

# Non-EU Overseas Trade Statistics - March 2012

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## **Summary**

- UK's Non EU exports have increased by £1.7 billion (14.4 per cent) compared to February 2012, to £13.5 billion. Compared to March 2011 exports have increased by £1.9 billion (16.0 per cent).
- UK's Non EU imports have increased by £1.0 billion (6.4 per cent) compared to February 2012, to £17.0 billion. Compared to March 2011, imports have increased by £1.3 billion (8.0 per cent).
- The monthly export figures are the highest since the OTS was first published separately for non-EU countries and EU Member States in 1993.
- The UK remains a net importer (imports are greater than exports). The size of the difference between imports and exports has decreased by 16.2 per cent compared to February 2012, and has decreased from March 2011 by 14.9 per cent.



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

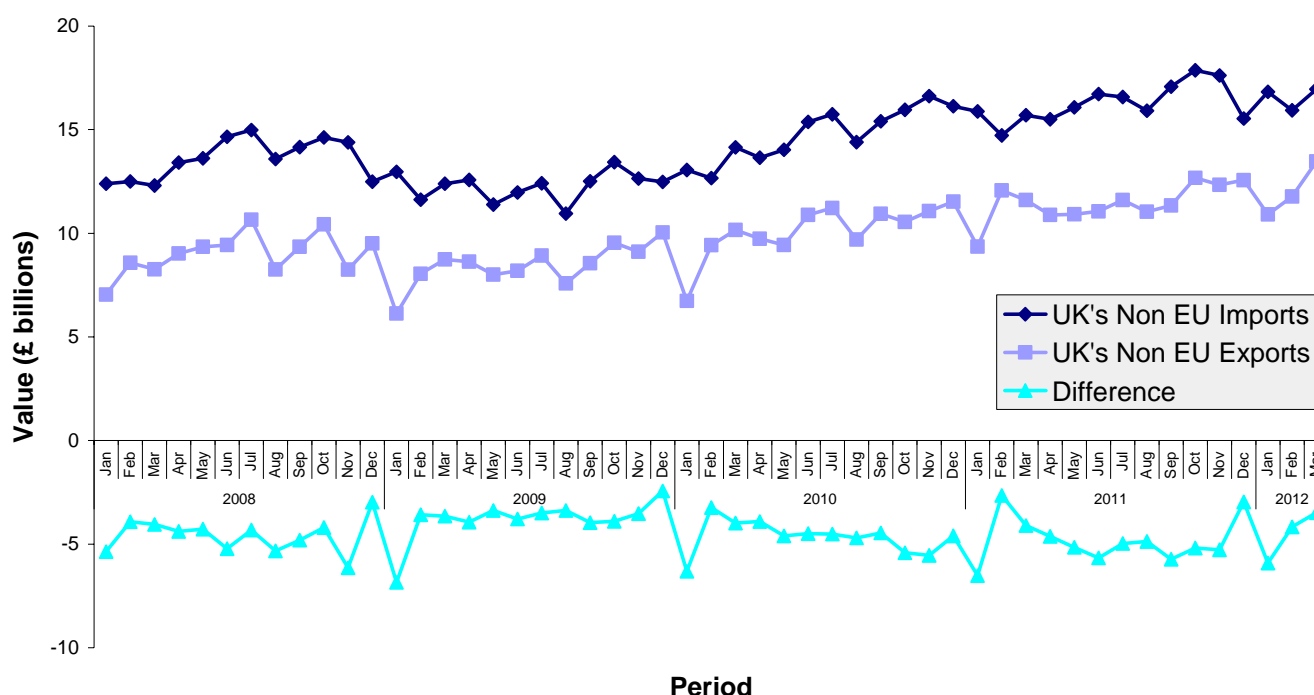
You can find details of how users interested in import and export markets for specific goods make use of the detailed OTS data in '[The Customer Story](#)'. You can also access the detailed data in our interactive database [here](#).

## Key Points

For the month of March 2012:

The value of imports and exports both increased in March 2012, with the value of exports rising more than the value of imports. This has decreased the difference between Non EU imports and exports. The monthly export figures are the highest since the OTS was first published separately for non-EU countries and EU Member States in 1993.

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



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

## Exports

- UK's Non EU exports have increased by £1.7 billion (14.4 per cent) compared to February 2012, to £13.5 billion. Compared to March 2011, exports have increased by £1.9 billion (16.0 per cent). This is a record high for exports, beating the previous record of October 2011 by £0.8 billion
- The top five commodities are the similar to the previous month. However, trade under HS2 71 (Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals), which occupied third place in February 2012 dropped to sixth place for March allowing HS2 85 (Electrical machinery and equipment), which was sixth in February, to move up the fifth place for this month.
- The largest contributing commodity group remains HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof). It contributed £2.5 billion, 18.2 per cent of the total value of UK's Non EU export trade. The largest contribution to this chapter was £971.1 million from HS4 8411 (Turbo-jets, Turbo-propellers and other gas turbines). Compared with February 2012 the value of exports in this commodity type increased £272.7 million, 12.5 per cent. This is the highest increase over all HS2 chapters.
- The largest decrease from the previous month was £131.2 million 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), a decrease of 13.1 per cent. This follows the February 2012 figure which was the second highest export value in this commodity type in recent years.
- USA remains the Non EU country for which the value of UK exports is largest, accounting for 28.5 per cent of the total value of UK's Non EU export trade. The USA had the largest increase, compared to February 2012, in the value of exports by £489.9 million, 14.7 per cent. The largest decrease in exports compared to February 2012 was to Qatar which decreased by £162.1 million, 55.0 per cent.
- The total 2012 year to date value of UK's goods exported to non EU countries excluding March 2012 is £22.7 billion, which has been upwardly revised by £8.8 million. This is an increase of less than 0.1 per cent.

## Imports

- The value of the UK's Non EU imports has increased by £1.0 billion (6.4 per cent) compared to February 2012, to £17.0 billion. Compared to March 2011 imports have increased by £1.3 billion (8.0 per cent).
- The top four commodities remain the same as the previous month. Trade under HS2 30 (Pharmaceutical products) has increased to become the fifth largest imported commodity by value. In February it was the ninth. In contrast, HS2 88 (Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof) has fallen to seventh place, having previously been fifth in February 2012.
- The largest contributing commodity group remains HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes). The largest contribution to this chapter was £2.8 billion from HS4 2709 (Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude).
- The largest increase at HS2 level from the previous month was in HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof) with an increase of £466.4 million. This increase over the previous month within HS2 84 was lead by two large increases in HS4 8471 (Automatic data-processing

machines and units thereof; magnetic or optical readers, machines for transcribing data onto data media in coded form and machines for processing such data), which rose by £160.3 million (55.0 per cent), and HS4 8411 (Turbojets, turbopropellers and other gas turbines), which saw a rise of £149.2 million (24.7 per cent).

- USA is the Non EU country for which the value of UK imports is largest for March 2012, accounting for 17.0 per cent of the total value of UK's Non EU import trade. The largest increase in value of imports to the UK compared to February 2012 was from Japan, a rise of £159.3 million, 23.7 per cent. The largest decrease in imports compared to February 2012 was from China which decreased by £435.5 million, 18.6 per cent.
- The total 2012 year to date value of UK's trade-in-goods imported from non EU countries excluding March 2012 is £32.8 billion, which has been downwardly revised by £46.5 million. This is a decrease of 0.1 per cent.

## Further Analysis: Exports

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

HS 2	Description	March 2012 Total £ millions	% Change from February 2012	% Change from March 2011	% of Total March 2012 Exports	Rank February 2012	Rank March 2011
-	Total Exports	13,460.7	14.4	16.0	100.0	n/a	n/a
84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	2,454.5	12.5	14.9	18.2	1	1
87	Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof	1,570.9	16.8	24.8	11.7	2	2
27	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes	1,048.1	21.0	7.6	7.8	5	3
30	Pharmaceutical products	1,036.4	16.2	17.7	7.7	4	4
85	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers, and parts and accessories of such articles	921.7	20.9	5.5	6.8	6	5

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

The overall increase **compared to February 2012** in exports reflects increases in a little under three quarters of HS2 chapters. All of the top five commodity types experienced increases in excess of £100 million, totalling £984.1 million, which accounted for over half of the total net increase in export trade.

Eight HS2 chapters had increases of over £100 million. The largest increase was for HS2 84, up by £272.7 million an increase of 12.5 per cent. This is the highest export

value for this commodity type in recent years. Within this chapter, there were increases in 72 per cent of HS4 level commodity types, with the largest increase being HS4 8411 (Turbo-jets, Turbo-propellers and other gas turbines), up £74.2 million. The corresponding increase in net mass suggests the value of trade increase is a combination of increases in volume and price.

The second largest value increase from the previous month, of £225.9 million, was in HS2 87 (Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof). This is a 16.8 per cent increase compared to February 2012. The largest contribution to this chapter was £1.2 billion from HS4 8703 (Motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of persons, incl. station wagons and racing cars). This HS4 commodity type was up by £150.8 million.

Outside of the top five commodities exported by value there was a relatively large increase in exports in HS2 89 (Ships, boats and floating structures), up by £165.3 million. This is the highest value of exports in this commodity type since July 2008. Exports from the UK in this commodity type have been reported in several newspapers, for example: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2110341/Kirsty-Bertarelli-yacht-Britains-richest-woman-takes-delivery-100m-superyacht.html>

The largest decrease since last month is 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 decreased by £131.2 million (13.1 per cent), and takes this commodity out of the top five. February's export value of £1.0 billion was the second highest value for exports in this commodity type ever.

The largest fall within HS2 71 was for HS4 7113 (jewellery and precious metal or of metal clad with precious metal (excluding articles greater than 100 years old)), down by £206.1 million to £215.8 million, a drop of nearly 49 per cent. This is offset an increase in the value of exports of HS4 7102 (unmounted diamonds) which rose by £119.0 million to £396.2 million, the second highest ever export value, after the record of £400.8 million in July 2011.

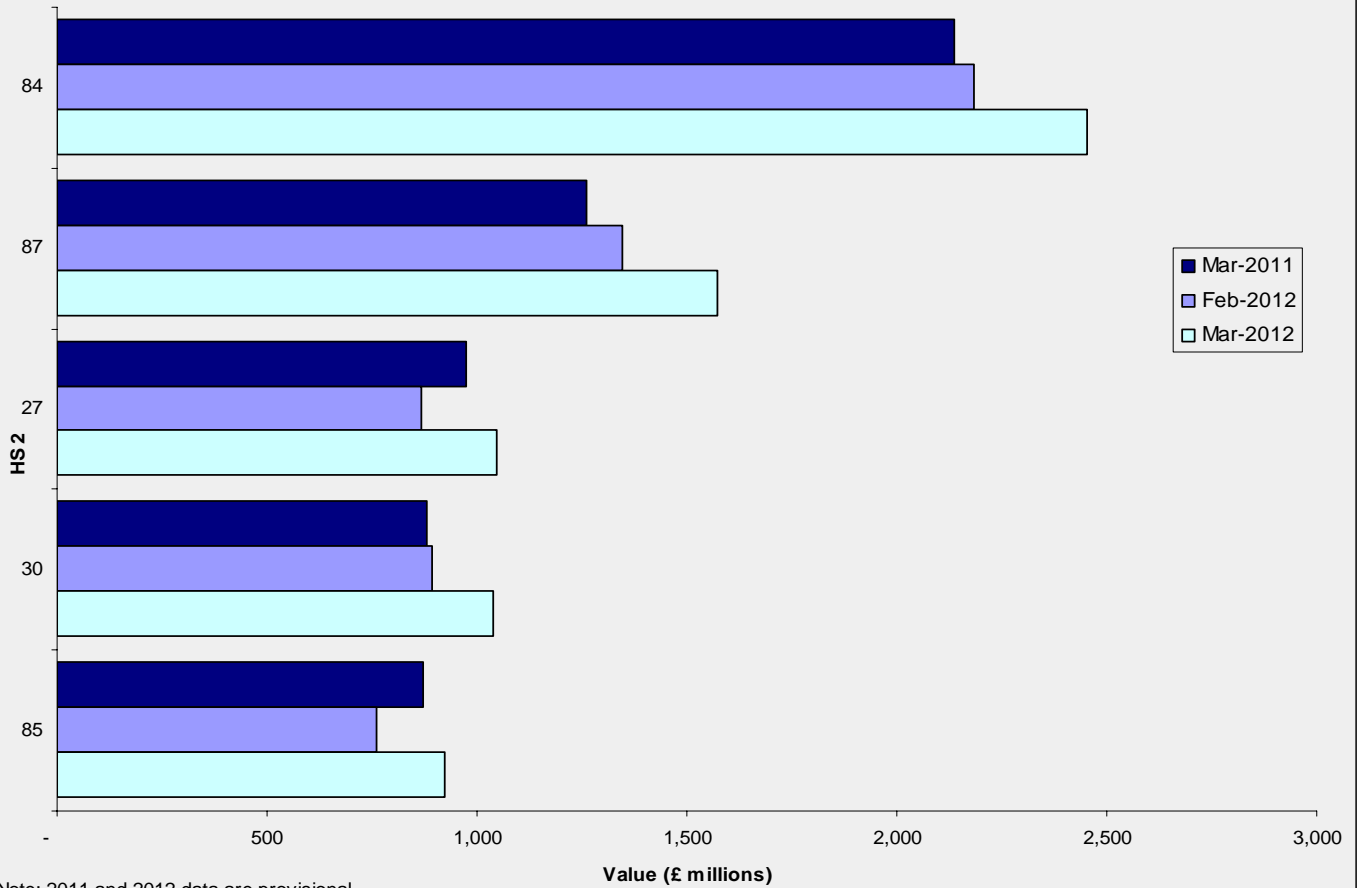
There was no other chapter for which the value of exports decreased by more than £100 million.

The total export trade value has increased by £1.9 billion (16.0 per cent) **compared to March 2011**. The change was driven by increases in a number of commodity types with six HS2 chapters showing an increase of over £100 million. In particular there were rises in the value of exports in HS2 84 (up by £317.6 million) and HS2 87 (up by £312.3 million). For both the value of exports in March 2012 is the highest in recent years.

Although the value of exports in HS2 71 fell compared to last month, as mentioned above, the total value of exports in this commodity type remains at a relatively high level of £871.6 million, an increase of £162.9 million compared to March 2011.

By contrast the largest decrease was only £65.7 million in HS2 28 (Inorganic chemicals).

**Fig 2: Top 5 commodities for UK's Non EU exports Mar 2012 compared to Feb 2012 and Mar 2011**



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

Figure 2 above shows the top five commodities for UK's Non EU exports in March 2012, compared to February 2012 and March 2011. It shows that all the top five commodity types had large increases compared with February 2012, but two of the increases are smaller when compared with March 2011.

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

**Table 2: Top 5 Non EU export partner countries in March 2012 compared to February 2012 and March 2011**

Country	March 2012 Total £ millions	% change from February 2012	% Change from March 2011	% of Total March 2012 Exports	Rank February 2012	Rank March 2011
Total Exports	13,460.7	14.4	16.1	100.0	n/a	n/a
USA	3,830.3	14.7	16.6	28.5	1	1
China	813.2	5.5	19.3	6.0	2	2
Russia	598.0	45.4	66.9	4.4	6	8
Switzerland	525.5	12.0	-5.3	3.9	3	3
United Arab Emirates	480.2	22.6	13.3	3.6	8	5

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

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

The overall increase in exports compared to February reflects increases in the value of exports to over 60 per cent of our export partners. In addition the increases for countries were generally larger than the decreases. As the table shows, all the top five export partner countries had an increase in the value of goods export to them from the UK compared to February 2012.

The largest change in value of export trade compared with February 2012 is the increase of £489.9 million to the USA. The value of exports to the USA in March 2012 of £3.8 billion is the highest value since November 2010. The largest increases were for HS2 30 (Pharmaceutical products) up by £93.0 million and HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof) up by £74.0 million.

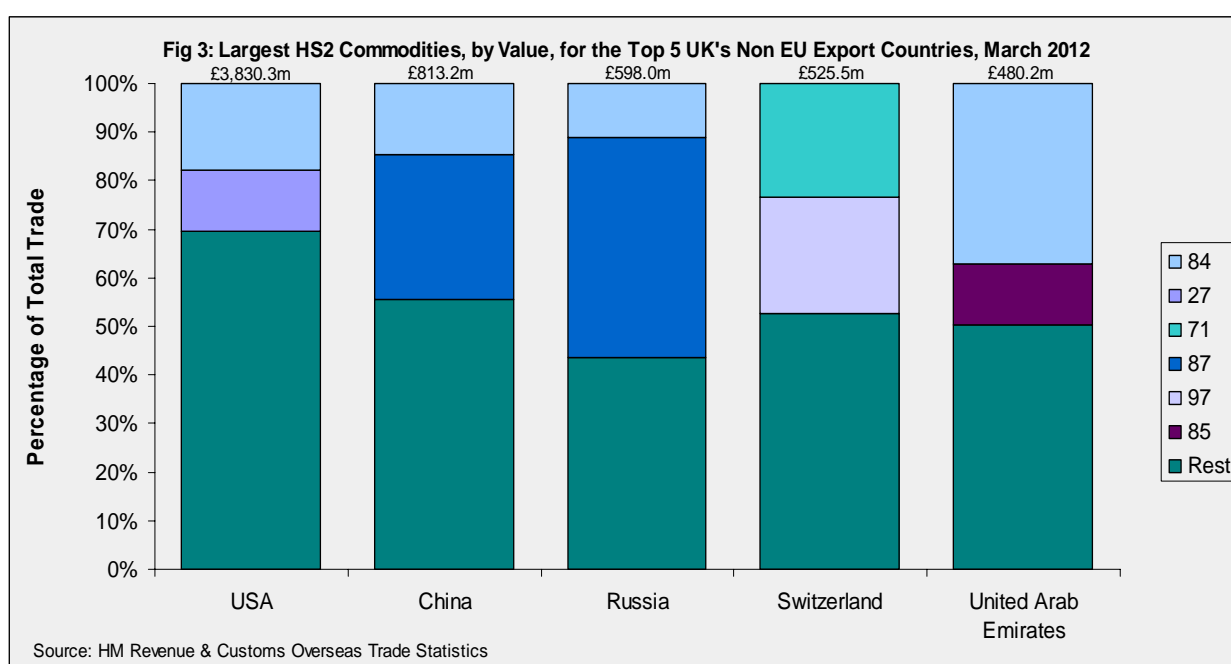
There were also relatively large increase in exports to the Netherlands Antilles (up by £196.6 million) and Russia (up by £186.7 million).

The increase in value of exports to the Netherlands Antilles is dominated by an increase of £177.2 million in HS2 89 (Ships, boats and floating structures).

Exports to Russia, which increased by 45.4 per cent making it the UK's third biggest export partner in March 2012. The increase was driven by a rise of £108.3 million (74.5 per cent) in the value of exports of cars in HS4 8703. The value of exports to Russia in this commodity, of £253.8 million, is the highest value in recent years.

The largest value decrease was for the value exports to Qatar, which fell by £162.1 million. This followed a rise in February of £202.7 million to £294.6 million. The increase in February and subsequent decrease this month is dominated by the change in exports of HS2 71 (Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals).

Figure 3 below shows the largest commodities by value for the top five Non EU export partner countries. Four of the top five countries have HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof) in their top two largest commodities exported from the UK. The trade with these countries accounts for 42.7 per cent of the total value of UK Non EU export trade under this heading. Furthermore, 45.5 per cent of all exports in HS2 27 from the UK go to the USA.





## Further Analysis: Imports

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

HS 2	Description	March 2012 Total £ millions	% Change from February 2012	% Change from March 2011	% of Total March 2012 Imports	Rank February 2012	Rank March 2011
-	Total Imports	16,950.7	6.4	8.0	100.0	n/a	n/a
27	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes	4,122.5	12.4	14.9	24.3	1	1
84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	2,257.6	26.0	23.5	13.3	2	2
85	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers, and parts and accessories of such articles	1,431.0	10.5	4.3	8.4	3	3
71	Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal, and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coin	1,111.4	-1.8	17.9	6.6	4	4
30	Pharmaceutical products	608.4	32.8	25.0	3.6	9	7

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

The increase of £1.0 billion in the value of imports **compared to February 2012** comprises increases in just over half of HS2 commodities chapters. There were increases in imports in four of the top five commodity types imported into the UK.

The increase was dominated by the rise in imports in HS2 84, up by 466.4 million (26.0 per cent) and HS2 27, up by £455.3 million (12.4 per cent).

The largest increase within the HS2 84 chapter were for HS4 8471 (Automatic data-processing machines and units thereof; magnetic or optical readers, machines for transcribing data onto data media in coded form and machines for processing such data, not elsewhere specified or included), up by £160.3 million (55.0 per cent) and HS4 8411 (Turbojets, turbopropellers and other gas turbines), up by £149.2 million (24.7 per cent). Although both HS4 8471 and HS4 8411 both showed increases in volume (19.0 and 9.6 per cent respectively), as these were less than the increases in value, this suggests that these increases were partially price led. Within HS2 27 the increase was led by a rise of £380.0 million (16.0 per cent) in HS4 2709 (Petroleum

oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude). As there was a similar percentage increase in volume, this implies that the increase was volume led.

The commodity group with the largest decrease was HS2 88 (Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof), which experienced a drop of £162.1 million (24.4 per cent). This was driven by a large decrease in HS4 8802 (Powered aircraft "e.g. helicopters and aeroplanes"; spacecraft, incl. satellites, and suborbital and spacecraft launch vehicles), which fell by £214.6 million (42.3 per cent).

The second largest decrease in the import of goods was in HS2 97 (Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques), down by £149.3 million. This follows a large increase last month of £242.4 million. Because of the nature of the goods involved, trade in this chapter is very volatile and just a few items of trade can have a major impact on the statistics. Because of the UK's position as one of the centres of the global art market, trade figures in these goods will reflect this volatility.

The increase in total import trade value **compared to March 2011**, noted above was driven by increases in just under a half of all chapters. The five chapters with the largest increases are the also the top five chapters with the largest value of trade. As with the changes compared to last month the overall increase in value of imports compared to March 2011 is dominated by increases in imports of HS2 27 (up £533.8 million) and HS2 84 up £429.7 million. The HS 84 value is the highest in recent years.

Within the top five chapters shown in fig 4 below, all of the chapters show increases compared with March 2011. Four of the five chapters show increases compared with February 2012. For HS 71, there is a marginal decrease of £20.7 million (1.8 per cent).

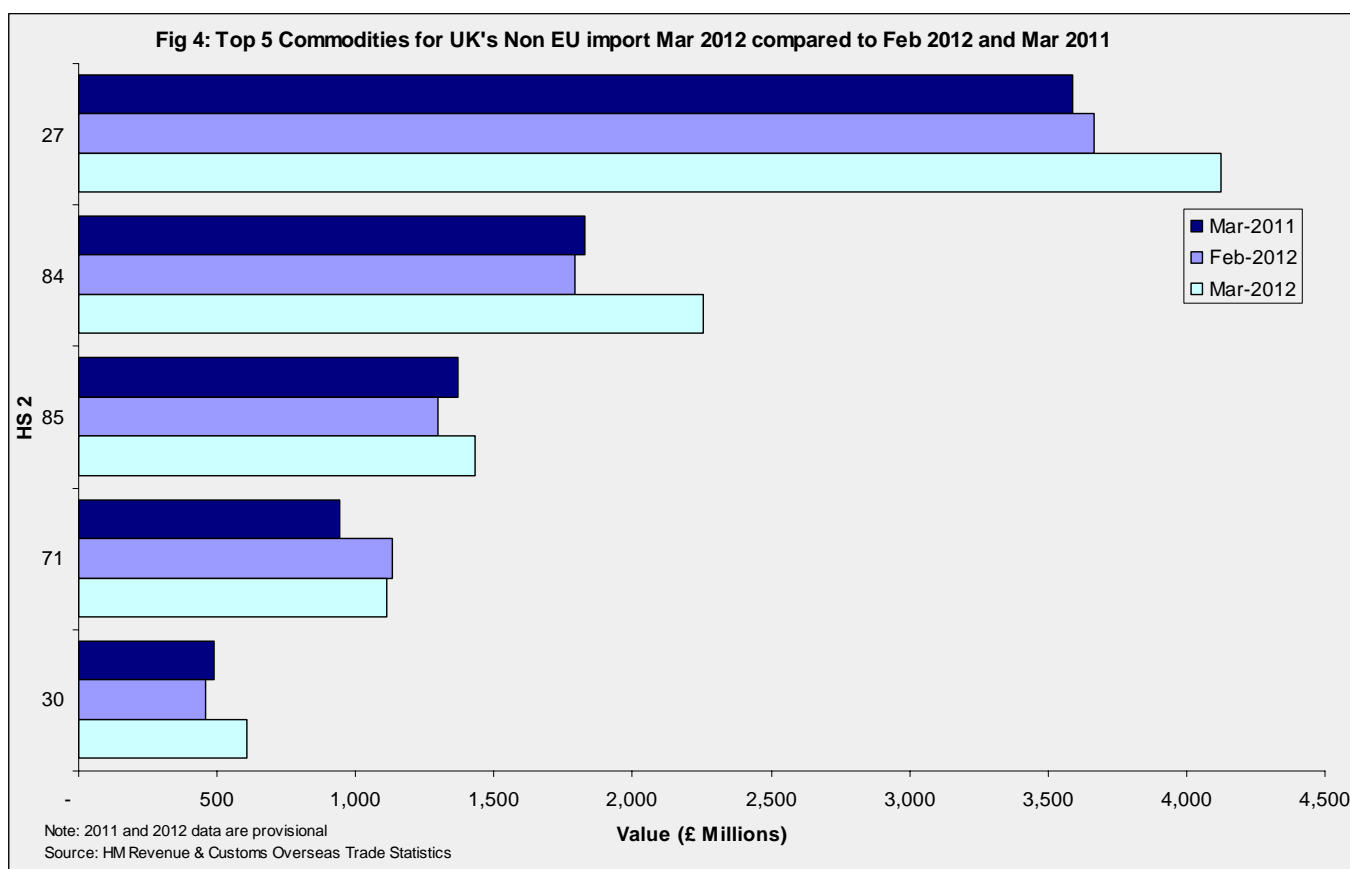


Table 4 shows comparisons of the value of UK import trade with our top five Non EU import trading partners for March 2011, February 2012, and March 2012. Imports from

all top five imports trading partners have risen in March compared to the previous month apart from China, which experienced an 18.6 per cent decrease.

Until last month, China and the USA had been the largest import partners for the UK for a number of years each accounting for between a quarter and a third of the total imports. In March 2012, as a result of the decrease mentioned above, Norway, which includes the Norwegian Continental Shelf, was our second largest import partner country by value.

The overall increase in imports compared to February reflects increases in the value of imports to over 60 per cent of our export partners. In addition the increases for countries were generally larger than the decreases.

One exception to the general pattern of higher increase was the fall in imports to the UK from China of £435.5 million, the largest decrease in any of the import partner countries. The value of imports from China has fallen by 39.8 per cent since the record high of October 2011. The decrease this month compared with February is spread across a whole range of HS2 chapters.

There was also a large decrease in imports was from Nigeria, which experienced a fall of £301.2 million (65.1 per cent) compared to February 2012. The decrease was driven by a fall in imports to the UK of HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes) which dropped from £452.0 million to £141.0 million, a reduction of £311.0 million (68.8 per cent). There was a similar decrease in the volume of the commodity being imported suggesting that less of the commodity is being imported rather than a decrease in prices.

In all the value of imports increased by over £100 million for eight of the UK's import partners. The largest increase in value of imports was from Japan, which rose by £159.3 million, an increase of 23.7 per cent. This was driven by an increase in HS2 87, (Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof), up by £97.6 million (61.8 per cent) and HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof) up by £74.6 million (44.7 per cent).

The second largest increase in the value of imports was from Israel, rising by £158.1 million, up 149.4 per cent. This was driven by a substantial increase in HS2 30, (Pharmaceutical products), up by £141.4 million from £7.1 million in February 2012 to £148.5 million this month, nearly twenty times February's figure. Trade under this commodity type, however, is very volatile. Monthly imports of this commodity type from Israel since 2008 have typically been around £5.0 million but in some months have risen to over £100.0 million.

The increase of imports from Japan and from Russia (up by £146.4 million, 22.5 per cent) accompanied by a decrease in imports from Switzerland (down by £71.2 million, 10.5 per cent) has led to Switzerland dropping from fourth to sixth place and Japan and Russia both moving up one place to fourth and fifth place respectively.

Table 4: Top 5 Non EU import partner countries in March 2012 compared to February 2012 and March 2011

Country	March 2012 Total £ millions	% change from February 2012	% Change from March 2011	% of Total March 2012 Imports	Rank February 2012	Rank March 2011
Total Imports	16,950.7	6.4	8.0	100.0	n/a	n/a
United States	2,882.8	2.6	8.0	17.0	1	1
Norway	2,177.2	6.4	2.1	12.8	3	2
China	1,912.0	-18.6	0.2	11.3	2	3
Japan	831.1	23.7	9.6	4.9	5	4
Russia	796.2	22.5	22.6	4.7	6	6

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

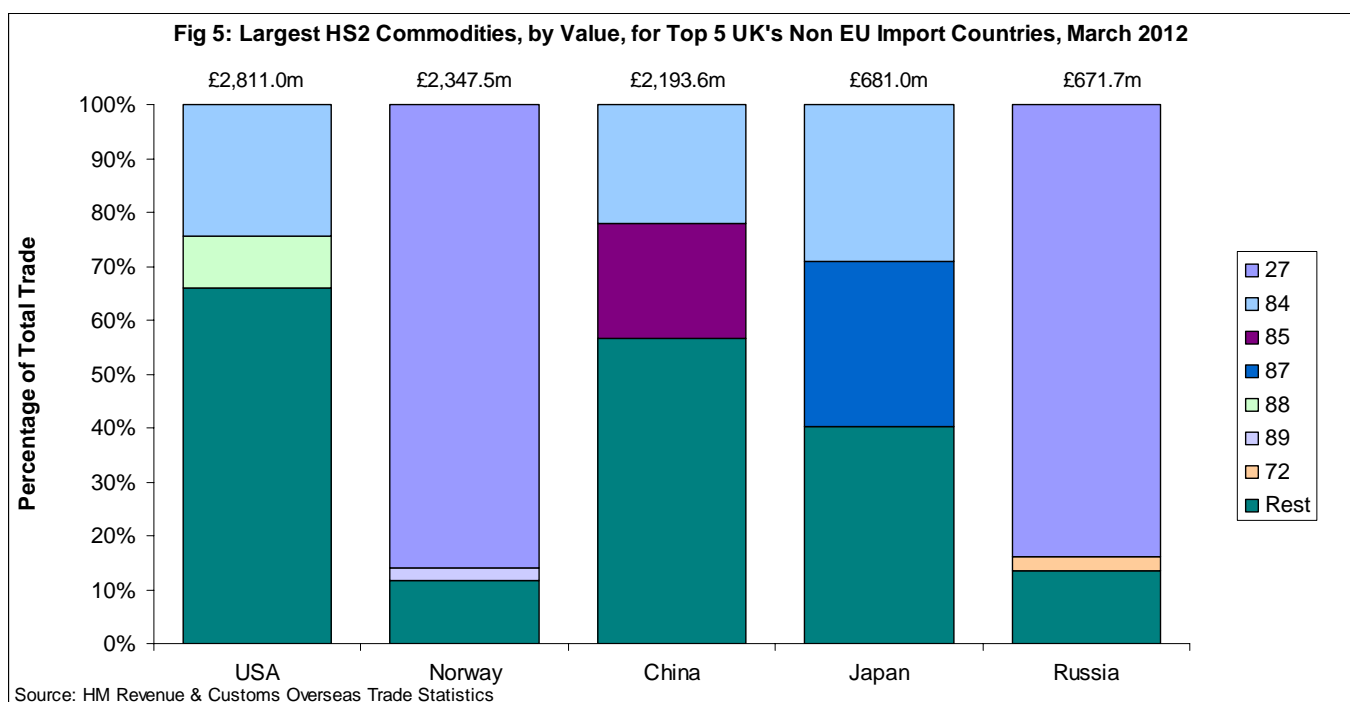
There were increases in the value of imports from just over half of our import partner countries **compared to March 2011**. These were greater in magnitude than the decreases in imports from other countries driving up the value of imports overall. As the table shows, the value of imports to the UK from all the top five export partner countries increased compared to March 2011.

The largest increases in total import trade value compared to March 2011 are driven by increases in imports from Algeria (up by £250.4 million) and Libya (up by £222.0 million). Both of these countries are outside the top five. The country with the third largest increase was the United States, the UK's largest non EU import partner country, up by £212.5 million). Both Algeria's and Libya's increases were driven by rises of £252.1 million and £221.7 million respectively in oil and gas imports recorded under HS2 27. The United States' increase was driven by a rise of £153.0 million in HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof).

The largest decrease in value of imports was from Qatar, down by £141.3 million to £293.5 million. The decrease is due to the fall in imports of HS2 27, down by £144.3 million (34.2 per cent).

Figure 5 shows the largest commodities by value imported from the top five Non EU import partner countries. Three of the top five non EU import trading partners have HS2 84 (Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof) in their top two largest commodities exported to the UK. The trade with these countries accounts for 60.5 per cent of the total value of UK Non EU import trade under this commodity heading.

The import trade in HS2 27 (Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes) from the Norway, specifically the Norwegian Continental Shelf, accounts for 85.9 per cent of the total imports to the UK from Norway. Russia also has HS2 27 in its top two largest commodity types. Together, these two countries account for 61.6 per cent of the total Non EU import trade to the UK under this heading.



Notes:

1. HM Revenue & Customs released these latest statistics on Overseas Trade with countries outside the European Union (EU) on 10 May 2012 under arrangements set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).
2. This release includes the first provisional estimates of trade-in-goods between the UK and countries outside the EU for March 2012. At the same time revisions for all previously published Non EU data for 2011 and 2012 are also being released in line with the [Overseas Trade Statistics Policy on Revisions](#).
3. Detailed trade information is presented according to the [Harmonised System \(HS\)](#) nomenclature.
4. The aggregate estimates here will differ slightly from those that are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as part of the Balance of Payments (BoP), as the two sets of data are compiled to different sets of rules. The ONS web site provides an overview of BoP at the [Guide to UK Trade](#) as well as the detailed monthly [UK Trade Releases](#). The BoP publication shows a high level picture of UK trade-in-goods, whereas the OTS publication shows a detailed picture of the UK's trade-in-goods by commodity and partner country. More detail about the differences between the BoP and OTS publications can be found [here](#).
5. The aggregate estimates here will differ from the Eurostat publication [Euro area external trade](#). The OTS is published as 'general trade' based upon goods recorded as they enter or leave the UK. This will include goods imported into and exported from a freezone or customs warehouse, regardless of their future use. The Eurostat EU external trade data are published as 'special trade' where goods are recorded as trade only when they enter free circulation or are accepted into [Inwards Processing Relief](#) (IPR).
6. Information to help support users of the non-EU Overseas Trade Statistics can be found [here](#). This includes links to our policies on revision and suppression of data, descriptions of the methodology used to compile the Overseas Trade Statistics and information on the quality of the data published.
7. The OTS has recently been reviewed as part of an assessment made of Overseas Trade Statistics by the [UK Statistics Authority](#). The report of that assessment can be found at

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-93---uk-trade-in-goods.pdf>

8. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

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

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

Next release: 12 June 2012 9:30am

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