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UK Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics April 2018

Summary

- Total trade in goods **exports** for April 2018 were £28.0 billion. This was a decrease of £3.6 billion (11 per cent) compared with last month, but an increase of £1.7 billion (6.6 per cent) compared with April 2017.
- Total trade in goods **imports** for April 2018 were £39.4 billion. This was a decrease of £3.7 billion (8.5 per cent) compared with last month, but an increase of £1.0 billion (2.5 per cent) compared with April 2017.
- The UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £11.4 billion.

Figure 1: Total UK monthly Trade in Goods



Trade Trends

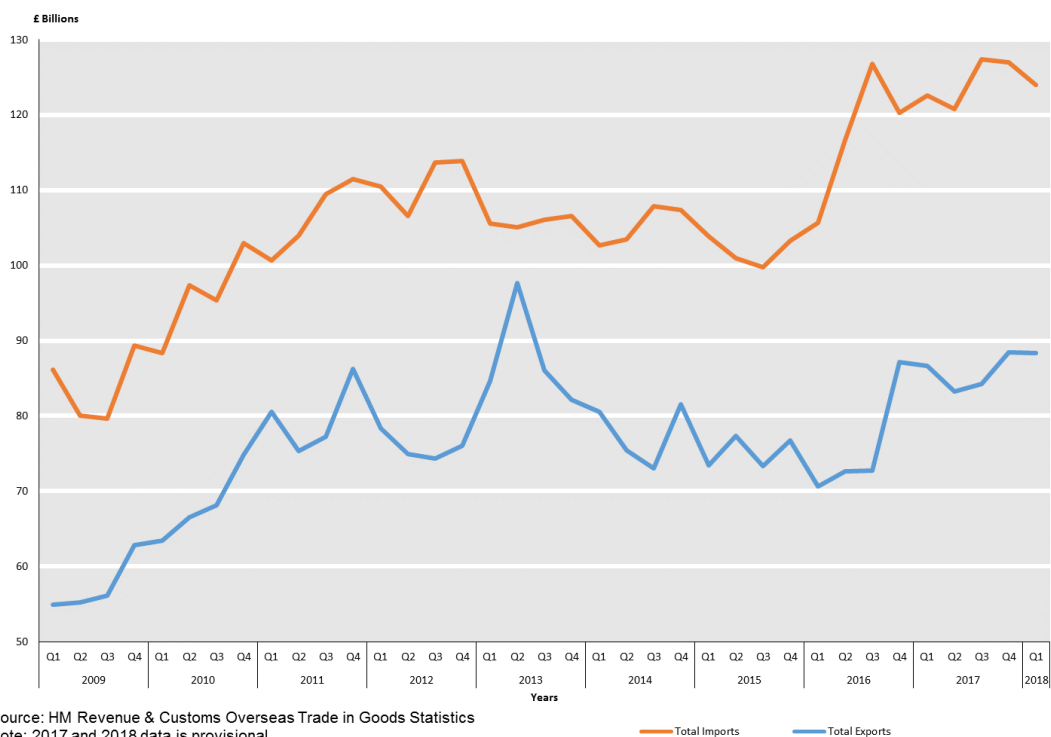
- Following the global economic crisis, UK trade in goods dropped in 2009. Both imports and exports then steadily increased until 2012. From the start of 2013, imports remained relatively flat until a very sharp increase in Q3 of 2016, while exports peaked in Q2 of 2013, with a further peak in Q4 of 2016.
- The total **export** trade for Q1 of 2018 was £88.3 billion, which was an increase of 1.9 per cent compared with £86.6 billion for Q1 of 2017.
- The total **import** trade for Q1 of 2018 was £124.0 billion, which was an increase of 1.2 per cent compared with £122.6 billion for Q1 of 2017.
- There was a trade deficit of £35.7 billion for Q1 of 2018. This was a narrowing of 0.7 per cent compared with Q1 of 2017. 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 1.9%
for Q1 2018 on
Q1 2017

Imports up 1.2%
for Q1 2018 on
Q1 2017

Trade deficit
narrowed by 0.7%
for Q1 2018 on Q1
2017

Figure 2: Quarterly UK Trade in Goods, 2009 – 2018



Non-EU & EU Trade

- **Non-EU Exports** for April 2018 were £14.3 billion. This was a decrease of £2.4 billion (14 per cent) on last month, but an increase of £0.2 billion (1.5 per cent) compared with April 2017.
- **Non-EU Imports** for April 2018 were £18.1 billion. This was a decrease of £1.6 billion (7.9 per cent) on last month, and a decrease of £0.9 billion (4.8 per cent) compared with April 2017.
- For **Non-EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £3.8 billion.
- **EU Exports** for April 2018 were £13.7 billion. This was a decrease of £1.2 billion (8.3 per cent) on last month, but an increase of £1.5 billion (12 per cent) compared with April 2017.
- **EU Imports** for April 2018 were £21.3 billion. This was a decrease of £2.1 billion (9.0 per cent) on last month, but an increase of £1.9 billion (9.7 per cent) compared with April 2017.
- For **EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £7.6 billion.
- The proportion of total exports to the EU was 49 per cent in April 2018. Over the past 18 months, this has ranged from 39 per cent to 51 per cent. The proportion of total imports from the EU was 54 per cent in April 2018. Over the past 18 months, this has ranged from 49 per cent to 56 per cent.

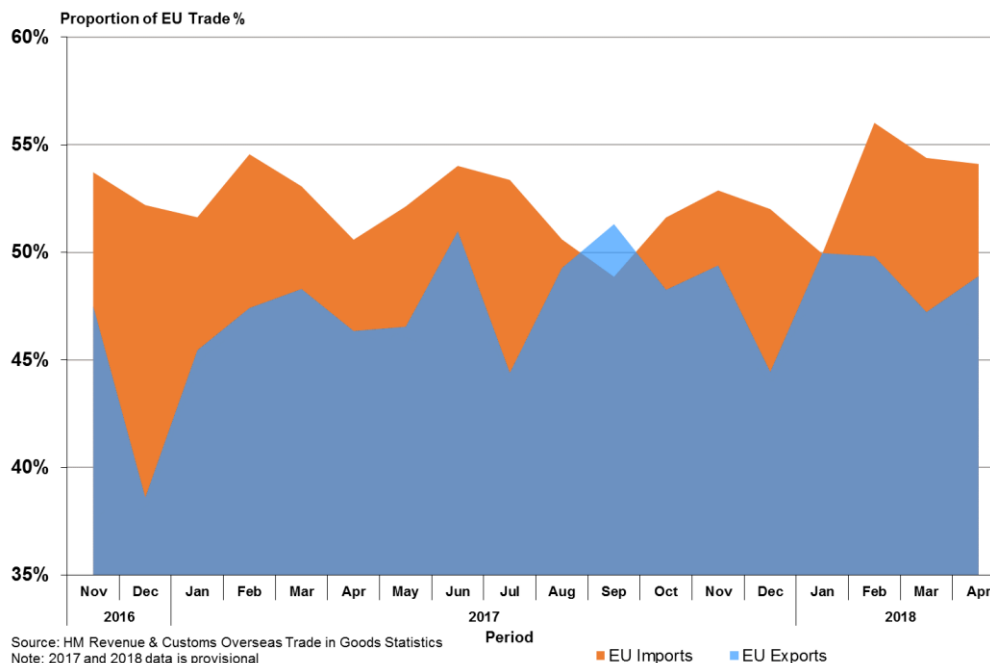
Non-EU exports
down 14% on
last month

Non-EU imports
down 7.9% on
last month

EU exports
up 12% on
April 2017

EU imports up
9.7% on
April 2017

Figure 3: Proportion of total UK Trade in Goods with the EU, April 2018



Exports

Country Analysis

Table 1: UK Exports of goods to top 10 partner countries, April 2018

Partner Country	April 2018 Total (£ millions)	Change from March 2018 (%)	Change from April 2017 (%)	Rank March 2018	Rank April 2017
USA	3,442	-23.7	-14.9	1	1
Germany	2,930	-9.8	7.2	2	2
France	2,051	-5.4	14.8	3	3
Netherlands	2,008	-2.1	33.7	4	5
China	1,759	8.5	5.0	6	4
Irish Republic	1,594	-9.2	7.3	5	6
Belgium	1,159	-4.9	0.5	8	7
Turkey	860	12.7	52.7	11	12
Italy	859	-8.8	10.7	9	8
Spain	844	-9.3	16.3	10	9
Others	10,514	-15.4	6.9	-	-
Total Non-EU	14,319	-14.2	1.5	-	-
Total EU	13,701	-8.3	12.5	-	-
Total Exports	28,020	-11.4	6.6	-	-

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade In Goods Statistics

Note: 2017 and 2018 data is provisional

- The order of the top ten export partner countries (ranked by value) has changed compared with last month and with April 2017. Most notably, compared with April 2017, Turkey rose to eighth place from 12th.
- Eight of the top ten countries experienced decreases in value compared with last month, but only one of the top ten countries experienced a decrease in value compared with April 2017.
- The USA remained the largest export partner country, despite experiencing the largest value decrease on last month and April 2017, down £1,069 million (24 per cent) and £602 million (15 per cent) respectively.

Top export partner USA down 24% on last month

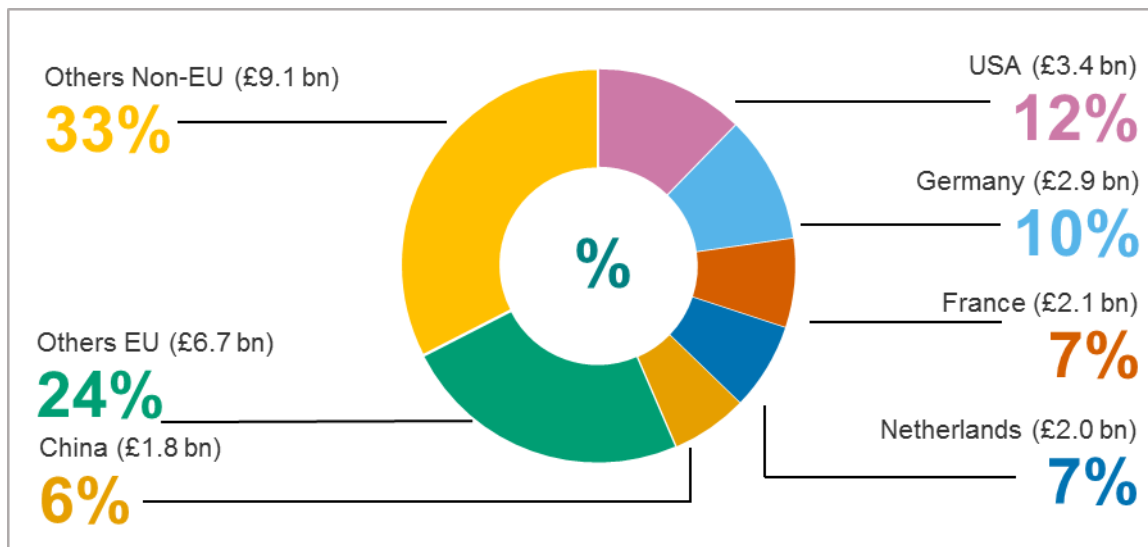
- Switzerland (13th place) experienced the second largest value decrease on last month, down £1,034 million (64 per cent).
- Germany experienced the third largest value decrease compared with last month, down £318 million (9.8 per cent). In contrast, it experienced an increase on April 2017, up £197 million (7.2 per cent).
- The United Arab Emirates (14th place) experienced the fourth largest value decrease compared with last month, down £253 million (34 per cent). It also experienced the second largest value decrease on April 2017, down £116 million (19 per cent).
- China experienced the largest increase compared with last month, up £137 million (8.5 per cent). It also experienced an increase on April 2017, up £84 million (5.0 per cent).
- The Netherlands experienced the largest value increase compared with April 2017, up £506 million (34 per cent).
- Turkey experienced the second largest value increase on last month and April 2017, up £97 million (13 per cent) and £297 million (53 per cent) respectively.
- France experienced the third largest increase on April 2017, up £264 million (15 per cent).

Exports to Switzerland down 64% on last month

Exports to the Netherlands up 34% on April 2017

Exports to Turkey up 53% on April 2017

Figure 4: UK exports of goods to the top 5 countries, April 2018



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2018 data is provisional

- The USA accounted for 12 per cent of the total value of goods exports from the UK, this was a decrease from 15 per cent in April 2017.
- Germany had the second largest proportion, accounting for 10 per cent, this was a slight increase on April 2017.
- The top five export partners accounted for 44 per cent of total exports in goods this month, this was a decrease from 45 per cent in April 2017.

The USA accounted for 12% of total UK exports

Commodity Analysis

Table 2: UK exports of goods by top 5 commodities, April 2018

Commodity Description	April 2018 Total (£ millions)	Change from March 2018 (%)	Change from April 2017 (%)	Rank March 2018	Rank April 2017
Mechanical appliances	4,129	-11.5	-1.7	1	1
Motor vehicles	3,294	-14.8	3.6	2	2
Precious metals	2,626	-15.3	119.1	3	6
Mineral fuels	2,382	1.3	9.5	4	3
Pharmaceutical products	1,664	-20.3	-18.9	5	4
Others	13,924	-10.5	3.3	-	-
Total Exports	28,020	-11.4	6.6	-	-

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade In Goods Statistics

Note: 2017 and 2018 data is provisional

- The order of the top five export commodities (ranked by value) remained the same when compared with last month, but the order changed when compared with April 2017. Most notably, when compared with April 2017, Precious metals rose to third from sixth.
- Mechanical appliances remained the top export commodity, despite experiencing the third largest value decrease on last month and April 2017, down £535 million (11 per cent) and £70 million (1.7 per cent).
- Motor vehicles experienced the largest value decrease compared with last month, down £574 million (15 per cent).
- Aircraft experienced the second largest decrease compared with last month, down £541 million (35 per cent).
- Pharmaceutical products experienced the largest value decrease compared with April 2017, down £388 million (19 per cent).
- Arts and antiques experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £69 million (12 per cent).
- Precious metals experienced the largest value increase compared with April 2017, up £1,427 million (more than double).
- Mineral fuels experienced the second largest value increase on April 2017, up £206 million (9.5 per cent).
- The top five export commodities accounted for 50 per cent of total UK trade in goods exports this month, compared with 51 per cent in April 2017.

Exports of Mechanical appliances down 11% on last month

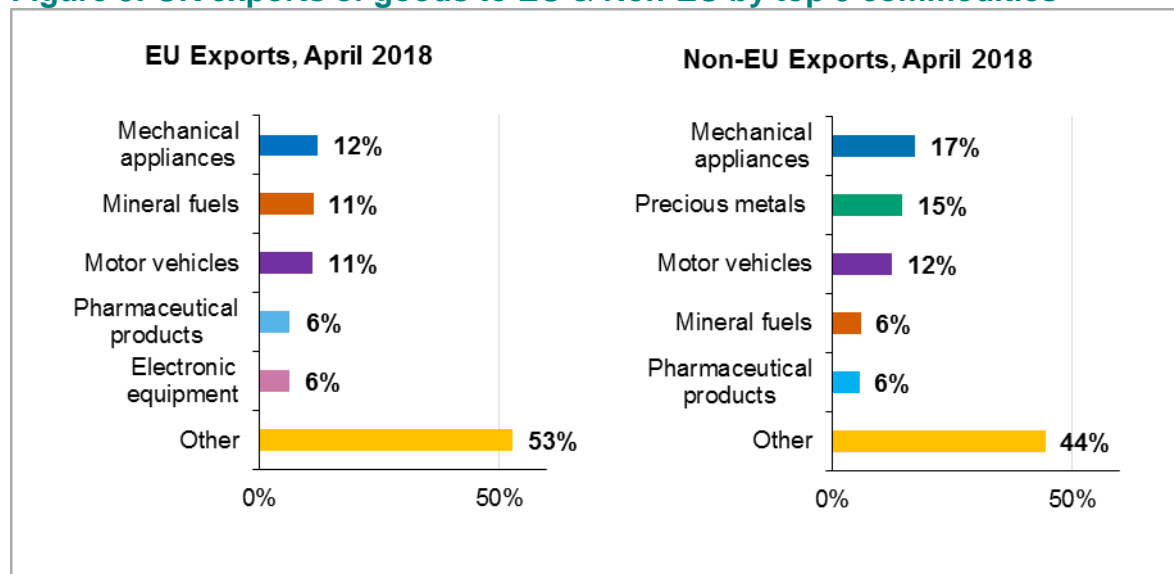
Exports of Motor vehicles down 15% on last month

Exports of Precious metals more than double on April 2017

Exports of Mineral fuels up 9.5% on April 2017

Combined Commodity and Country Analysis

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



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2018 data is provisional

- Mechanical appliances, Mineral fuels, Motor vehicles, and Pharmaceutical products were in the top five export commodities for both EU and non-EU countries.
- The decrease in exports to the USA on last month was led by Aircraft, down £221 million (57 per cent). The decrease on April 2017 was led by Pharmaceutical products, down £226 million (48 per cent).
- The decrease in exports to Switzerland on last month was led by Precious metals, down £924 million (80 per cent).
- The decrease in exports of Motor vehicles on last month was led by the USA, down £122 million (19 per cent).
- The decrease in exports of Mechanical appliances on both periods was led by the USA, down £142 million (19 per cent) and £104 million (15 per cent) respectively.
- The decrease in exports to Germany on last month was led by Pharmaceutical products, down £114 million (33 per cent). In contrast, the increase on April 2017 was led by Precious metals, up £126 million (more than treble).
- The increase in exports to China on last month and April 2017 was led by Precious metals, up £215 million (42 per cent) and £710 million (from £13 million) respectively.
- The increase in exports to Turkey on both periods was led by Precious metals, up £109 million (34 per cent) and £290 million (more than treble) respectively.
- The increase in exports to France on April 2017 was led by Precious metals, up £131 million (more than treble).
- The increase in exports to the Netherlands on April 2017 was led by Mineral fuels, up £402 million (95 per cent).

Exports of Aircraft to the USA down 57% on last month

Exports of Precious metals to Switzerland down 80% on last month

Exports of Mineral fuels to the Netherlands up 95% on April 2017

Imports

Country Analysis

Table 3: UK imports of goods from top 10 countries, April 2018

Partner Country	April 2018 Total (£ millions)	Change from March 2018 (%)	Change from April 2017 (%)	Rank March 2018	Rank April 2017
Germany	5,818	-4.6	12.4	1	1
USA	3,614	0.9	2.9	2	2
Netherlands	3,333	-6.9	17.8	3	4
China	2,661	-12.1	-13.2	4	3
France	2,190	-5.4	4.8	7	5
Belgium	1,891	-23.2	1.6	5	6
Italy	1,520	-9.5	12.0	8	8
Norway	1,468	-38.5	15.4	6	9
Spain	1,261	-9.6	11.0	9	10
Irish Republic	1,096	-3.1	-25.5	10	7
Others	14,523	-5.6	-0.7	-	-
Total non-EU	18,070	-7.9	-4.8	-	-
Total EU	21,306	-9.0	9.7	-	-
Total Imports	39,375	-8.5	2.5	-	-

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2017 and 2018 data is provisional

- Compared with last month and April 2017, all of the top ten import partners (ranked by value) remained the same but in a different order.
- Nine of the top ten import partners decreased in value compared with last month, but only two of the top ten import partners decreased in value compared with April 2017.
- Germany remained the top import partner country, experiencing the fourth largest decrease on last month, down £279 million (4.6 per cent). In contrast, it experienced the largest value increase on April 2017, up £642 million (12 per cent).
- Norway experienced the largest value decrease compared with last month, down £918 million (38 per cent). In contrast, it experienced the fifth largest value increase compared with April 2017, up £195 million (15 per cent).

Top import partner Germany down 4.6% on last month

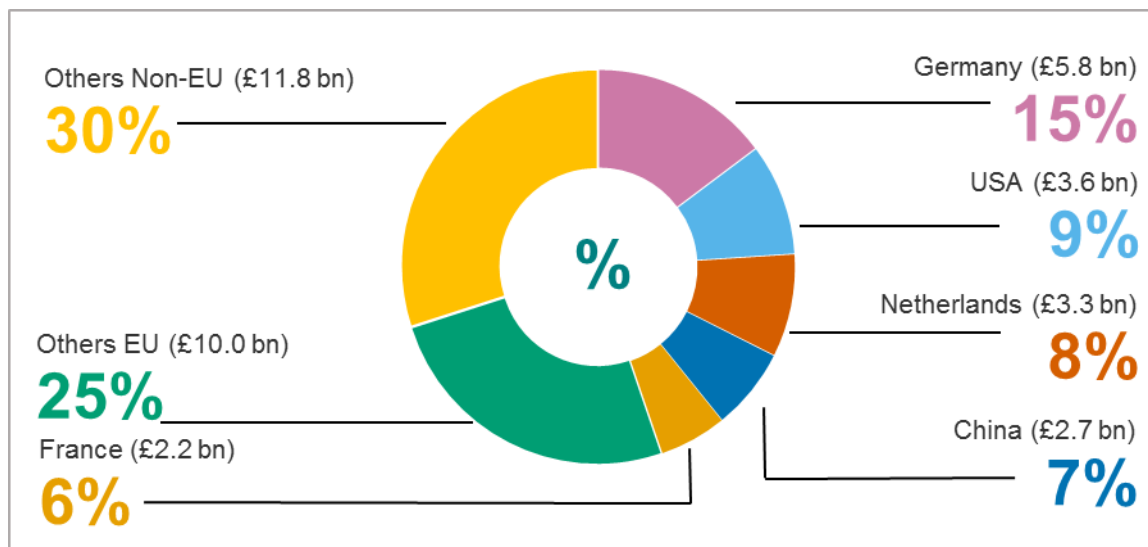
- Hong Kong (18th place) experienced the largest value decrease compared with last April 2017, down £437 million (44 per cent).
- Belgium experienced the second largest value decrease compared with last month, down £571 million (23 per cent).
- China experienced the third largest value decrease compared with last month, down £366 million (12 per cent), and it experienced the second largest value decrease compared with April 2017, down £406 million (13 per cent).
- South Africa (21st place) experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £94 million (24 per cent), and it experienced the fourth largest value decrease compared with April 2017, down £194 million (29 per cent).
- Japan (11th place) experienced the second largest value increase compared with last month, up £78 million (8.9 per cent), and it experienced the seventh largest value increase compared with April 2017, up £134 million (16 per cent).
- Imports from the Netherlands saw the second largest increase compared with April 2017, up £504 million (18 per cent).

Imports from China down 12% on last month

Imports from South Africa up 24% on last month

Imports from the Netherlands up 18% on April 2017

Figure 6: UK imports of goods from top 5 countries, April 2018



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2018 data is provisional

- Germany accounted for 15 per cent of the total value of imports to the UK, a slight increase compared with April 2017.
- USA had the second largest proportion, accounting for 9.2 per cent of total imports, which is unchanged on the 9.2 per cent in April 2017.
- The top five partner countries accounted for 45 per cent of total UK import value this month, a slight increase on the 43 per cent in April 2017.

Germany accounted for 15% of total UK imports

Commodity Analysis

Table 4: UK imports of goods by top 5 commodities, April 2018

Commodity Description	April 2018 Total (£ millions)	Change from March 2018 (%)	Change from April 2017 (%)	Rank March 2018	Rank April 2017
Mechanical appliances	4,945	-9.7	9.8	1	1
Motor vehicles	4,900	-9.4	12.1	2	2
Mineral fuels	3,820	-20.0	32.2	3	5
Electronic equipment	3,576	-7.2	0.4	4	3
Precious metals	2,559	-3.9	-16.6	5	4
Others	19,576	-6.2	-2.2	-	-
Total Imports	39,375	-8.5	2.5	-	-

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
Note: 2017 and 2018 data is provisional

- The ordering of the top five commodity groups for April 2018 was unchanged compared with last month, but did change compared with April 2017. Most notably, when compared with April 2017, Mineral fuels rose to third from fifth place.
- Mechanical appliances was the top import commodity by value, accounting for a 13 per cent share of the total imports this month. It saw the second largest value decrease on last month, down £532 million (9.7 per cent).
- Imports of Mineral fuels experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £953 million (20 per cent). However, it experienced the largest value increase on April 2017, up £930 million (32 per cent).
- Precious metals saw the second largest value decrease on April 2017, down £508 million (17 per cent).
- Imports of Motor vehicles saw the third largest value decrease on last month, down £507 million (9.4 per cent). However, it experienced the second largest value increase on April 2017, up £531 million (12 per cent).
- Pharmaceutical products (6th place) saw the largest increase on last month, up £166 million (9.3 per cent).
- Art and antiques (28th place) saw the second largest value increase on last month, up £76 million (38 per cent).
- The top five import commodities accounted for 50 per cent of total UK trade in goods imports this month, compared with 48 per cent in April 2017.

Imports of Mechanical appliances down 9.7% on last month

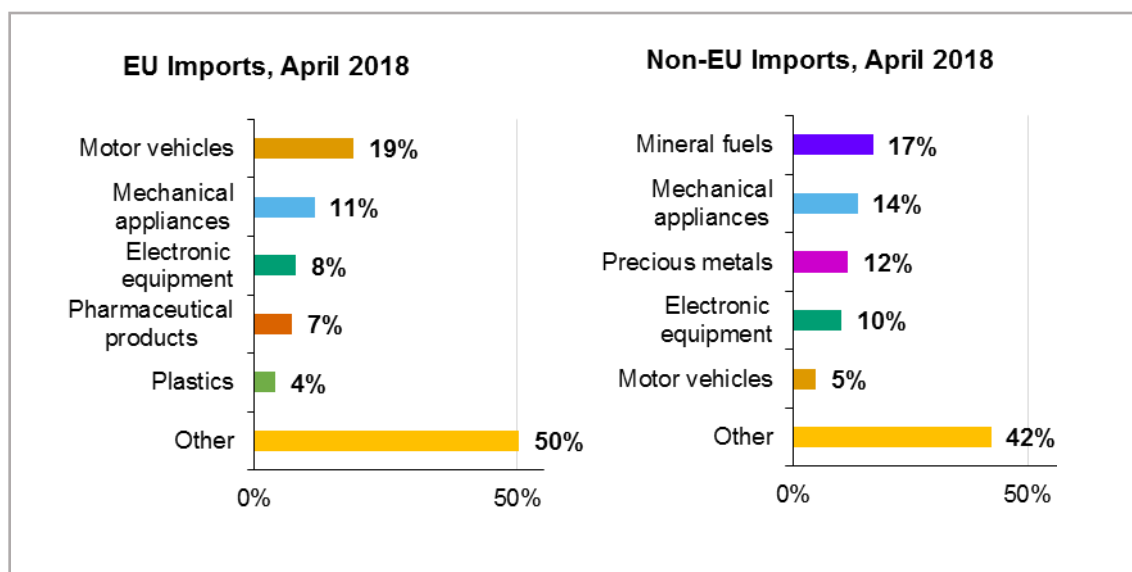
Mineral fuels imports down 20% on last month

Imports of Precious metals down 17% on April 2017

Imports of Pharmaceutical products up 9.3% on last month

Combined Commodity and Country Analysis

Figure 7: UK imports of goods from the EU & Non-EU by top 5 commodities



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2018 data is provisional

- Motor vehicles, Mechanical appliances, and Electronic equipment were in the top five import commodities for both EU and non-EU countries.
- The fall in imports of Mechanical appliances was led by Germany when compared to last month, down £142 million (16 per cent). The fall in imports of this commodity when compared with April 2017 was led by the United Arab Emirates, down £122 million (71 per cent).
- The fall of Mineral fuels when compared with last month was led by Norway, down £847 million (39 per cent). Conversely, the rise of imports in this commodity compared with April 2017 was also led by Norway, up £323 million (33 per cent).
- The fall of Motor vehicles was led by Belgium when compared with last month, down £163 million (24 per cent).
- The fall of imports from China on last month was led Furniture and light fittings, down £67 million (26 per cent).
- The rise of imports from South Africa on last month was led by Precious metals, up £82 million (34 per cent). However, the fall of imports from South Africa compared with April 2017 was also led by Precious metals, down £201 million (38 per cent).
- The rise in imports of Art and antiques when compared with both periods was led by the USA, up £46 million (39 per cent) and £101 million (more than double) respectively.
- The increase of imports of Pharmaceutical products on both periods was led by the Netherlands, up £136 million (37 per cent) and £42 million (9.1 per cent) respectively.

Imports of Mechanical appliances from Germany down 16% on last month

Imports of Mineral fuels from Norway down 39% on last month

Imports of Pharmaceutical products from Netherlands up 37% 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 12 June 2018 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 2018. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU and EU data for 2017 and 2018 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 2018 Overseas Trade in Goods 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 April 2018 Overseas Trade in Goods 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 in Goods Statistics by the [UK Statistics Authority](#). The report of that assessment can be found at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-93---uk-trade-in-goods.pdf>.
11. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:
 - meet identified user needs;
 - are well explained and readily accessible;
 - are produced according to sound methods; and
 - Are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

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

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