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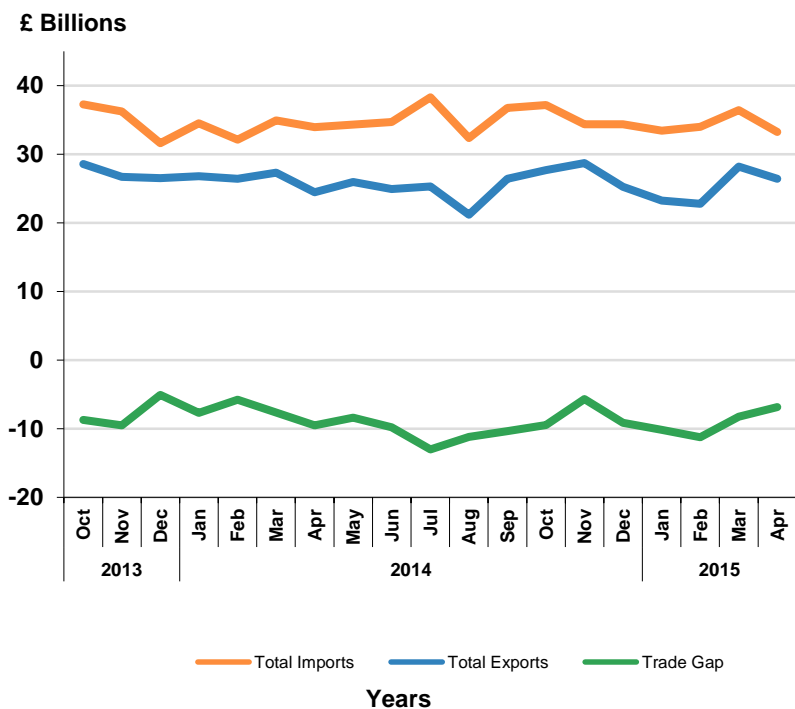


# UK Overseas Trade Statistics April 2015

## Summary

- Total Trade Exports for April 2015 are £26.4 billion. This is a decrease of £1.8 billion (6.3 per cent) compared with last month but an increase of £2.0 billion (8.0 per cent) compared with April 2014.
- Total Trade Imports for April 2015 are £33.3 billion. This is a decrease of £3.2 billion (8.7 per cent) compared with last month and a marginal decrease of £0.7 billion (2.0 per cent) compared with April 2014.
- The UK is a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £6.8 billion.

Figure 1: Total UK monthly trade



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
Note: 2014 and 2015 data are provisional

## Trade Trends

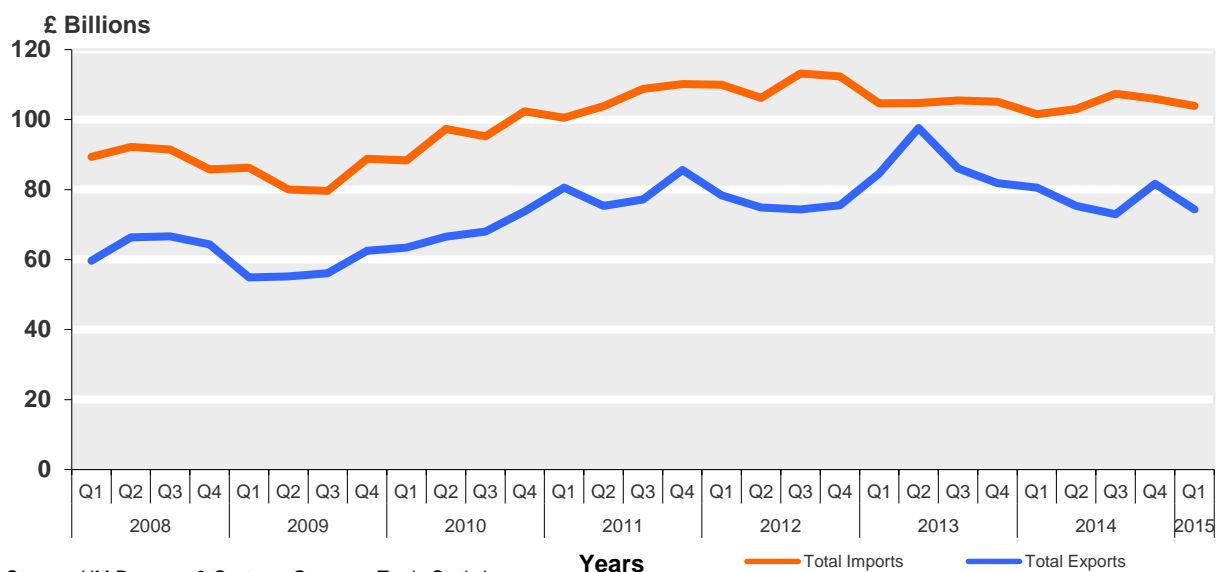
- Following the global economic crisis, UK trade dropped in 2009. Both imports and exports steadily increased until 2012. From the start of 2013, exports have remained relatively flat, while imports peaked in Q2 of 2013 and have decline since.
- The total **export** trade for 2014 is £311 billion, which is lower than the £350 billion for 2013 (11 per cent decrease).
- The total **import** trade for 2014 is £418 billion, which is a reduction compared with £420 billion for 2013 (0.5 per cent decrease).
- There was a trade deficit of £107 billion for 2014, which is an increase of 54 per cent on the £70 billion deficit for 2013. However, this has been strongly influenced by trade in non-monetary gold.
- For many years Germany has been our largest trading **import** partner by value, occasionally surpassed by USA. For **exports** USA has also been dominant for many years, but occasionally surpassed by Germany and Switzerland, driven by exports of precious metals.
- Mechanical appliances has generally been the largest **import** commodity by value. For **exports**, Mechanical appliances has predominantly been the largest valued commodity, surpassed by Mineral fuels and Motor vehicles in recent years.

Exports down  
11% for total  
2014 on 2013

Imports down  
0.5% for total  
2014 on 2013

Trade deficit  
increased by 51%  
for 2014

Figure 2: Quarterly UK trade, 2008 - 2014



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
Note: 2014 and 2015 data are provisional

## Non-EU & EU Trade

- **Non-EU Exports** for April 2015 are £15.5 billion. This is a decrease of £1.0 billion (6.0 per cent) compared with last month but an increase of £3.4 billion (28.0 per cent) compared with April 2014.
- **Non-EU Imports** for April 2015 are £15.7 billion. This is a decrease of £1.0 billion (6.1 per cent) compared with last month, and a decrease of £0.3 billion (1.6 per cent) compared with April 2014.
- **Non-EU trade** is a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £0.2 billion.
- **EU Exports** for April 2015 are £11.0 billion. This is a decrease of £0.8 billion (6.7 per cent) compared with last month and a decrease of £1.4 billion (12 per cent) compared with April 2014.
- **EU Imports** for April 2015 are £17.6 billion. This is a decrease of £2.2 billion (11.0 per cent) compared with last month and a decrease of £0.4 billion (2.4 per cent) compared with April 2014.
- **EU trade** is a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £6.6 billion.
- The proportion of exports to the EU is 41 per cent in April 2015. Over the past 18 months, this has ranged from 41 per cent to 51 per cent. Similarly, the proportion of imports from the EU is 53 per cent in April 2015. Over the same period, this has ranged between 49 per cent and 56 per cent.

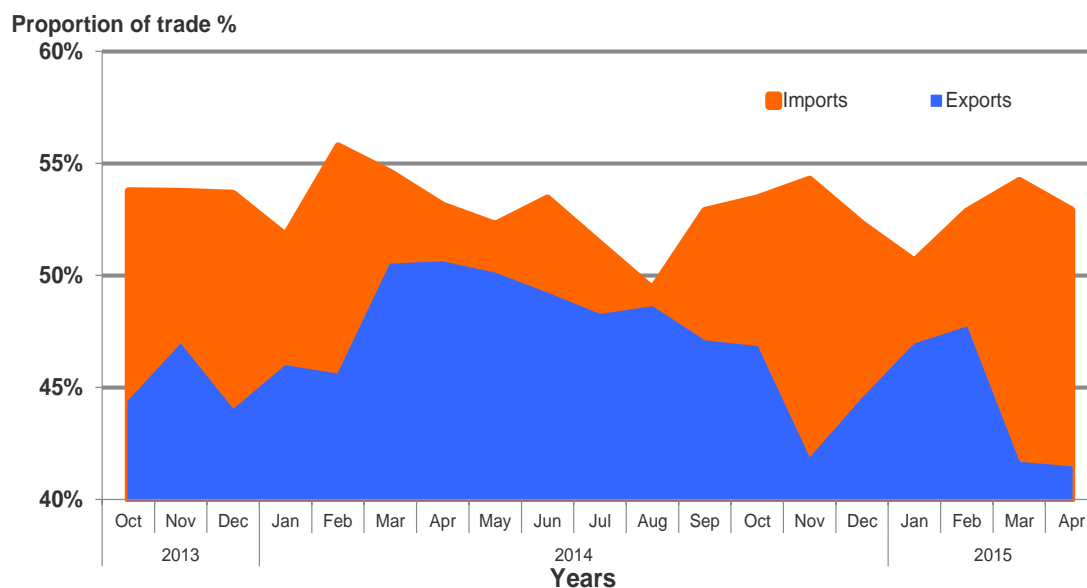
Non-EU exports  
up 28% on April  
2014

Non-EU imports  
down 6% on last  
month

EU exports down  
12% on April 2014

EU imports down  
11% on last month

**Figure 3: Proportion of Total UK Trade with the EU, April 2015**



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
Note: 2014 and 2015 data are provisional

# Exports

## Country Analysis

**Table 1: UK exports to top 10 partner countries, April 2015**

Partner Country	Apr 2015 Exports (£ billions)	Change from Mar 2015 (%)	Change from Apr 2014 (%)	Rank Mar 2015	Rank Apr 2014
United States	4.60	16.7	47.7	1	1
Germany	2.61	-6.6	-3.3	3	2
China	1.94	26.6	56.6	5	6
Switzerland	1.85	-40.8	79.6	2	8
France	1.50	-6.2	-0.8	4	4
Netherlands	1.31	-0.9	-34.8	7	3
Irish Republic	1.30	-4.7	-12.8	6	5
Belgium	0.97	-5.8	-8.7	8	7
Spain	0.72	-7.5	0.8	10	10
Italy	0.69	-12.0	-17.0	9	9
Others	8.94	-10.1	2.0	-	-
<b>Total non-EU</b>	<b>10.95</b>	<b>-6.7</b>	<b>-5.1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>15.47</b>	<b>-6.0</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>26.43</b>	<b>-6.3</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2014 and 2015 data are provisional

- The top ten export partner countries (ranked by value) have changed compared with both last month and last year. Most notably, Switzerland has dropped from second to fourth place and China has risen from fifth to third place on last month.
- Only the USA and China have experienced increases compared with last month of the top ten export countries. However, compared with April 2014, four countries increased while the remaining six decreased.
- The USA remains the largest export partner country. It saw the largest value increases compared with both last month and last year, rises of £659 million (up 17 per cent) and £1,484 million (up 48 per cent) respectively.

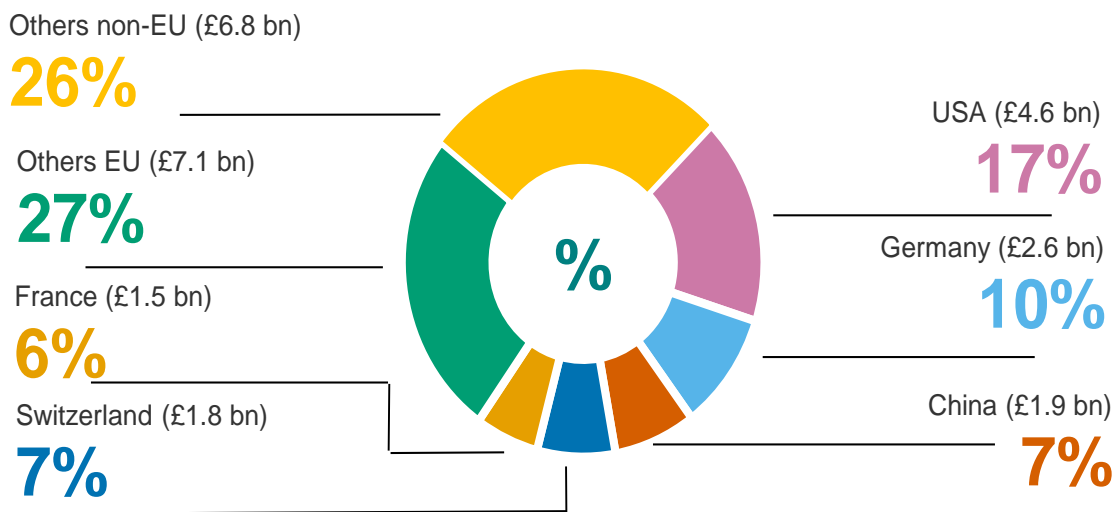
Top export country, USA, up 48% on last year

- Switzerland saw the largest decrease compared with last month, a loss of £1,272 million (down 41 per cent), which led to its fall from second to fourth place.
- The Netherlands experienced the largest decrease compared with last year, a loss of £697 million (down 35 per cent). This has now moved to sixth place from third last year.

Exports to Switzerland down 41% on last month

The Netherlands exports down 35% on April 2014

**Figure 4: UK exports to top 5 countries, April 2015**



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
 Note: 2014 and 2015 data are provisional  
 Note: Data rounded to the nearest percentage point.

- The USA accounted for 17% of the total value of exports from the UK. This has seen an increase from 13% compared with April 2014.
- Germany has the second largest proportion of total exports, accounting for 9.9 per cent. However, this is a decrease of 6.6 per cent compared with last month and 3.3 per cent compared with April 2014.
- The top five export partners account for 47 per cent of total exports compared with 44 per cent in April 2014.

USA accounts for 17% of total UK exports up from 13% in April 2014

## Commodity Analysis

**Table 2: UK exports by top 5 commodities, April 2015**

Commodity Description	Apr 2015 Total (£ billions)	Change from Mar 2015 (%)	Change from Apr 2014 (%)	Rank Mar 2015	Rank Apr 2014
Mechanical appliances	3.65	-5.2	1.9	2	1
Precious metals, stones & jewellery	3.20	-26.0	112.4	1	6
Motor vehicles	2.85	-6.9	-2.4	3	3
Pharmaceutical products	1.99	-9.6	23.0	4	4
Mineral fuels	1.69	-1.6	-45.1	5	2
Others	13.04	0.0	10.9	-	-
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>26.43</b>	<b>-6.3</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2014 and 2015 data are provisional

- The top five export commodities (ranked by value) have changed compared with both last month and last year. Most notably, Mineral Fuels dropped from second place in April 2014 to fifth place this month.
- Mechanical appliances is the largest export commodity by value, accounting for 14 per cent of the total value of exports.
- Precious metals saw the largest value decrease compared with last month falling by £1,122 million (26 per cent). However, this commodity had the largest increase compared with April 2014 up £1,694 million, doubling in value.
- Organic chemicals saw the largest value increase compared with last month, up £474 million (72 per cent).
- Mineral fuels had the largest value decrease compared with April 2014, down £1388 million (45 per cent).
- The top five export commodities account for 51 per cent of total UK trade exports compared with 52 per cent in April 2014.

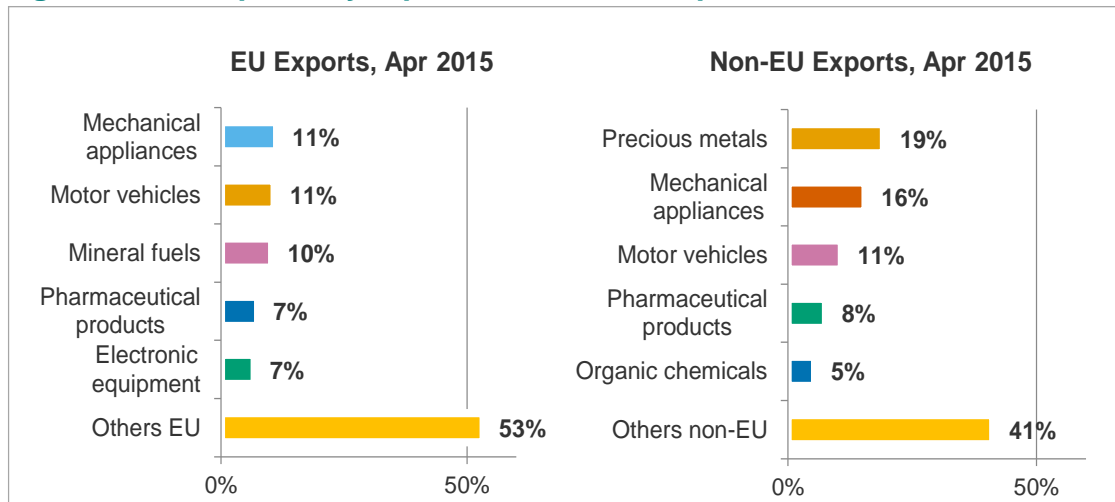
Mechanical appliances 14% of total exports

Precious metal exports doubled in comparison with April 2014

Exports of Mineral fuels down 45% on April 2014

## Combined Commodity and Country Analysis

Figure 5: UK exports by top 5 commodities, April 2015



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2014 and 2015 data are provisional

- Three of the top 5 commodities are the same for both non-EU and EU countries, the exception being precious metals and organic chemicals for the non-EU and mineral fuels and electronic equipment for the EU.
- The increase in exports to USA compared with both periods was led by increases of organic chemicals, toys and pharmaceutical products. There were rises in organic chemicals of £476 million, a fourfold increase, and toys of £317 million (doubling in value) compared with last month. Compared with April 2014, organic chemicals increased by £559 million (a sevenfold rise) and pharmaceutical products increased by £429 million, doubling in size.
- The large decrease in precious metals exports compared with last month and the large rise compared with April 2014 were both led by changes in exports to Switzerland. The fall compared with last month was £1,248 million (46 per cent) and this increase compared with April 2014 was £800 million (doubling in value).
- The decrease in value of exports in mineral fuels compared with April 2014 was led by a fall to the Netherlands of £617 million (62 per cent).

Exports of Organic chemicals to the USA up fourfold on last month

Exports of Mineral fuels to the Netherlands down £617 million on April 2014

## Imports

### Country Analysis

**Table 3: UK imports from top 10 countries, April 2015**

Partner Country	April 2015 Imports (£ billions)	Change from March 2015 (%)	Change from April 2014 (%)	Rank March 2015	Rank April 2014
Germany	5.11	-9.2	3.9	1	1
USA	2.85	-1.7	11.8	3	3
China	2.28	-24.0	1.7	2	4
Netherlands	2.27	-16.1	-13.8	4	2
France	1.94	-10.3	-5.9	5	5
Belgium	1.55	-17.1	-3.0	6	6
Italy	1.31	-6.4	-0.9	7	7
Spain	1.20	-2.4	12.0	8	9
Irish Republic	0.97	-3.5	-3.4	10	10
Switzerland	0.94	34.6	40.7	14	12
Others	12.83	-7.2	-7.4	-	-
<b>Total non-EU</b>	<b>15.66</b>	<b>-1.6</b>	<b>-6.1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>17.60</b>	<b>-2.4</b>	<b>-10.9</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>33.26</b>	<b>-8.7</b>	<b>-2.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2014 and 2015 data are provisional

- The top ten import partners (ranked by value) have changed slightly compared with last month. Switzerland has moved from fourteenth place last month and twelfth place in April 2014 to tenth place this month.
- Nine of the top ten import partners fell in value compared with last month, Switzerland being the exception. Compared with April 2014, five of the top ten countries fell in export trade.
- Germany remained the largest import partner accounting for 15 per cent of the total import trade, despite experiencing the second largest value decrease compared with last month, down £519 million (9.2 per cent).

Top import country, Germany, down 9.2% on last month

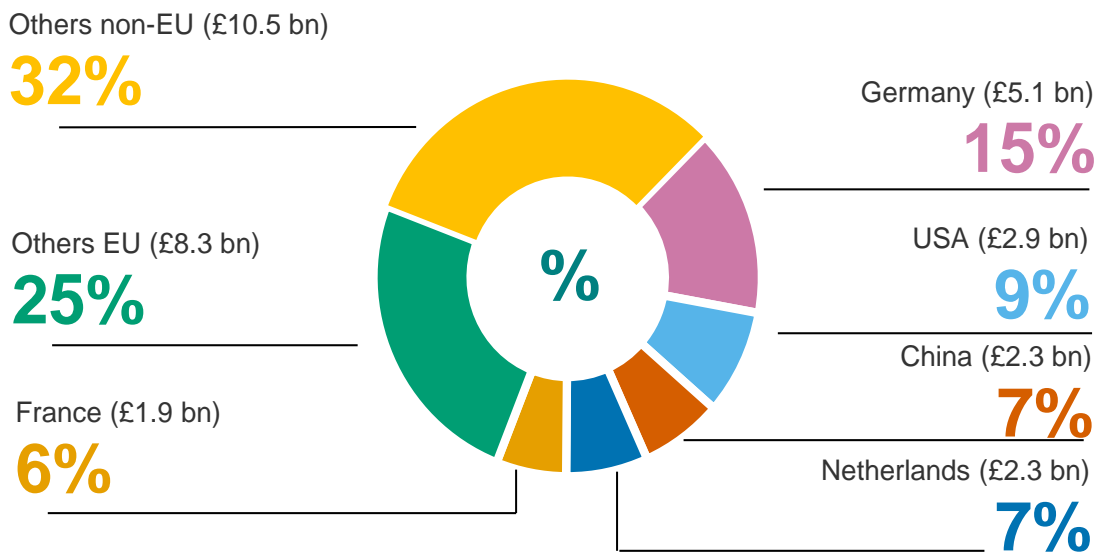
Imports from China down by £720 million on last month



- China saw the largest decrease compared with last month, by £720 million (24 per cent). However, Russia experienced the largest decrease compared with April 2014, down £392 million (49 per cent).
- South Korea saw the largest increase compared with both last month and April 2014 up £533 million, (more than doubling in size) and £576 million (trebling in size) respectively. This increase moved this country from 22<sup>nd</sup> place for both last month and April 2014 to twelfth place this month.

Imports from South Korea trebled on April 2014

**Figure 6: UK imports from top 5 countries, April 2015**



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics  
 Note: 2014 and 2015 data are provisional  
 Note: Data rounded to the nearest percentage point.

- Germany accounts for 15% of the total value of imports to the UK. This share of the market was the same for both last month and April 2014.
- The top five export partner countries account for 43 per cent of total UK trade exports this month compared with 42 per cent for April 2013.

Germany was 15% of total UK import for this month, last month and April 2014

## Commodity Analysis

**Table 4: UK imports by top 5 commodities, April 2015**

Commodity Description	April 2015 Imports (£ billions)	Change from March 2015 (%)	Change from April 2014 (%)	Rank March 2015	Rank April 2014
Mechanical appliances	4.23	-8.3	-1.2	2	1
Motor vehicles	4.04	-17.1	7.6	1	3
Electronic equipment	3.07	-5.6	3.6	4	4
Mineral fuels	2.83	-13.6	-26.9	3	2
Precious metals, stones and jewellery	1.70	7.4	5.5	6	6
Others	17.39	-7.7	-0.4	-	-
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>33.26</b>	<b>-8.7</b>	<b>-2.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2014 and 2015 data are provisional

- Mechanical appliances, having dropped to second place last month, returned to its normal position as the top import commodity by value, despite experiencing a decrease compared with last month, down £385 million (8.3 per cent). This accounts for 13 per cent of the total UK imports.
- All but one of the top five commodity groups decreased in import value compared with last month, the exception being precious metals. However, only two of the top five commodity groups fell (mechanical appliances and mineral fuels) in comparison with April 2014.
- Motor vehicles had the largest decrease compared with last month, down £834 million (17 per cent). However, it had the largest increase in comparison with April 2014, up £286 million (7.6 per cent)
- The second largest fall in comparison with last month was for Mineral fuels, which dropped to fourth place, down £445 million (14 per cent). Furthermore, it also experienced the largest value decrease compared with April 2014, down £1,041 million (27 per cent).
- Ships and boats had the largest increase compared with last month, up by £466 million, a nine-fold rise. It also saw the second largest increase in comparison with April 2014, up £269 million, doubling in value.
- The top five import commodities account for 48 per cent of total UK trade exports; in April 2014, it was 49 per cent.

Mechanical appliances 13% of total imports

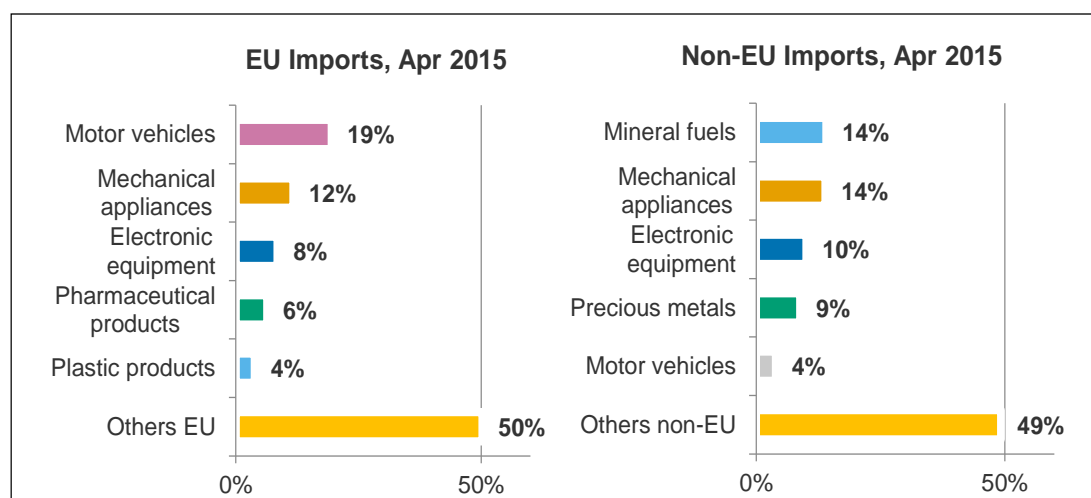
Imports of Motor vehicles down 17% on last month

Mineral fuel imports down 27% on Apr 2014

Imports of ships up nine-fold on last month

## Combined Commodity and Country Analysis

Figure 7: UK imports by top 5 commodities, April 2015



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2014 and 2015 data are provisional

- Three out of the top 5 commodities for both EU and non-EU countries are the same, except for pharmaceutical products and plastic products for the EU and Mineral fuels and Precious metals for non-EU.
- The decrease in imports from China compared with last month was due to falls in furniture, down £105 million (38 per cent).
- The substantial increase in the value of imports from South Korea compared with both last month and April 2014 was led by rises in imports of ships, of £510 million from virtually zero trade in both cases.
- The decrease in imports of mineral fuels compared with April 2014 was led by imports from Norway, down £369 million (33 per cent) and Russia down £300 million (50 per cent).
- Motor vehicles experienced the largest decrease in imports in comparison with last month but the largest increase in comparison with April 2014. The former was led by a decrease in imports from Germany down £272 million (14 per cent) and the latter was led by rises from France (£68 million, 25 per cent), the Netherlands (£62 million, 86 per cent) and Germany (£55 million, 3.4 per cent).

Imports of furniture from China down 38% on last month

Imports of ships from South Korea up £510m on last month

Imports of mineral fuels from Norway down 33% on April 2014

## 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 9 June 2015 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](#).
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 April 2015. At the same time revisions for all previously published non EU and EU data for 2014 and 2015 are also being released in line with the [HM Revenue & Customs Policy on Revisions](#).
3. The **EU figures** provided in this publication of the April 2015 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 HS2 and country totals.
4. The **non-EU figures** provided in this publication of the April 2015 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 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'.
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. 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>.
10. A consultation was run from 17 December 2014 to 31 January 2015. The results of this consultation showed support for a single combined commentary release, joining the separate EU and non-EU documents. This is the first release to be published in this format.
11. Following routine quality assurance and checking procedures, Trade Statistics has identified some errors in declarations made by traders. Revisions to both Non-EU and EU historical data will be released on 10 July 2015 in conjunction with the latest 2015 trade estimates and May OTS release.
12. 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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