



Coverage:
United Kingdom

Theme:
Business and Energy

Released:
11 May 2017

Next Release:
9 June 2017

Frequency of release:
Monthly

Media contact:
HMRC Press Office
03000 585018

Statistical contacts:

Maxim Mastrangelo
03000 594250
uktradeinfo@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

Customs Trade Statistics
HM Revenue & Customs
21 Victoria Avenue
Southend-on-Sea
SS99 1AA

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

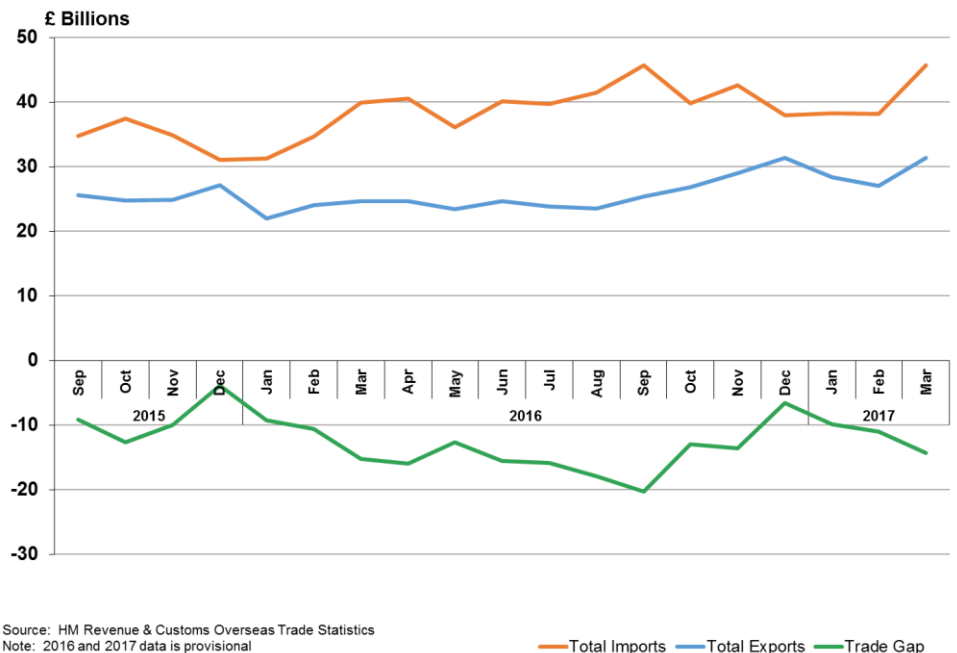


UK Overseas Trade Statistics March 2017

Summary

- Total trade exports for March 2017 were £31.4 billion. This was an increase of £4.3 billion (16 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £6.7 billion (27 per cent) compared with March 2016.
- Total trade imports for March 2017 were £45.7 billion. This was an increase of £7.6 billion (20 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £5.8 billion (15 per cent) compared with March 2016.
- The UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £14.3 billion.

Figure 1: Total UK monthly trade



Trade Trends

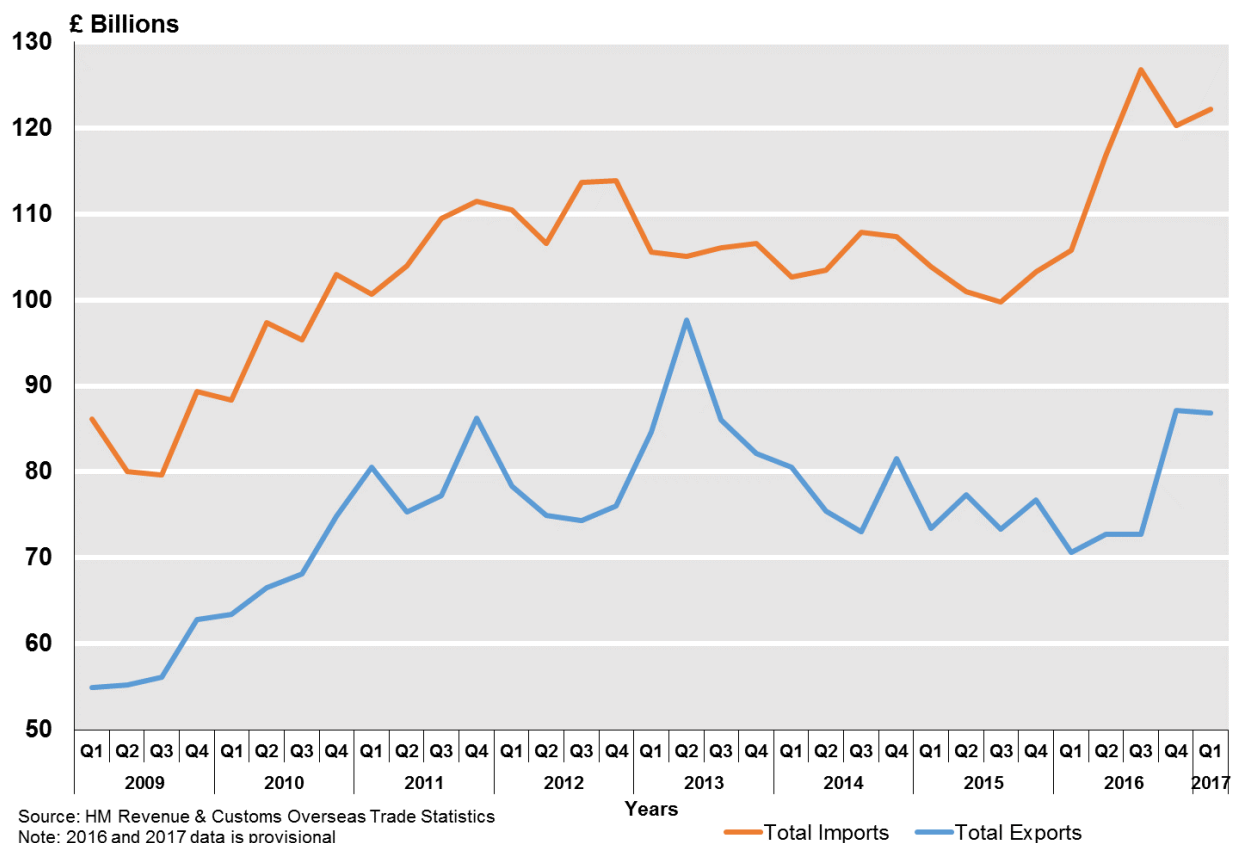
- Following the global economic crisis, UK trade dropped in 2009. Both imports and exports then steadily increased until 2012. From the start of 2013, imports remained relatively flat until a very sharp increase in Q3 of 2016, while exports peaked in Q2 of 2013, with a further peak in Q4 of 2016.
- The total **export** trade for Q1 of 2017 was £86.9 billion, which was an increase of 23 per cent compared with £70.7 billion for Q1 of 2016.
- The total **import** trade for Q1 of 2017 was £122 billion, which was an increase of 16 per cent compared with £106 billion for Q1 of 2016.
- There was a trade deficit of £35.3 billion for Q1 of 2017. This was an increase of 0.5 per cent compared with £35.1 billion deficit for Q1 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 23%
for Q1 2017 on
Q1 2016

Imports up 16%
for Q1 2017 on
Q1 2016

Trade deficit up
0.5% for Q1 2017
on Q1 2016

Figure 2: Quarterly UK trade, 2009 – 2017



Non-EU & EU Trade

- **Non-EU Exports** for March 2017 were £16.1 billion. This was an increase of £1.8 billion (13 per cent) on last month, and an increase of £3.6 billion (28 per cent) compared with March 2016.
- **Non-EU Imports** for March 2017 were £21.4 billion. This was an increase of £4.0 billion (23 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £1.8 billion (9.4 per cent) compared with March 2016.
- In **Non-EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £5.3 billion.
- **EU Exports** for March 2017 were £15.3 billion. This was an increase of £2.5 billion (19 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £3.2 billion (26 per cent) compared with March 2016.
- **EU Imports** for March 2017 were £24.3 billion. This was an increase of £3.6 billion (17 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £4.0 billion (20 per cent) compared with March 2016.
- In **EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £9.0 billion.
- The proportion of total exports to the EU was 49 per cent in March 2017. Over the past 18 months, this has ranged from 38 per cent to 51 per cent. The proportion of total imports from the EU was 53 per cent in March 2017. Over the same period, this has ranged between 46 per cent and 56 per cent.

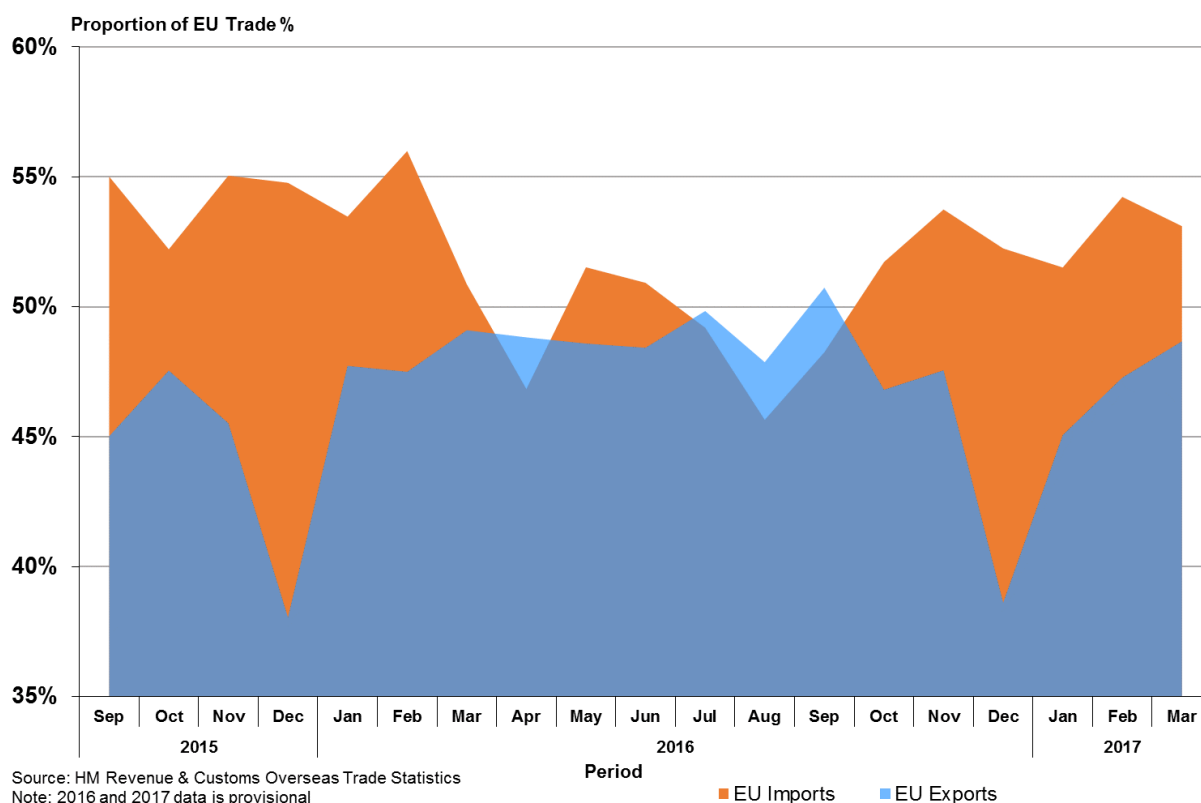
Non-EU exports
up 28% on
March 2016

Non-EU imports
up 23% on
last month

EU exports
up 26% on
March 2016

EU imports up
20% on
March 2016

Figure 3: Proportion of Total UK Trade with the EU, March 2017



Exports

Country Analysis

Table 1: UK exports to top 10 partner countries, March 2017

Partner Country	March 2017 Total (£ millions)	Change from February 2017 (%)	Change from March 2016 (%)	Rank February 2017	Rank March 2016
USA	4,603	26.2	27.3	1	1
Germany	3,680	27.6	37.6	2	2
France	2,359	28.4	39.5	3	3
Netherlands	1,785	9.9	6.3	4	4
Irish Republic	1,596	17.6	19.8	5	5
China	1,488	11.0	25.4	6	6
Belgium	1,272	14.0	29.2	8	7
Switzerland	1,218	-5.3	135.4	7	11
Spain	994	3.0	26.6	9	9
Italy	981	14.3	13.9	10	8
Others	11,421	12.3	22.3	-	-
Total Non-EU	16,116	12.9	28.4	-	-
Total EU	15,281	19.4	26.2	-	-
Total Exports	31,398	15.9	27.3	-	-

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2016 and 2017 data is provisional

- The order of the top ten export partner countries (ranked by value) has slightly changed compared with last month, though the top six remained unchanged. Similarly the top seven were unchanged when compared with March 2016.
- Nine of the top ten countries have experienced increases in value compared with last month, while all ten countries showed an increase compared with March 2016.
- The USA was the largest export partner country, and showed the largest increase compared with last month, up £956 million (26 per cent). It saw the second largest increase compared with March 2016, up £987 million (27 per cent).

Top export country, USA, up 26% on last month

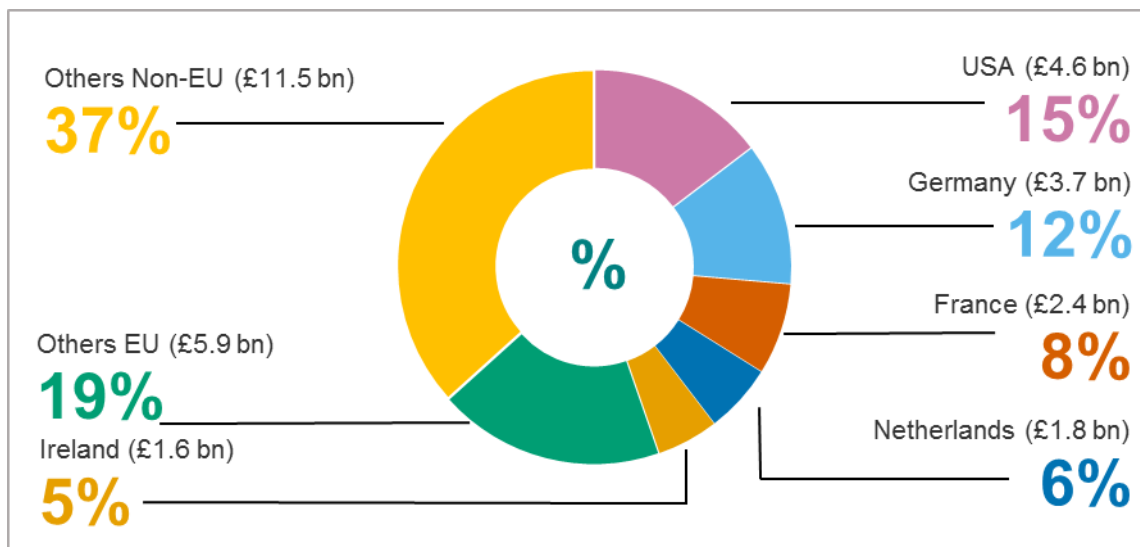
- Germany experienced the second largest value increase compared with last month, up £795 million (28 per cent), and saw the largest increase compared with March 2016, up £1,007 million (38 per cent).
- Qatar (in 30th place) experienced the largest value decrease compared with last month, down £492 million (76 per cent). Similarly, it experienced the second largest decrease compared with March 2016, down £78 million (33 per cent).
- Switzerland experienced a decrease compared with last month, down £68.5 million (5.3 per cent). In contrast, it saw the third largest increase compared with March 2016, up £701 million (more than double).
- France experienced increases compared with both last month and March 2016, up £522 million (28 per cent), and £668 million (39 per cent) respectively.
- The largest value decrease compared with March 2016 was outside the top ten, as Morocco (53rd) fell by £84.2 million (59 per cent).

Exports to Germany up 28% on last month

Exports to Qatar down 76% on last month

Exports to Switzerland more than double on March 2016

Figure 4: UK exports to top 5 countries, March 2017



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
Note: 2016 and 2017 data is provisional

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

The USA accounted for 15% of total UK exports

Commodity Analysis

Table 2: UK exports by top 5 commodities, March 2017

Commodity Description	March 2017 Total (£ millions)	Change from February 2017 (%)	Change from March 2016 (%)	Rank February 2017	Rank March 2016
Mechanical appliances	4,886	25.5	27.6	1	1
Motor vehicles	4,064	15.7	28.5	2	2
Pharmaceutical products	2,499	15.4	26.6	5	3
Mineral fuels	2,228	2.6	68.9	4	6
Electronic equipment	2,017	15.6	21.8	6	4
Others	15,704	15.5	23.4	-	-
Total Exports	31,398	15.9	27.3	-	-

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
Note: 2016 and 2017 data is provisional

- The ordering of the top five export commodities (ranked by value) has changed compared with last month and March 2016.
- The top commodity, Mechanical appliances, saw the largest increases compared with both last month, and March 2016, up £994 million (26 per cent), and £1,057 million (28 per cent) respectively.
- Motor vehicles experienced the second largest value increases compared with both last month, and March 2016, rising £551 million (16 per cent), and £901 million (28 per cent) respectively.
- Precious metals saw the largest value decrease on last month, down £349 million (16 per cent), to drop out of the top five. Conversely, it experienced a large increase compared with March 2016, up £704 million (62 per cent).
- Mineral fuels saw the second largest increase compared with March 2016, up £908 million (69 per cent).
- Aircraft experienced increases compared with both last month and March 2016, up £488 million (37 per cent), and £444 million (33 per cent) respectively.
- Pharmaceutical products experienced an increase in exports on both periods, up £333 million (15 per cent) on last month, and £524 million (27 per cent) compared with March 2016.
- Cereals (in 64th place) experienced the largest value decrease compared with March 2016, down £62.3 million (64 per cent).
- The top five export commodities accounted for 50 per cent of total UK trade exports this month compared with 49 per cent in March 2016.

Exports of Mechanical appliances up 28% on March 2016

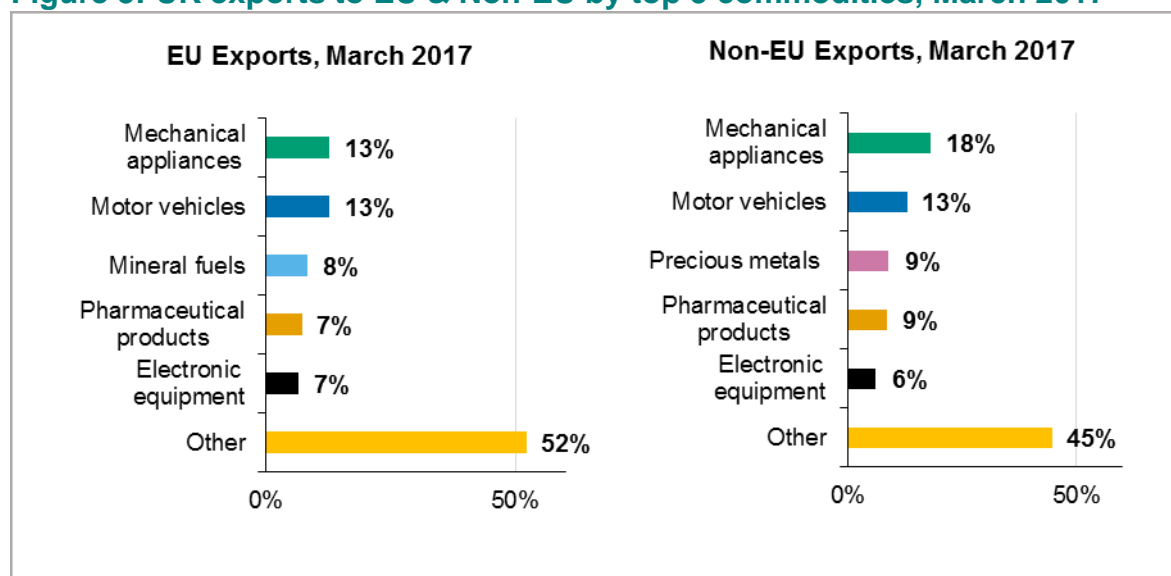
Exports of Motor vehicles up 16% on last month

Exports of Precious metals down 16% on last month

Exports of Mineral fuels up 69% on March 2016

Combined Commodity and Country Analysis

Figure 5: UK exports to EU & Non-EU by top 5 commodities, March 2017



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
 Note: 2016 and 2017 data is provisional

- Mechanical appliances, Motor vehicles, Pharmaceutical products and Electronic Equipment are in the top five export commodities for both EU and non-EU countries.
- The increase in exports of Mechanical appliances compared with both periods was led by an increase to France, up £282 million on last month, and £298 million compared with March 2016 (a near trebling in value for both periods). Similarly, the USA saw large increases in exports of the commodity on both last month, and March 2016, up £266 million (44 per cent), and £313 million (56 per cent) respectively.
- The rise in exports of Motor vehicles compared with both last month, and March 2016, was dominated by increases to the USA, up £244 million (40 per cent), and £423 million (doubling in value) respectively.
- The decrease in exports of Precious metals compared with last month was led by Qatar, down by £493 million (a near total decrease). Conversely, a rise in exports of the commodity compared with March 2016 was largely due to Switzerland, up £667 million (up from £185 million).
- The increase in exports of Mineral fuels compared with March 2016 was led by an increase to China, up £346 million (up from £58.8 million).
- The increases in exports of Pharmaceutical products on both periods was largely due to the USA, up £118 million (18 per cent) on last month, and £197 million (34 per cent) on March 2016.
- The fall in exports of Cereals compared with March 2016 was largely due to Spain, down £32.0 million (93 per cent).

Exports of Mechanical appliances to France near treble on last month

Exports of Motor vehicles to USA up 40% on last month

Exports of Mineral fuels to Qatar saw a near total decrease on last month

Exports of Cereals to Spain down 93% on March 2016

Imports

Country Analysis

Table 3: UK imports from top 10 countries, March 2017

Partner Country	March 2017 Total (£ millions)	Change from February 2017 (%)	Change from March 2016 (%)	Rank February 2017	Rank March 2016
Germany	6,559	15.2	18.1	1	1
USA	4,187	35.7	15.4	2	2
Netherlands	3,645	26.4	31.1	4	3
China	3,137	6.4	16.3	3	4
Belgium	2,609	27.9	33.8	6	6
France	2,425	11.7	10.7	5	5
Norway	1,891	10.2	76.3	7	12
Spain	1,844	21.5	28.8	8	9
Italy	1,680	16.5	15.1	9	8
Japan	1,198	25.9	13.5	12	13
Others	16,554	21.1	3.0	-	-
Total Non-EU	21,446	22.9	9.4	-	-
Total EU	24,283	17.5	19.7	-	-
Total Imports	45,729	20.0	14.6	-	-

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics

Note: 2016 and 2017 data is provisional

- The ordering of the top ten import partners (ranked by value) has changed slightly compared with last month. The Netherlands has risen above China; Belgium has risen above France, and Japan has risen from 12th to tenth in the rankings. There were several country ranking changes compared with March 2016, though the top four were unchanged.
- All of the top ten import partners increased in value compared with both last month and with March 2016.
- Germany remained the top import partner country. It had the second biggest increase in value compared with last month, up £868 million (15 per cent). It also saw the largest increase compared with March 2016, up £1,003 million (18 per cent).

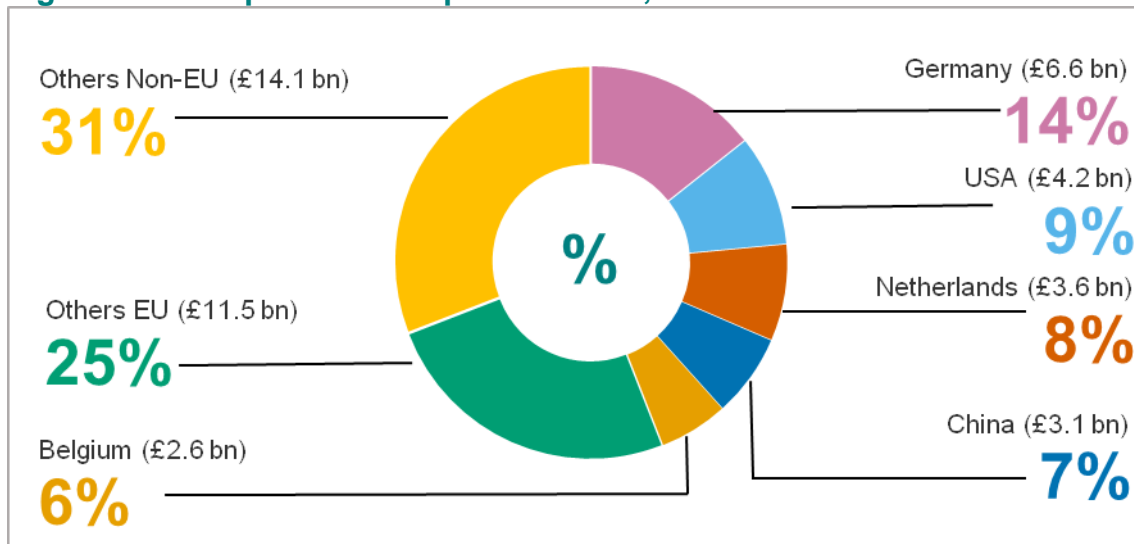
Top import country Germany up 15% on last month

- The USA saw the largest value increase compared with last month, up £1,101 million (36 per cent). It also rose compared with March 2016, up £560 million (15 per cent).
- Imports from the Netherlands saw the third largest increase compared with last month, up £761 million (26 per cent). It saw the second largest increase compared with March 2016, up £865 million (31 per cent).
- Australia (36th place) experienced the largest value decrease compared with last month, down £153 million (44 per cent). It also fell compared with March 2016, down £280 million (58 per cent).
- Switzerland experienced the largest value decrease compared with March 2016, down £1,099 million (63 per cent). It dropped from seventh to 18th place.
- Turkey saw the second largest decrease compared with March 2016, down £461 million (40 per cent). It dropped from tenth to 16th.

Imports from USA up 36% on last month

Imports from Australia down 44% on last month

Figure 6: UK imports from top 5 countries, March 2017



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
 Note: 2016 and 2017 data is provisional

- Germany accounted for 14 per cent of the total value of imports to the UK, a slight increase on March 2016.
- The USA accounted for 9.2 per cent of total imports, also increasing slightly compared with 9.1 per cent in March 2016.
- The top five partner countries accounted for 44 per cent of total UK import value this month, compared with 42 per cent for March 2016.

Germany accounted for 14% of total UK imports

Commodity Analysis

Table 4: UK imports by top 5 commodities, March 2017

Commodity Description	March 2017 Total (£ millions)	Change from February 2017 (%)	Change from March 2016 (%)	Rank February 2017	Rank March 2016
Motor vehicles	6,228	22.6	24.6	1	2
Mechanical appliances	5,874	25.3	22.4	2	3
Electronic equipment	3,873	17.1	13.9	4	4
Mineral fuels	3,684	9.4	63.0	3	5
Precious metals	3,146	25.2	-39.4	5	1
Others	22,924	19.6	19.1	-	-
Total Imports	45,729	20.0	14.6	-	-

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics
 Note: 2016 and 2017 data is provisional

- The ordering of the top five commodity groups has changed slightly compared with last month. Electronic equipment rose to third from fourth place. Precious metals dropped from first to fifth place when compared with March 2016.
- Motor vehicles was the top import commodity by value, accounting for a 14 per cent share of the total imports. It showed the second largest increase compared with last month, up £1,148 million (23 per cent). The commodity also saw the second largest increase against March 2016, up £1,229 million (25 per cent).
- Mechanical appliances showed the largest increase in imports compared with last month, up £1,188 million (25 per cent). It showed the third highest increase on March 2016, up £1,075 million (22 per cent).
- Mineral fuels increased by £317 million (9.4 per cent) compared with last month. It also showed the highest increase compared with March 2016, up £1,424 million (63 per cent), climbing from fifth to fourth place.
- Precious metals experienced the third largest value increase compared with last month, up £632 million (25 per cent). In contrast, it had the largest decrease compared with March 2016, down £2,044 million (39 per cent), falling from first to fifth place.
- Imports of Art and antiques (in 46th place) experienced the largest decrease compared with last month, down £82 million (36 per cent).
- The top five import commodities accounted for 50 per cent of total UK trade imports for this month, down from 52 per cent in March 2016.

Top import commodity, Motor vehicles, up 23% on last month

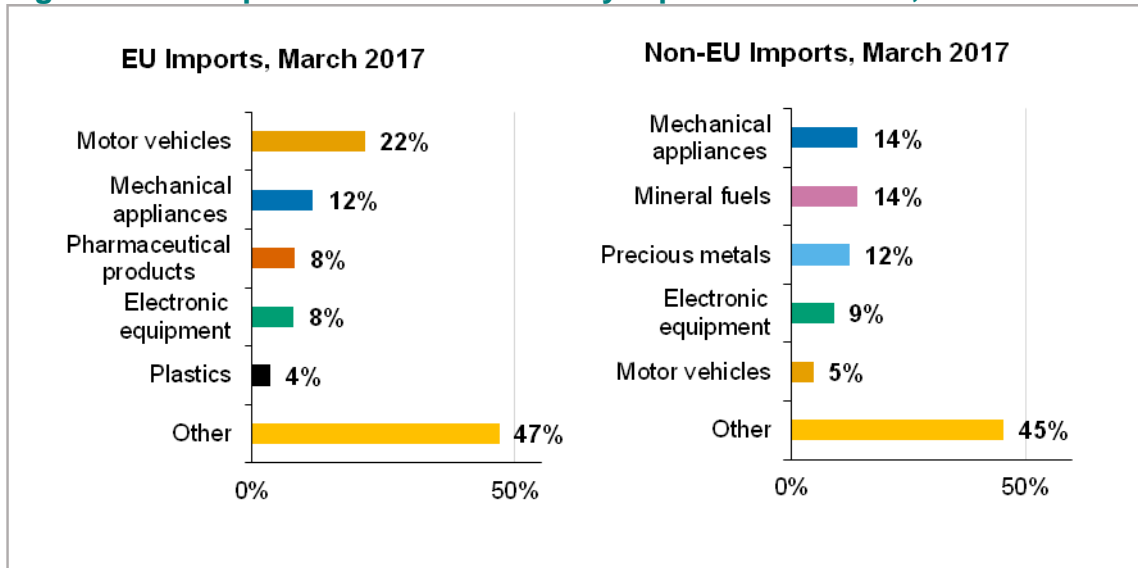
Imports of Motor vehicles up 29%

Imports of Mineral fuels up 63% on March 2016

Precious metals imports down 39% on March 2016

Combined Commodity and Country Analysis

Figure 7: UK imports to EU & Non-EU by top 5 commodities, March 2017



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade Statistics Note: 2016 and 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 Motor vehicles compared with last month was led by increases from Germany, up £339 million (18 per cent) and Belgium, up £303 million (57 per cent). These countries, together with Spain, also led the increase on March 2016. Germany rose by £351 million (19 per cent); Spain by £248 million (68 per cent); and Belgium by £221 million (36 per cent).
- The increase in imports of Mechanical appliances compared with last month was led by USA and the Netherlands, up £208 million (26 per cent) and £105 million (27 per cent) respectively. These countries also led the increase on March 2016, with the USA up £215 million (27 per cent) and the Netherlands up £143 million (41 per cent).
- The large decrease in Precious metals compared with March 2016 was led by imports from Switzerland, Turkey and Australia, down £1,128 million (95 per cent), £590 million (almost total) and £343 million (90 per cent) respectively.
- The increase in imports of Mineral fuels compared with last month was led by imports from Algeria, up £196 million (from less than £5 million) and Qatar, up £155 million (a sevenfold increase). The increase on March 2016 was led by imports from Norway, up £595 million (68 per cent).
- The increase in imports from the USA compared with last month was led by Aircraft, up £347 million (doubling in value), and Mechanical appliances, as mentioned above.

Imports of Motor vehicles from Germany up 18% on last month

Imports of Mechanical appliances from USA up 26% on last month

Imports of Precious metals from Switzerland down 95% on March 2016

Imports of Aircraft from the USA double 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 11 May 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](#).
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 March 2017. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU and EU data for 2016 and 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 March 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 March 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.

Statistical contact:

Maxim Mastrangelo 03000 594250

E-mail uktradeinfo@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

Next release: 9 June 2017 9:30am

© **Crown copyright 2017.**

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