

Non-EU Overseas Trade Statistics - December 2012

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Summary

- UK's non-EU exports have increased by £0.6 billion (5.3 per cent) compared to November 2012, to £12.6 billion. Compared to December 2011, exports have increased by £0.1 billion (0.6 per cent).
- UK's non-EU imports have decreased by £0.2 billion (1.2 per cent) compared to November 2012, to £16.4 billion. Compared to December 2011, imports have increased by £0.8 billion (5.3 per cent).
- The UK remains a net importer (imports are greater than exports). The size of the difference between imports and exports has decreased by £0.8 billion (18.4 per cent) compared to November 2012, and has increased from December 2011 by £0.8 billion (25.4 per cent).
- The first estimate of total exports for 2012 is £146.6 billion compared with £137.4 billion in 2011.
- The first estimate of total imports from 2012 is £199.3 billion compared with £195.2 billion in 2011.



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.

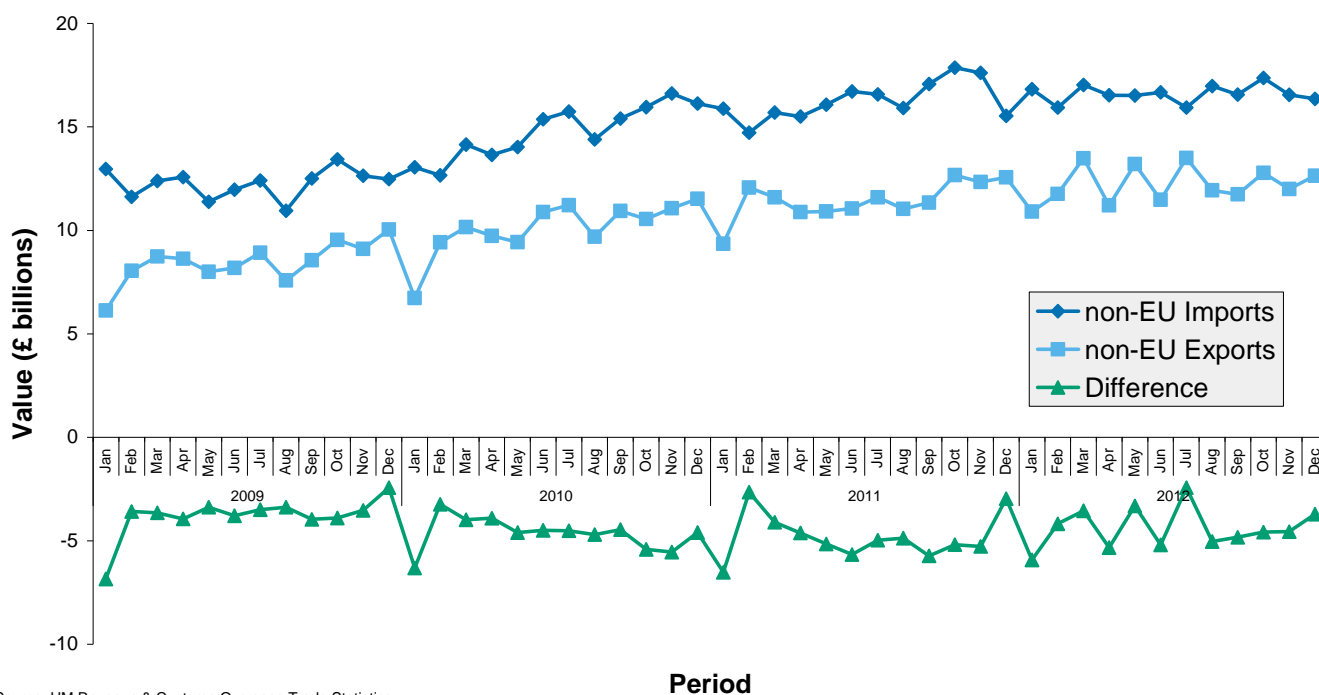
You can find details of how users interested in import and export markets for specific goods make use of the detailed OTS data in ['The Customer Story'](#). You can also access the detailed data in our interactive database [here](#).

Key Points

For the month of December 2012:

The value of exports increased in December 2012 compared with the previous month while the value of imports decreased. Consequently the difference between non-EU imports and exports has decreased by 18.4 per cent. This is the fourth consecutive monthly fall in the trade gap, and the largest fall since July. The import value is also the lowest since July.

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



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

Exports

- UK's non-EU exports have increased by £0.6 billion (5.3 per cent) compared to November 2012, to £12.6 billion. Compared to December 2011, exports have increased by £0.1 billion (0.6 per cent).
- The top two commodities are the same as last month. The largest contributing commodity group remains HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof). In December it contributed £2.4 billion, 19.2 per cent of the total value of UK's non-EU export trade. The largest contribution to this chapter was £1.0 billion from HS4 8411 (Turbo-jets, Turbo-propellers and other gas turbines).
- The overall increase in exports compared to November 2012 is driven by two large increases. The largest increase from the previous month was £634.5 million in HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes), a fourfold increase. This puts chapter 27 back into the top five from fifteenth place last month, replacing HS2 30 (Pharmaceutical products). The second largest increase was £504.3 million (73.3 per cent) in HS2 71 (Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal, and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coin), moving this chapter to third place, from fifth last month. However, there were also decreases in over 60 per cent of HS2 chapters. The largest value decrease from the previous month was in the second largest export chapter, HS2 87, a fall of £195.4 million (11.7 per cent).
- The USA remains the UK's largest non-EU export partner country, accounting for 24.8 per cent of the total value of UK's non-EU export trade. Exports from the UK to Switzerland had the largest increase in value, compared to November 2012, up by £473.0 million, 71.6 per cent, to move ahead of China. The largest decrease in exports compared to November 2012 was to Russia, down by £182.1 million, 37.1 per cent.
- The first estimate of total exports for 2012 is £146.6 billion¹. This is an increase of £9.2 billion (6.7 per cent) compared with 2011. This continues the upward trend in the value of exports of goods from the UK in recent years only interrupted in 2009 during the period of recession.
- The total 2012 year to date value of UK's goods exported to non-EU countries excluding December 2012 is £134.0 billion. This has been downwardly revised by £36.7 million, which is less than 0.1 per cent.

Imports

- The value of the UK's non-EU imports decreased by £0.2 billion (1.2 per cent) compared to November 2012, to £16.4 billion. Compared to December 2011 imports have increased by £0.8 billion (5.3 per cent).
- The top five commodities are similar to the previous month. HS2 88 (Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof) has become one of the top five imported commodities in December. In November it was the seventh largest imported commodity by value. The largest commodity group remains HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes), contributing £4.4 billion in December 2012, 26.7 per cent of the total value of non-EU imports to the UK. The largest contribution to this chapter was £2.6 billion from HS4 2709 (Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous

¹ The final figure for total exports for 2012 will be published in August when data is finalised in line with our revisions policy.

minerals, crude). This chapter also had the largest value increase from the previous month, of £664.6 million, 18.0 per cent.

- The largest value decrease from the previous month was a fall of £240.5 million (10.7 per cent) in the second biggest chapter by import value, HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof).
- The USA has overtaken China as the UK's largest non-EU import partner country in December 2012, accounting for 14.5 per cent of the total value of UK's non-EU import trade, while China had a 14.2 per cent share. As with last month, imports from both countries fell in value, but the value of imports to the UK from China fell by £295.8 million (11.3 per cent), the largest decrease compared to November 2012, whereas the fall in the USA's import trade was substantially less. The largest increase in imports into the UK compared to October 2012 was from Switzerland which increased by £384.1 million, 43.0 per cent.
- The first estimate of total imports for 2012 is £199.3 billion². This is an increase of £4.1 billion (2.1 per cent) compared with 2011. This continues the upward trend in the value of imports of goods into the UK in recent years only interrupted in 2009 during the period of recession.
- The total 2012 year to date value of UK's trade-in-goods imported from non-EU countries, excluding December 2012, is £182.9 billion, which is virtually unchanged from last month.

² The final figure for total imports for 2012 will be published in August 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 2011, November 2012 and December 2012.

HS 2	Description	December 2012 Total £ millions	% Change from November 2012	% Change from December 2011	% of Total December 2012 Exports	Rank November 2012	Rank December 2011
-	Total Exports	12,640.5	5.3	0.6	100.0	n/a	n/a
84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	2,421.3	-0.5	1.0	19.2	1	1
87	Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof	1,478.2	-11.7	12.5	11.7	2	2
71	Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal, and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coin	1,192.7	73.3	46.3	9.4	5	6
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	859.4	1.7	-11.1	6.8	4	4
27	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes	830.8	323.1	-28.5	6.6	15	3

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

The overall increase in exports **compared to November 2012** is driven by two large increases, while there were decreases in over 60 per cent of HS2 chapters. The total export trade value has increased by £0.6 billion (5.3 per cent). Three of the top five commodity types increased in export value. There were three chapters with increases of over £100 million, and four decreases of this magnitude, but more tellingly two of these increases were over £500 million, while there were no decreases over £200 million.

The largest value increase from the previous month, of £634.5 million, was in HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes). This is a fourfold increase compared to November 2012 and follows last month being the lowest recorded monthly export in recent years. The increase is driven by large increases in HS4 2709 (Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude) up £354.5 million from £0.1 million last month, and HS4 2710 (Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (excl. crude)) up £257.5 million, 164.0 per cent. These changes have raised HS2 27 from fifteenth place last month, to fifth.

The second largest increase was in the third largest export, HS2 71 (Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal, and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coin), up by £504.3 million, an increase of 73.3 per cent. Within HS71 it was HS4 7110 (Platinum, including palladium, rhodium, iridium, osmium and ruthenium) which saw the largest increase compared with November 2012 of £467.8 million, a fourfold increase.

The third largest increase was in HS2 88 (Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof), up by £190.9 million (43.9 per cent) to £625.4 million. This is the third highest export figure in recent years, with the highest being £681.1 million in December 2010.

Although those were the only increases greater than £100 million, just below this level was HS2 22 (Beverages, spirits and vinegar), up £96.5 million, 25.6 per cent, to £473.4 million. This is the highest export value on record for this chapter, beating the previous highest value of £412.6 million from October 2012. The increase is driven by exports of Scotch whisky in HS4 2208 (Undenatured ethyl alcohol of an alcoholic strength of < 80%; spirits, liqueurs and other spirituous beverages).

The largest decrease since last month was in the second largest export by value, HS2 87 (Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof), which fell by £195.4 million, a drop of 11.7 per cent; to £1.5 billion. Within this chapter, the largest decrease is in HS4 8703 (Motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of persons, including station wagons and racing cars (excl. motor vehicles of heading no 8702)), which saw a decrease of £201.8 million (down by 15.1 per cent). This decrease is still within the usual variation for HS4 8703, which has been on a generally upward trend since 2009.

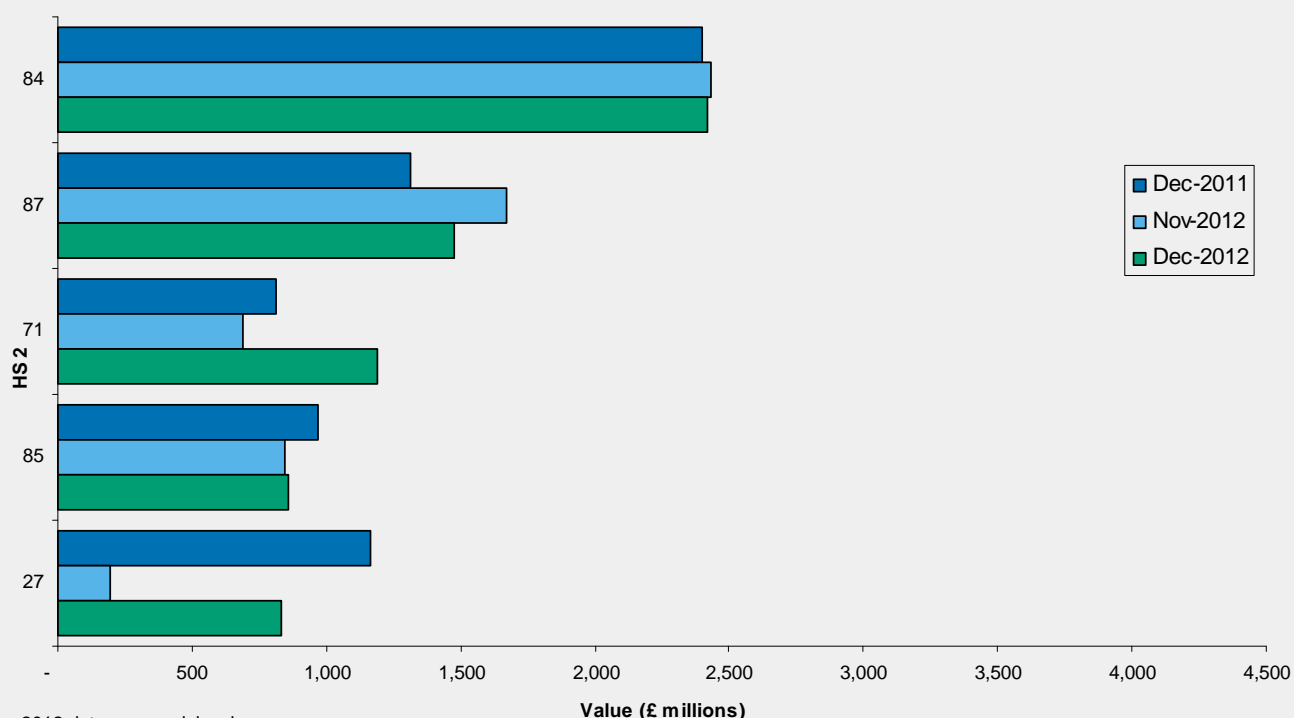
The second largest decrease was in HS2 30 (Pharmaceutical products), down by £142.6 million, a decrease of 15.6 per cent. This decrease has dropped HS2 30 from third to sixth biggest export. This decrease is spread among a number of products within this chapter, and puts HS2 30 at its lowest level since January 2012. It is normal for this chapter to see a drop in December or January.

The other large decreases were HS2 97 (Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques), which fell by £133.8 million, 24.8 per cent, and HS2 29 (Organic chemicals), which fell by £131.2 million, 37.8 per cent.

Compared to December 2011, the total export trade value increased slightly, by £70.8 million (0.6 per cent). Half of all HS2 chapters showed increases, and half showed decreases. There were four chapters with increases of over £100 million, and four decreases of this magnitude.

The largest two increases were in HS2 71, up £377.2 million, 46.3 per cent and HS2 87, up £164.4 million, 12.5 per cent. HS2 88 (Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof) rose by £160.0 million (34.4 per cent), and HS2 97 (Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques) by £142.3 million (53.8 per cent). The largest decrease of £331.3 million was in HS2 27, down 28.5 per cent. Also in the top five, HS2 85 decreased by £106.8 million, 11.1 per cent. Outside the top five, the other chapters for which the value of exports decreased by more than £100 million were HS2 29 (Organic chemicals) which fell by £253.8 million (54.1 per cent), and HS2 30 (Pharmaceutical products), down by £184.7 million, a decrease of 19.4 per cent.

Fig 2: Top 5 commodities for UK's non-EU exports December 2012 compared to November 2012 and December 2011



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

Figure 2 shows the top five commodities for UK's non-EU exports in December 2012, compared to November 2012 and December 2011. It shows the large increases for HS2 27 and 71 when compared with November 2012, although HS2 27 was down compared to December 2011. HS2 87 is down on last month but up on last year, while for the top chapter there were very small changes in both periods.

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

Country	December 2012 Total £ millions	% Change from November 2012	% Change from December 2011	% of total December 2012 Exports	Rank November 2012	Rank December 2011
Total Exports	12,640.5	5.3	0.6	100.0	n/a	n/a
USA	3,134.2	-0.6	-14.4	24.8	1	1
Switzerland	1,133.3	71.6	118.3	9.0	3	3
China	885.7	2.6	4.7	7.0	2	2
South Korea	576.7	161.4	12.4	4.6	16	4
India	466.5	34.7	5.3	3.7	10	6

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

For all three periods, the USA was the UK's largest non-EU export partner country, while this month has seen a record increase for Switzerland, to move ahead of China for the first time since 2008. South Korea and India have also seen large increases in exports which move them into the top five, displacing Russia and Hong Kong.

Compared to November 2012, the overall increase in exports is composed of decreases in the value of exports to over 50 per cent of our export partners, counterbalanced by a smaller number of much bigger increases. There was one country with a decrease of £100 million or more, and three with increases of this magnitude. The largest decrease moved Russia out of the top five export countries, from fourth to twelfth, while the largest increase moved Switzerland from third place last month to second place this month.

The largest increase in exports was to Switzerland, where exports increased by £473.0 million, (71.6 per cent). This month's exports to Switzerland are the highest value seen in recent years (£1.1 billion), 57 per cent higher than the previous highest of £721.0 million in July 2012. This is composed of an increase of £537.5 million in HS2 71, a near fourfold increase, offset by a decrease in HS2 97 (Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques) of £103.1 million, a fall of 54.5 per cent. The increase in HS2 71 is driven by a rise of £450.2 million in exports of platinum and palladium in HS4 7110, and £84.0 million in jewellery in HS4 7113.

The second largest increase in exports was to South Korea, up by £356.0 million, (161.4 per cent). This increase has moved South Korea from sixteenth place in November 2012 to fourth place this month. The increase is driven by a rise of £354.6 million in HS2 27 from £0.1 million in November 2012. This is a record for exports to South Korea, 12 per cent higher than the previous highest monthly export of £513.0 million in December 2011.

The third largest increase in exports was to India, up by £120.2 million, (34.7 per cent). This increase has moved India from tenth place in November 2012 to fifth place this month. The increase is driven by a rise of £115.0 million in aircraft in HS2 88, with a £97.5 million rise in powered aircraft in HS4 8802.

There were no other increases over £60 million.

The largest decrease in exports was to Russia, down by £182.1 million, 37.1 per cent. This decrease has moved Russia from fourth place in November 2012 to twelfth place this month. This is the lowest monthly export to Russia since January 2011's export value of £230.1 million. This decrease was driven by a fall of £112.3 million (57.3 per cent) in cars in HS4 8703, as previously mentioned.

There were no other decreases over £100 million.

Compared to December 2011, the minor increase of £70.8 million (0.6 per cent) in exports reflects an approximately even mix of increases and decreases in the value of exports to our partner countries. There were two decreases in excess of £100 and only one increase above this value.

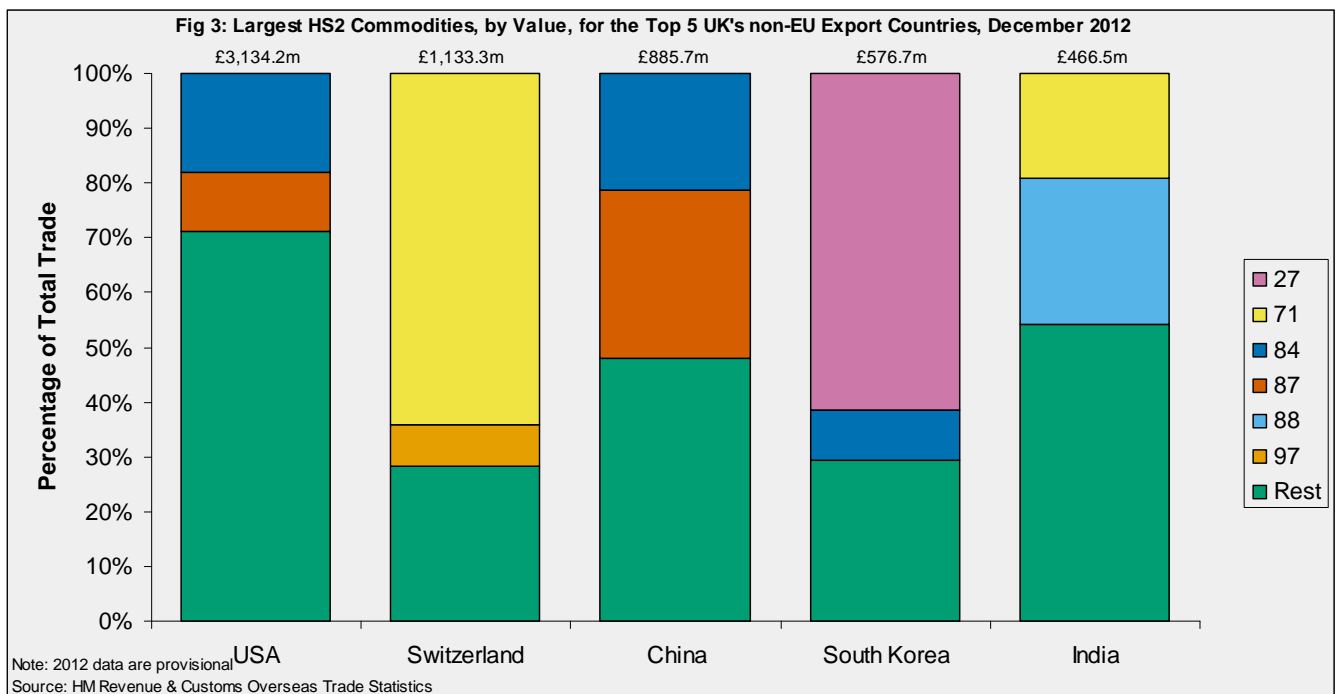
This largest decrease was for the USA, down by £525.8 million (14.4 per cent). This was driven by falls in HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes) of £324.0 million (57.1 per cent); HS2 29 (Organic chemicals) of £223.0 million (71.4 per cent); HS2 71 (Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal, and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coin) was down £108.9 million (48.5 per cent); and HS2 30 (Pharmaceutical products) was down £100.8 million (22.9 per cent). Offsetting this, there were two increases of over £100 million - HS2 97 (Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques) up by £154.5 million (138.4 per cent); and HS2 87 (Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof) up £147.9 million (76.7 per cent).

The second largest decrease was for Russia, down £164.0 million (34.7 per cent), which was driven by falls of £67.6 million (44.7 per cent) in cars in HS4 8703 and £48.4 million (99.0 per cent) in HS2 28 (Inorganic chemicals).

The largest increase in total export trade value compared to December 2011 was to Switzerland, up by £614.1 million, more than double December 2011's export value. As with the comparison with November 2012, this is due to a rise in HS2 71 (Natural or

cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals), up £584.4 million (a fivefold increase), with a £462.4 million rise in platinum and palladium in HS4 7110 and £122.6 million in HS4 7113 (jewellery).

Figure 3 shows the two largest commodities by value exported from the UK to each of its top five non-EU export partner countries. In December 2012 three of the top five countries had HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof) in their top two largest commodities exported from the UK, two had HS2 87 (Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof), and two had HS2 71 (Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal, and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coin). The trade with these countries accounts for 33.3 per cent of the total value of UK non-EU export trade for HS2 84, 41.4 per cent for HS2 87, and 68.3 per cent for HS2 71. Additionally, South Korea accounts for 42.7 per cent of the UK's exports in HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes), and 64.1 per cent of the UK's exports to Switzerland are in HS2 71.



Further Analysis: Imports

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

HS 2	Description	December 2012 Total £ millions	% Change from November 2012	% Change from December 2011	% of Total December 2012 Imports	Rank November 2012	Rank December 2011
-	Total Imports	16,357.7	-1.2	5.3	100.0	n/a	n/a
27	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes	4,366.6	18.0	20.7	26.7	1	1
84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	2,009.8	-10.7	8.7	12.3	2	2
71	Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal, and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coin	1,598.9	24.9	127.6	9.8	4	5
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	1,425.5	-4.8	-9.7	8.7	3	3
88	Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof	506.1	8.9	-29.3	3.1	7	4

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

The value of imports decreased by £0.2 billion **compared to November 2012**. This relatively small decrease is composed of decreases in over 70 per cent of the HS2 commodity chapters, balanced by a smaller number of larger increases. There were three decreases of over £100 million and two increases of this magnitude, but both of these increases were over £300 million, while the decreases were all below this level.

The chapter with the largest decrease was in this month's second largest import chapter by value, HS2 84, down £240.5 million (10.7 per cent). This was spread over several headings, with the largest decreases in HS4 8471 (Automatic data-processing machines) down £84.3 million (14.3 per cent) which includes computers and e-readers. This could represent a decrease after the rise in imports for Christmas trade.

The second largest value decrease from the previous month, of £140.0 million (43.8 per cent), was in this month's seventeenth largest import chapter by value, HS2 95 (Toys, games and sports requisites; parts and accessories thereof), from eleventh last month. Again, this probably represents a drop in imports after the Christmas trade, and regularly falls in December.

The third biggest decrease is HS2 61 (Articles of apparel and clothing accessories, knitted or crocheted), which fell by £106.2 million (18.9 per cent) to take this chapter out of the top five after the imports for the winter trade. Within this chapter, HS4 6110 (knitted or crocheted jerseys, pullovers, cardigans and waistcoats) fell by £43.6 million (25.4 per cent).

The largest value increase from the previous month, of £664.6 million (18.0 per cent), was in imports of the UK's biggest import by value, HS2 27. This is the second consecutive monthly increase of £500 million or more, and takes this chapter from its lowest import value for two years in October, to a record high this month. This increase was led by increases of £476.8 million (22.8 per cent) in Crude oil in HS4 2709, £137.1 million (16.4 per cent) in refined oil in HS4 2710, and £81.6 million (16.8 per cent) in Petroleum gas in HS4 2711. In all cases, similar increases in the quantity imported suggest that this is an increase in volume rather than price increases.

The other large increase in imports was for HS2 71 (Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal, and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coin), which increased by £318.3 million, 24.9 per cent, to become the UK's third biggest import by value. This increase was more than covered by a rise of £434.6 million (165.3 per cent) in imports of platinum and palladium in HS4 7110.

No other HS2 chapter increased by more than £100 million.

When **compared to December 2011**, total import value increased by £0.8 billion (5.3 per cent). As with the comparison with last month, the rise is composed of decreases in 70 per cent of the HS2 commodity chapters, balanced by a smaller number of larger increases. There were three chapters with increases of over £100 million (two of which were over £700 million) and three decreases over £100 million. All three increases, and two of the decreases, were in the top five.

The chapters with an increase of over £100 million were HS2 71, up £896.5 million, 127.6 per cent; HS2 27, up £748.2 million, 20.7 per cent; and HS2 84, up £160.0 million, 8.7 per cent. These are the top three chapters in import value.

The chapters with decreases of over £100 million are HS2 88, down £209.9 million, 29.3 per cent; HS2 85, down £153.1 million, 9.7 per cent (both in the top five) and HS2 30 (Pharmaceutical products) down £128.0 million, 27.6 per cent.

Within the top five chapters shown in Figure 4, three of the chapters show increases and two show decreases, when compared with November 2012, but the increase in chapter 27 dominates all other changes. When compared to December 2011, the large increases in chapters 27 and 71 are the dominant factors.

Fig 4: Top 5 Commodities for UK's non-EU import December 2012 compared to November 2012 and December 2011

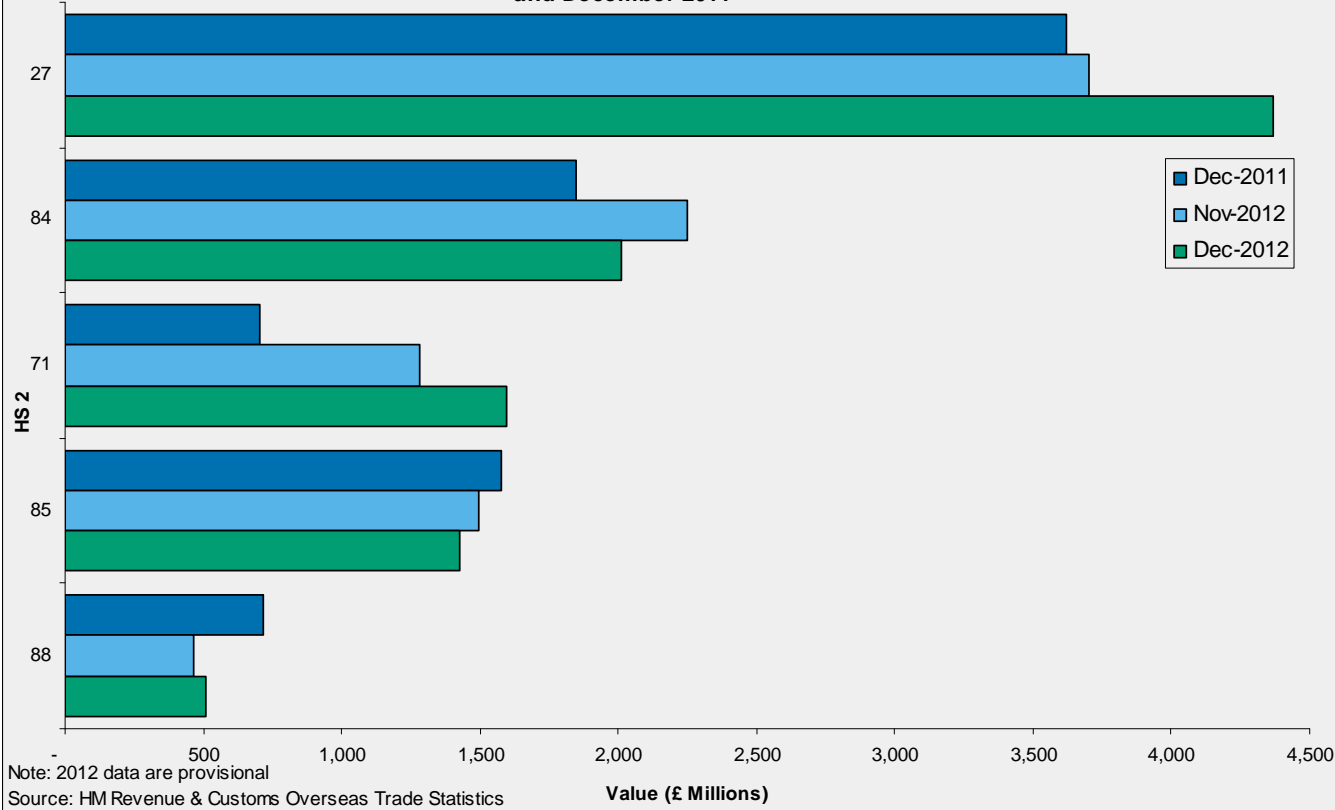


Table 4: Top 5 Non-EU import partner countries in December 2012 compared to November 2012 and December 2011

Country	December 2012 Total £ millions	% Change from November 2012	% Change from December 2011	% of Total December 2012 Imports	Rank November 2012	Rank December 2011
Total Imports	16,357.7	-1.2	5.3	100.0	n/a	n/a
USA	2,378.2	-4.5	-5.2	14.5	2	1
China	2,330.4	-11.3	-7.1	14.2	1	2
Norway	1,703.8	10.8	-19.3	10.4	3	3
Switzerland	1,277.9	43.0	179.6	7.8	4	8
Russia	717.9	6.6	35.0	4.4	7	6

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

Table 4 shows comparisons of the value of UK non-EU import trade from our top five import trading partners for December 2011, November 2012, and December 2012. Imports from two of the top five trading partners have decreased in December compared to the previous month, and three have decreased when compared to December 2011.

These changes have moved the USA ahead of China after being behind for one month, and Russia back into fifth from seventh, ahead of Japan and Hong Kong. The USA, China, and Norway have been the UK's largest import partners for a number of years.

The small decrease in total imports **compared to November 2012** reflects decreases in the value of imports from around 60 per cent of our import partners. Seven countries had decreases of over £100 million, while five had an increase of this magnitude.

The largest decrease in value of imports was from China, down by £295.8 million, a decrease of 11.3 per cent, to £2.3 billion. This fall was spread over a number of chapters, with three having decreases over £50 million. There was a decrease of £98.5 million (47.7 per cent) in HS2 95 (Toys, games and sports requisites; parts and accessories thereof); £66.5 million (12.4 per cent) in HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof); and £50.4 million (28.7 per cent) in HS2 61 (Knitwear).

The second largest decrease in value of imports was from Taiwan, down by £184.5 million, 42.2 per cent, to £252.9 million. This was led by decreases of £83.5 million (57.6 per cent) in silver in HS4 7106 and £60.9 million (81.8 per cent) in computers in HS4 8471. This decrease moves Taiwan down to fifteenth place from twelfth last month.

The third largest decrease in value of imports was from Nigeria, down by £174.4 million, 37.2 per cent, to £294.3 million. This fall was due to a fall of £222.3 million (48.5 per cent) in Crude oil in HS4 2709.

The other decreases of over £100 million were from Japan (down £153.7 million, 21.3 per cent), Hong Kong (down £126.4 million, 18.8 per cent), Singapore (down £114.4 million, 36.7 per cent) and the USA (down £113.0 million, 4.5 per cent).

The largest increase in the value of imports was from Switzerland, where imports increased by £384.1 million, (43.0 per cent). As with exports, this month's imports from Switzerland are the highest value seen in recent years (£1.3 billion), 20 per cent higher than the previous highest of £1.1 billion from March 2010. This is more than covered by an increase of £446.5 million in imports of platinum group metals in HS4 7110, a threefold increase. There was a similar increase in quantity imported, indicating that this is an increase in volume rather than price increases.

The second biggest increase in value of imports was from Norway, up by £166.5 million, an increase of 10.8 per cent. This increase is driven by a rise of £213.4 million, 15.9 per cent, in HS2 27, with HS4 2709 (Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude) up £128.9 million, 12.8 per cent and HS4 2711 (Petroleum gas and other gaseous hydrocarbons) up £103.0 million, 37.0 per cent.

The increase in Chapter 27 also drove the third, fourth and fifth biggest increases. Angola increased by £130.0 million, a tenfold increase, with a £130.4 million increase in HS4 2709 from zero last month. Kuwait increased by £105.6 million, with a threefold increase in HS4 2710 (Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (excl. crude) up £100.2 million to £139.8 million; and Algeria increased by £104.8 million (61.4 per cent) with a £110.1 million increase (68.9 per cent) in HS4 2709.

In contrast, there was an increase of £0.8 billion, 5.3 per cent in the total value of imports **compared to December 2011**, with imports from over 55 per cent of our import partner countries increasing in value. There were increases in excess of £100 million for imports from six countries, and six decreases of this magnitude. Three of the UK's top five import trading partners for December 2012 have decreased when compared to December 2011. However, the largest increase is almost equal to the overall change, indicating that the other increases are balanced by the decreases.

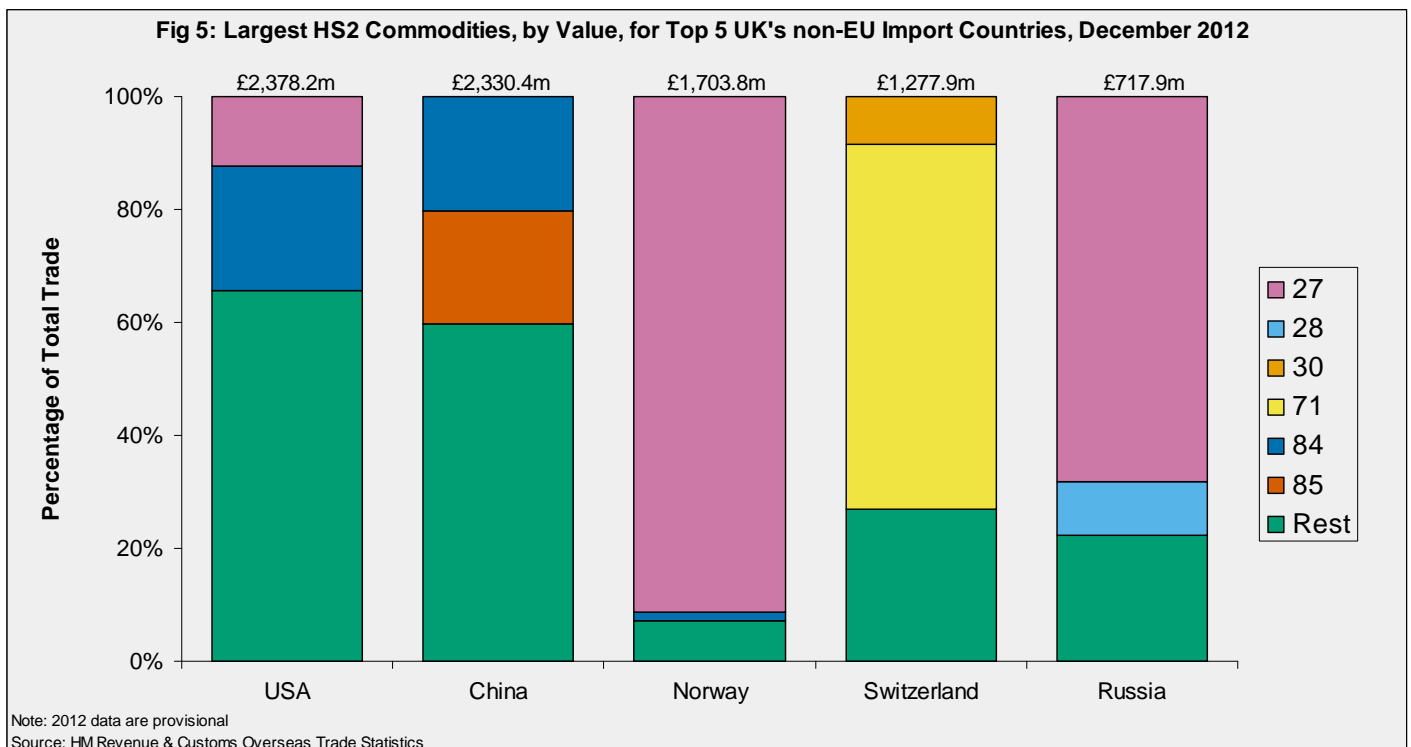
The largest increase in total import trade value is from Switzerland, up by £820.8 million, which is 99.8 per cent of the overall net increase. This is led by an increase of £785.4 million in HS2 71, which is made up of a £665.0 million increase in HS4 7110 (platinum group metals) from less than £0.5 million, and £118.8 million in HS4 7106 unwrought silver), from £2.7 million in December 2011.

There were also large increases from Russia (up £186.3 million, 35.0 per cent); the United Arab Emirates (up £160.6 million, 119.5 per cent); Angola (up £131.1 million, from £0.2 million); Nigeria (up £124.5 million, 73.3 per cent); and India (up £118.5 million, 29.2 per cent). All these increases were driven by the imports of gas and oil in HS2 27.

In contrast, it was a fall in HS2 27 which drove the largest decrease in value of imports, Norway, down by £407.5 million (19.3 per cent), with a fall of £419.7 million in HS2 27. The second largest decrease was from China, down £177.5 million (7.1 per cent), with a £125.4 million decrease in HS2 85. The other large decreases are from the USA (down £130.5 million, 5.2 per cent), Japan (down £130.1 million, 18.6 per cent), Israel (down £121.3 million, 43.5 per cent), and Singapore (down £108.8 million, 35.5 per cent).

Figure 5 shows the two largest commodities by value imported from each of the top five non-EU import partner countries. This month, three of the top five trading partners have HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof) in their top two largest commodities imported to the UK, accounting for 51.1 per cent of the total import value in HS2 84. Also, three of the top five import partners have HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes) in their top two largest commodities imported to the UK. The trade with these countries accounts for 53.4 per cent of the total value of UK non-EU import trade in this chapter.

The import trade in HS2 27 from Norway, specifically the Norwegian Continental Shelf, accounts for 91.2 per cent of the total imports to the UK from Norway, and the imports of HS2 71 accounts for 64.6 per cent of the import trade from Switzerland.



Notes:

1. HM Revenue & Customs released these latest statistics on Overseas Trade with countries outside the European Union (EU) on 7 February 2013 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 December 2012. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU data for 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 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. 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 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: 12 March 2013 9:30am

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If using specific facts contained in this release please check the information is still current.