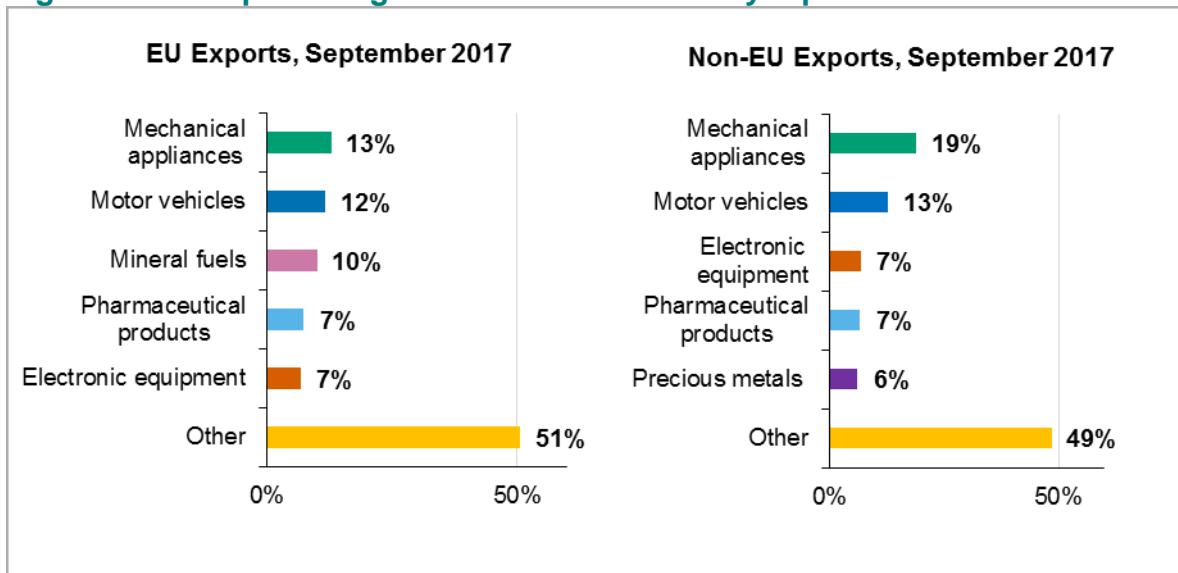
Exports of Motor vehicles up 36% on last month

Exports of Organic chemicals down 15% on last month

Exports of Mineral fuels up 40% on September 2016

## Combined Commodity and Country Analysis

**Figure 5: UK exports of goods to EU & Non-EU by top 5 commodities**



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2017 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 increases in exports of Mechanical appliances compared with both last month and September 2016 were led by France, up £114 million (31 per cent) and £311 million (near treble), and the USA, up £102 million (18 per cent) and £63 million (10 per cent), respectively.
- The rise in exports of Motor vehicles on last month was due to increases to a variety of trading partners, namely the USA, Belgium, Germany and Italy; up £121 million (28 per cent), £108 million (68 per cent), £107 million (42 per cent), and £82 million (82 per cent), respectively. While increases on September 2016 were led by Austria and South Korea, up £47 million (75 per cent) and £45 million (near treble), respectively.
- The rise in exports of Mineral fuels compared with September 2016 was led by the Netherlands, up £236 million (64 per cent) and France, up £164 million (more than five times the value).
- The rise in exports of Arts and Antiques on both last month and September 2016 was led by Switzerland, up £195 million (more than treble) and £239 million (seven times the value), respectively.
- Increased exports to Hong Kong compared with both last month and September 2016 were largely due to Precious metals, up £178 million and £198 million (both more than doubled), respectively.
- The increase in exports Pharmaceutical products on last month was namely due to a rise to Germany, up £75 million (26 per cent). While the decrease on September 2016 was due to the USA, down £202 million (34 per cent).

Exports of Mechanical appliances to France near treble on September 2016

Exports of Motor vehicles to the Italy up 82% on last month

Exports of Pharmaceuticals to USA down 34% on September 2016

# Imports

## Country Analysis

**Table 3: UK imports of goods from top 10 countries, September 2017**

Partner Country	September 2017 Total (£ millions)	Change from August 2017 (%)	Change from September 2016 (%)	Rank August 2017	Rank September 2016
Germany	6,222	10.4	2.1	1	1
China	4,050	11.5	-1.2	2	2
USA	3,527	3.8	-3.1	4	3
Netherlands	3,412	-3.6	3.3	3	4
Switzerland	2,939	191.2	9.4	11	5
France	2,277	8.1	7.7	5	7
Belgium	2,190	11.3	-3.1	6	6
Italy	1,605	15.7	8.4	7	9
Norway	1,445	6.8	18.6	8	12
Irish Republic	1,259	6.9	6.7	9	13
Others	17,534	7.5	-0.3	-	-
<b>Total Non-EU</b>	<b>23,826</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>22,632</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>46,458</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2017 data is provisional

- The order of the top ten import partners (ranked by value) has changed compared with last month, with Switzerland replacing Canada in the top ten. There were several country ranking changes compared with September 2016, though the top five import partners are unchanged.
- Nine of the top ten import partners increased in value compared with last month, while seven increased compared with September 2016.
- Germany remained the top import partner country, with the second largest increase in value compared with last month, up £586 million (10 per cent). It also experienced an increase on September 2016, up £127 million (2.1 per cent).
- Switzerland experienced the largest value increase compared with last month, up £1,930 million (near treble). It also saw the second largest increase on September 2016, up £252 million (9.4 per cent).

Top import  
country Germany  
up 10% on last  
month

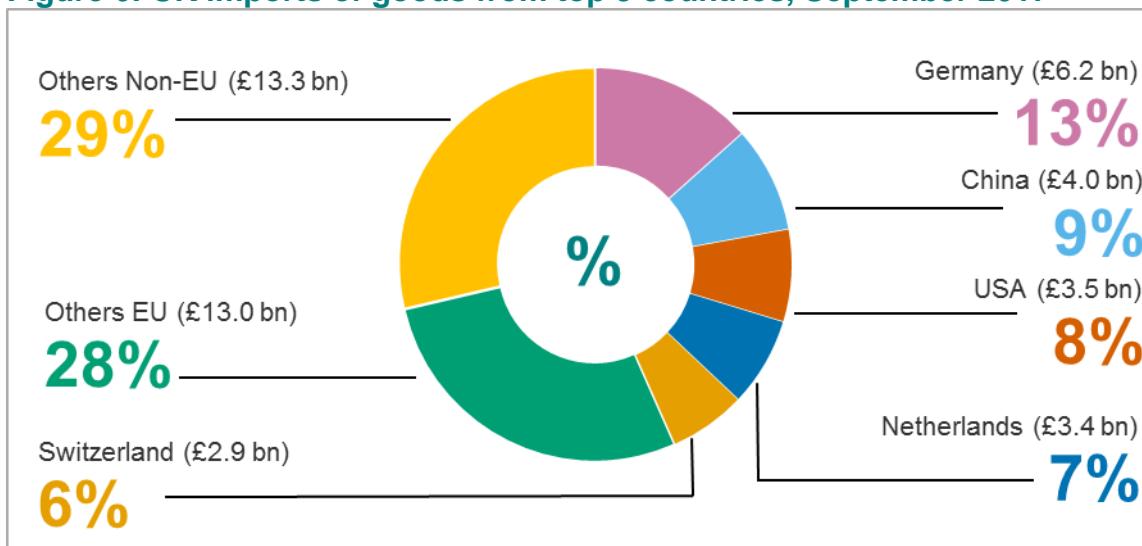
- Denmark (24<sup>th</sup> place) showed the largest value decrease on last month, down £147 million (25 per cent). However, it increased on September 2016, up £68 million (18 per cent).
- Russia (17<sup>th</sup> place) experienced the fourth largest increase on last month, up £290 million (52 per cent). It also experienced the largest increase on September 2016, up £445 million (more than double).
- Imports from the Netherlands saw the second largest decrease compared with last month, down £129 million (3.6 per cent). Conversely, it increased on September 2016, up £110 million (3.3 per cent).
- Imports from Hong Kong (16<sup>th</sup> place) saw the fifth largest increase compared with last month, up £242 million (38 per cent). However, it experienced the largest decrease on September 2016, down £777 million (47 per cent).
- Imports from Singapore (41<sup>st</sup> place) experienced the second largest decrease on September 2016, down £544 million (79 per cent).
- Spain (12<sup>th</sup> place) saw an increase on last month, up £237 million (25 per cent). Conversely, it experienced the third largest decrease on September 2016, down £234 million (16 per cent).

Imports from Russia up 52% on last month

Imports from Hong Kong down 47% on September 2016

Imports from Spain up 25% on last month

**Figure 6: UK imports of goods from top 5 countries, September 2017**



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
Note: 2017 data is provisional

- Germany accounted for 13 per cent of the total value of imports to the UK, this is a slight decrease on September 2016.
- China accounted for 8.7 per cent of total imports, a decrease compared with 9.0 per cent in September 2016.
- The top five partner countries accounted for 43 per cent of total UK import value this month, which is the same as September 2016.

Germany accounted for 13% of total UK imports

## Commodity Analysis

**Table 4: UK imports of goods by top 5 commodities, September 2017**

Commodity Description	September 2017 Total (£ millions)	Change from August 2017 (%)	Change from September 2016 (%)	Rank August 2017	Rank September 2016
Precious metals	6,684	59.8	-4.0	3	1
Mechanical appliances	5,313	5.0	9.4	1	3
Motor vehicles	5,030	15.5	-4.8	2	2
Electronic equipment	4,183	10.2	2.5	4	4
Mineral fuels	3,205	10.3	19.2	5	5
Others	22,043	3.9	1.1	-	-
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>46,458</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2017 data is provisional

- The ordering of the top five commodity groups has changed compared with last month, with Precious metals rising to first. Compared with September 2016, Mechanical appliances replaced Motor vehicles in second place.
- Precious metals was the top import commodity by value, accounting for a 14 per cent share of the total imports. It showed the largest increase on last month, up £2,501 million (60 per cent). In contrast, it showed the third largest decrease on September 2016, down £276 million (4.0 per cent).
- Imports of Motor vehicles showed the second largest increase on last month, up £674 million (15 per cent). Conversely, it showed the fourth largest decrease on September 2016, down £252 million (4.8 per cent).
- Animal or vegetable fats, oils and waxes (in 54<sup>th</sup> place) showed the largest decrease on last month, down £71 million (40 per cent).
- Ships, boats and floating structures (in 88<sup>th</sup> place) imports saw the third largest decrease on last month, down by £53 million (81 per cent). It also experienced largest decrease on September 2016, down by £538 million (near complete reduction).
- Imports of Mineral fuels experienced the largest increase compared with September 2016, up £516 million (19 per cent).
- The top five import commodities accounted for 53 per cent of total UK trade imports for this month, up from 52 per cent in September 2016.

Imports of Precious metals up 60% on last month

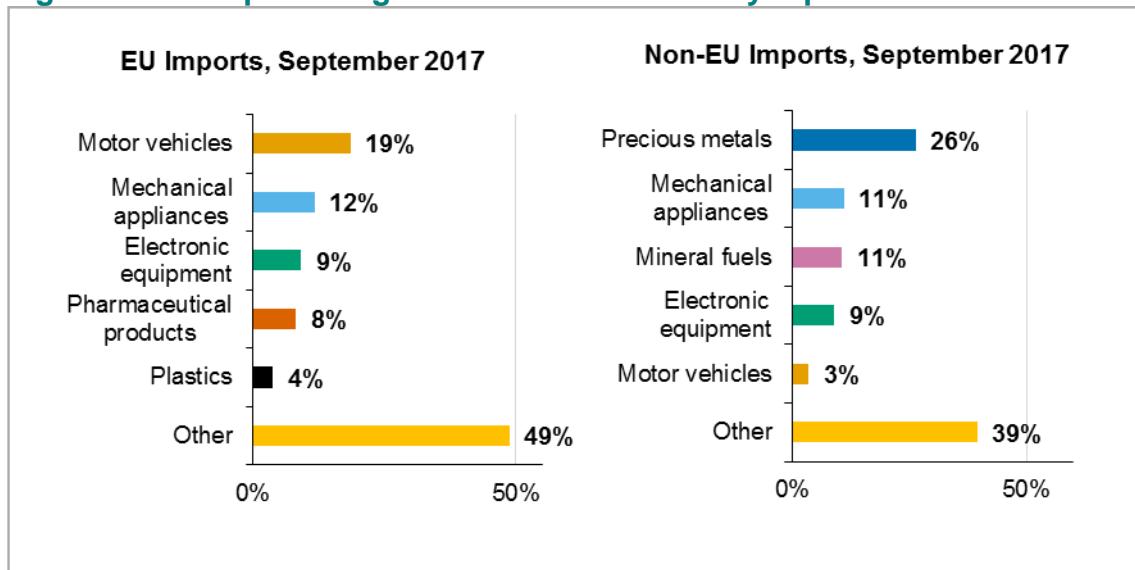
Motor vehicles imports up 15% on last month

Animal or vegetable fats, oils and waxes down 40% on last month

Imports of Mineral fuels up 19% on September 2016

## Combined Commodity and Country Analysis

**Figure 7: UK imports of goods to EU & Non-EU by top 5 commodities**



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics Note: 2017 data is provisional

- Motor vehicles, 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 led by increases from Switzerland, up by £1,897 million (more than five times), and Hong Kong, up £190 million (more than double). The decrease on September 2016 was also led by Hong Kong, down £726 million (69 per cent).
- The increase in Motor vehicles compared with last month was led by Spain, up £152 million (76 per cent), and Belgium, up £141 million (27 per cent). The decrease on September 2016 was led by Germany, down £171 million (8.6 per cent).
- The decrease in imports of Animal or vegetable fats, oils and waxes on last month was led by Romania, down £41 million (near total reduction).
- The increase in imports from Germany on both periods was led by Iron and steel, up £168 million (more than double) on last month, and up £184 million (more than triple) on September 2016.
- The fall in imports from Denmark on last month was led by decreases in Electronic equipment, down £122 million (59 per cent).
- The decrease in imports of Ships, boats, and floating structures on September 2016 was led by Singapore, down £509 million (total reduction).
- The fall in imports from the Netherlands on last month was led by a decrease in Pharmaceutical products, down £155 million (22 per cent).

Imports of Precious metals from Switzerland up more than 5 times on last month

Imports of Motor vehicles from Spain up 76% on last month

Imports of Electronic equipment from Denmark down 59% 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 10 November 2017 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 2017. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU and EU data for 2017 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 2017 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 2017 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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