



HM Revenue  
& Customs

# UK Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics November 2018

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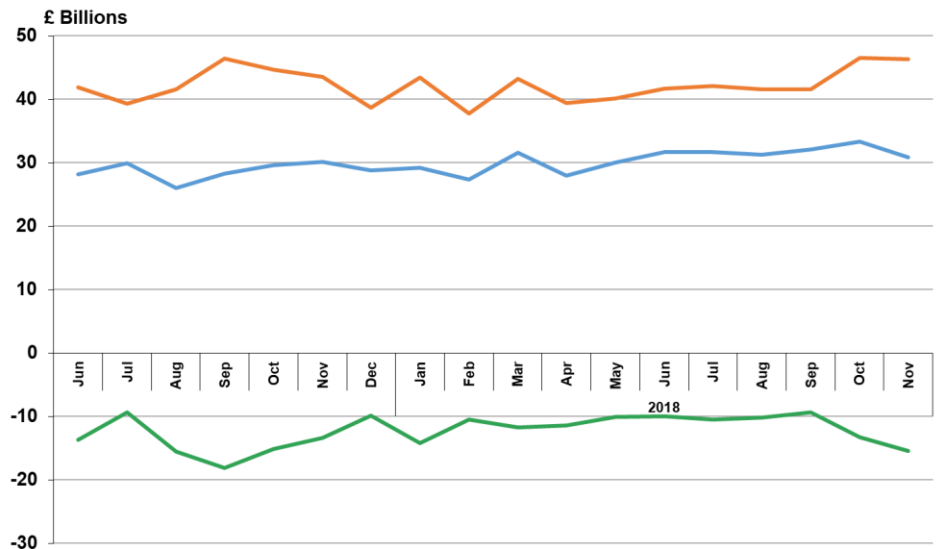
Website:  
<http://www.uktradeinfo.com>



## Summary

- Total trade in goods **exports** for November 2018 were £30.8 billion. This was a decrease of £2.5 billion (7.4 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £0.7 billion (2.5 per cent) compared with November 2017.
- Total trade in goods **imports** for November 2018 were £46.3 billion. This was a decrease of £0.3 billion (0.6 per cent) compared with last month, and an increase of £2.8 billion (6.5 per cent) compared with November 2017.
- The UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £15.5 billion.

Figure 1: Total UK monthly Trade in Goods



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

— Total Imports — Total Exports — Trade Gap

## Trade Trends

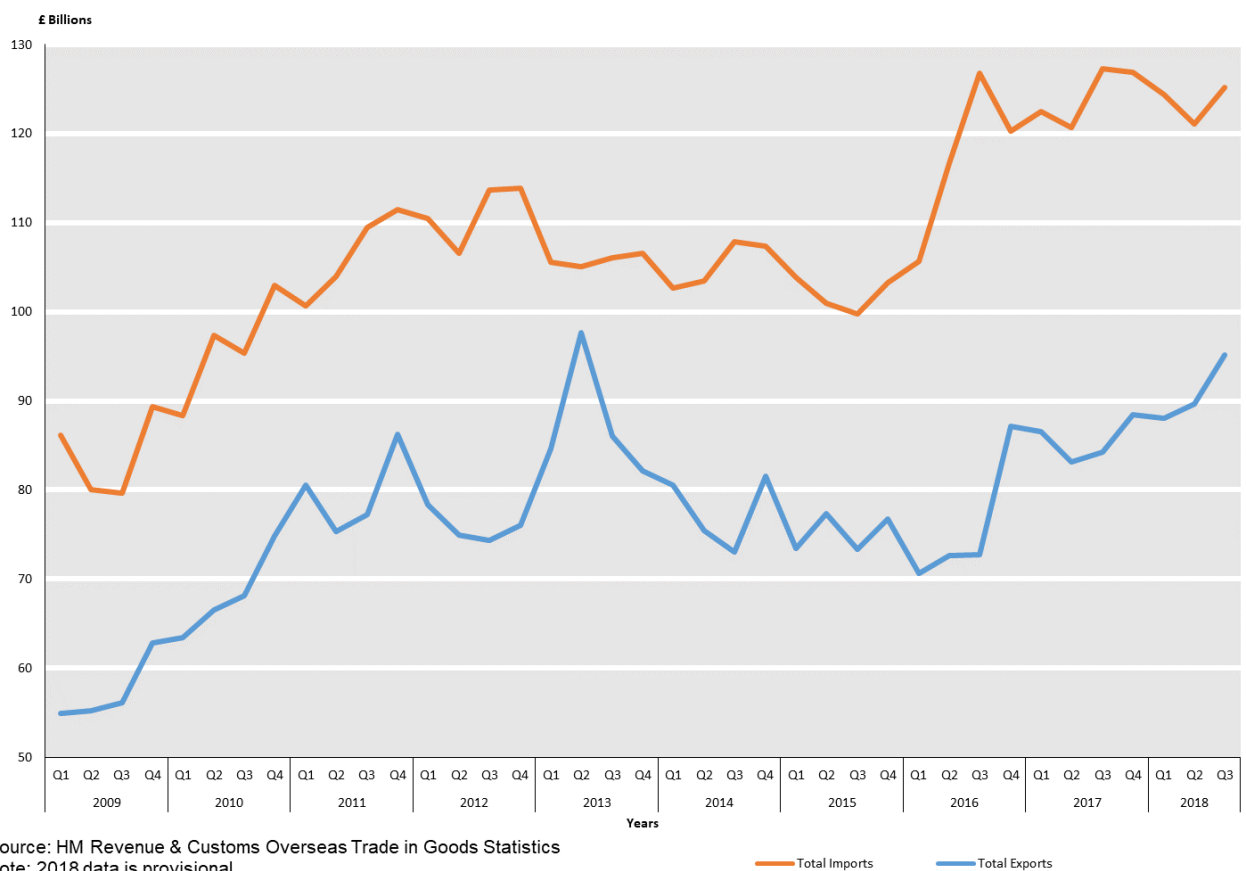
- Following the global economic crisis, UK trade in goods dropped in 2009. Both imports and exports then steadily increased until 2012. From the start of 2013, imports remained relatively flat until a very sharp increase in Q3 of 2016, while exports peaked in Q2 of 2013, with a steady rise since Q4 of 2016.
- The total **export** trade for Q3 of 2018 was £95.1 billion, which was an increase of 13 per cent compared with £84.2 billion for Q3 of 2017.
- The total **import** trade for Q3 of 2018 was £125.2 billion, which was a decrease of 1.7 per cent compared with £127.3 billion for Q3 of 2017.
- There was a trade deficit of £30.1 billion for Q3 of 2018. This was a narrowing of 30 per cent compared with Q3 of 2017.
- 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 13%  
for Q3 2018 on  
Q3 2017

Imports down  
1.7% for Q3 2018  
on Q3 2017

Trade deficit  
narrowed by 30%  
for Q3 2018 on Q3  
2017

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



## Non-EU & EU Trade

- **Non-EU Exports** for November 2018 were £15.8 billion. This was a decrease of £2.2 billion (12 per cent) on last month, and an increase of £0.6 billion (3.6 per cent) compared with November 2017.
- **Non-EU Imports** for November 2018 were £22.3 billion. This was a decrease of £0.1 billion (0.5 per cent) on last month, and an increase of £1.8 billion (8.6 per cent) compared with November 2017.
- For **Non-EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £6.5 billion.
- **EU Exports** for November 2018 were £15.0 billion. This was a decrease of £0.3 billion (2.0 per cent) on last month, and an increase of £0.2 billion (1.3 per cent) compared with November 2017.
- **EU Imports** for November 2018 were £24.0 billion. This was a decrease of £0.2 billion (0.6 per cent) on last month, and an increase of £1.0 billion (4.5 per cent) compared with November 2017.
- For **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 November 2018. Over the past 18 months, this has ranged from 43 per cent to 51 per cent. The proportion of total imports from the EU was 52 per cent in November 2018. Over the past 18 months, this has ranged from 49 per cent to 56 per cent.

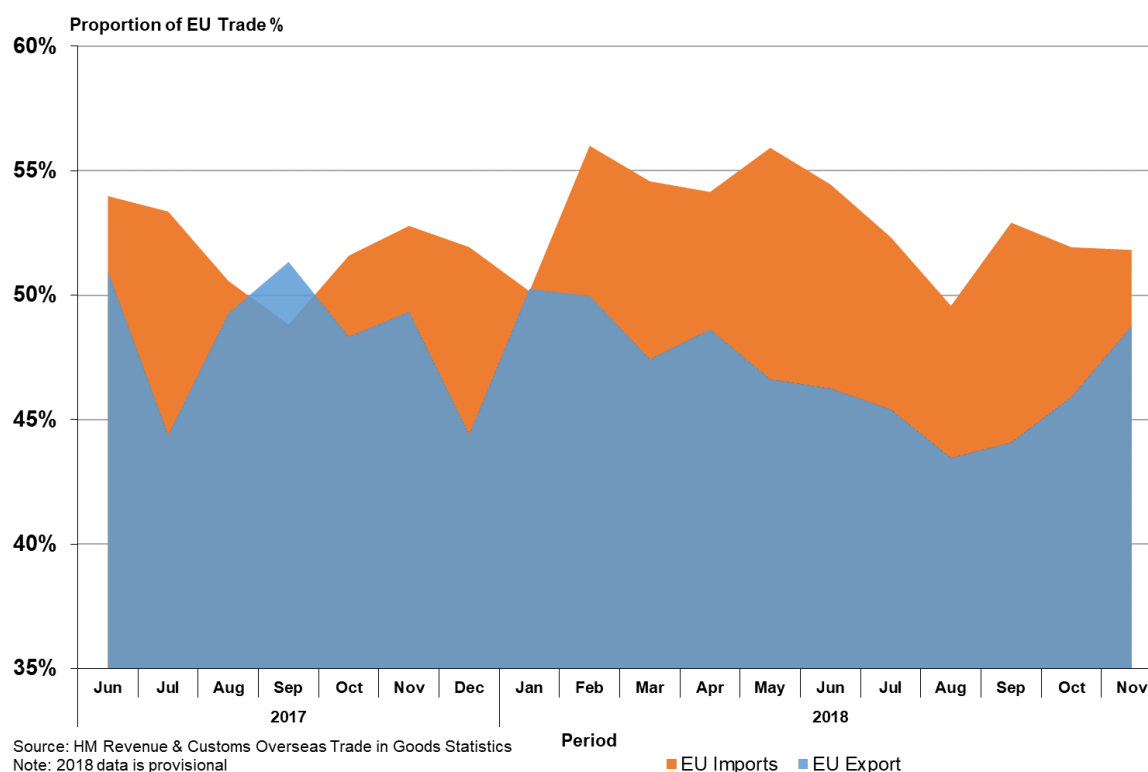
Non-EU exports  
down 12% on  
last month

Non-EU imports  
up 8.6% on  
November 2017

EU exports  
down 2.0% on  
last month

EU imports  
up 4.5% on  
November 2017

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



## Exports

### Country Analysis

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

Partner Country	November 2018 Total (£ millions)	Change from October 2018 (%)	Change from November 2017 (%)	Rank October 2018	Rank November 2017
USA	4,645	-11.2	23.3	1	1
Germany	3,130	2.7	-3.0	2	2
France	2,139	4.9	2.0	4	3
Netherlands	2,034	-21.2	0.5	3	4
Irish Republic	2,028	2.1	2.8	5	5
China	1,644	-5.4	-8.7	6	6
Belgium	1,198	2.5	4.6	8	7
Spain	975	4.6	5.4	10	8
Italy	914	-3.6	0.2	9	9
Hong Kong	704	-8.8	-13.7	11	10
Others	11,409	-11.1	0.1	-	-
<b>Total Non-EU</b>	<b>15,791</b>	<b>-12.0</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>15,029</b>	<b>-2.0</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>30,820</b>	<b>-7.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

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

- The top ten export countries (ranked by value) remained the same as November 2017, but changed compared with last month. Most notably, Spain rose to eighth place from tenth place compared with last month.
- Five of the top ten countries experienced increases in value compared with last month, and seven of the top ten countries experienced increases in value compared with November 2017.
- The USA remained the largest export partner country, despite experiencing the second largest decrease on last month, down £587 million (11 per cent). In contrast, it experienced the largest value increase on November 2017, up £877 million (23 per cent).

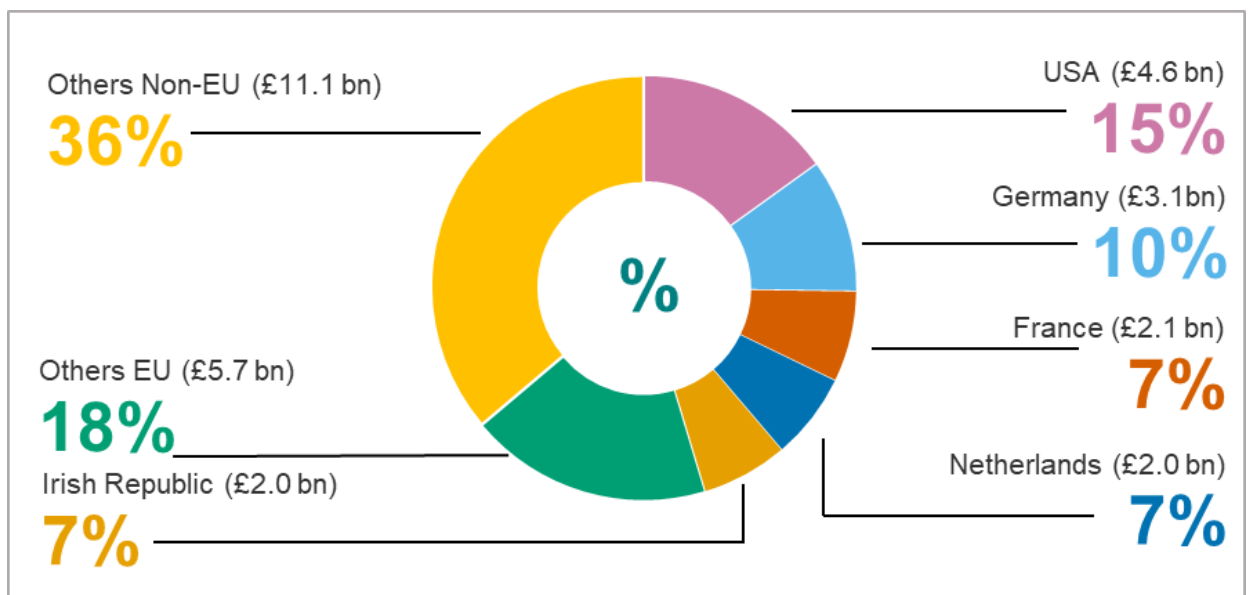
Top export partner  
 USA  
 down 11% on  
 last month

- Bahrain (ranked 31<sup>st</sup>) experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £124 million (more than four times in value).
- The UAE (ranked 11<sup>th</sup>) experienced the second largest value increase on November 2017, up £177 million (35 per cent).
- Switzerland experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £1,025 million (60 per cent).
- Oman (ranked 56<sup>th</sup>) experience the largest value decrease on November 2017, down £278 million (86 per cent).

Exports to Bahrain up more than four times on last month

Exports to Oman down 86% on November 2017

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



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

- The USA accounted for 15 per cent of the total value of goods exports from the UK. This was an increase from 13 per cent in November 2017.
- Germany had the second largest proportion, accounting for 10 per cent, a decrease from 11 per cent in November 2017.
- The top five export partners accounted for 45 per cent of total exports in goods this month, this was an increase from 44 per cent on November 2017.

The USA accounted for 15% of total UK exports

## Commodity Analysis

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

Commodity Description	November 2018 Total (£ millions)	Change from October 2018 (%)	Change from November 2017 (%)	Rank October 2018	Rank November 2017
Mechanical appliances	5,022	0.2	11.9	1	1
Motor vehicles	3,680	-1.6	-5.8	2	2
Mineral fuels	2,672	-22.8	13.9	3	3
Electronic equipment	2,052	3.8	1.3	6	5
Pharmaceutical products	1,947	-9.8	-10.5	5	4
Others	15,447	-8.7	2.0	-	-
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>30,820</b>	<b>-7.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2018 data is provisional

- The top five export commodities (ranked by value) has changed when compared to both last month and last year. Most notably, Electronic equipment rose to fourth from sixth place when compared to last month.
- Mechanical appliances remained in first place, experiencing a slight increase in value on last month, up £9.9 million (0.2 per cent). In contrast it experienced the largest increase on November 2017, up £535 million (12 per cent).
- Other products (ranked 12<sup>th</sup>) experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £119 million (18 per cent).
- Mineral fuels experienced the second largest value decrease on last month, down £789 million (23 per cent). It had the second largest increase on November 2017, up £325 million (14 per cent).
- Precious metals experienced the largest decrease on last month, down £957 million (35 per cent).
- Pharmaceutical products experienced the largest decrease on November 2017, down £228 million (10 per cent).
- The top five export commodities accounted for 50 per cent of total UK trade in goods exports this month, this remained the same compared with November 2017.

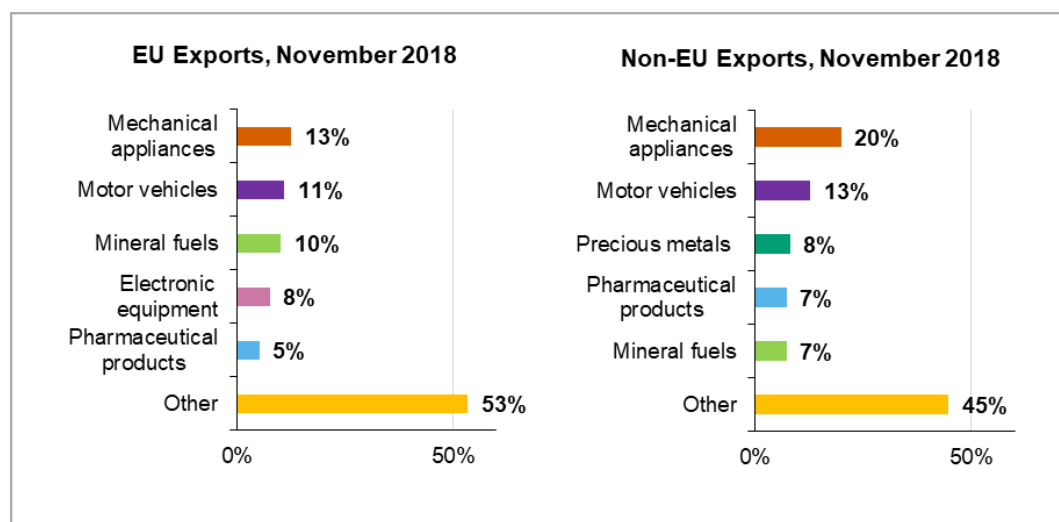
Exports of Mechanical appliances up 12% on November 2017

Exports of Precious metals down 35% on last month

Exports of Pharmaceutical products down 10% on November 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, Motor vehicles, Mineral fuels and Pharmaceutical products were in the top five export commodities for both EU and non-EU countries.
- The slight increase in exports of Mechanical appliances on last month was led by USA, up £188 million, this was largely offset by decreases by UAE, Spain, Ukraine and India, down £64 million, £36 million, £34 million and £34 million respectively. The increase on November 2017 was led by the USA up £377 million (64 per cent).
- The increase in exports of Other products on last month was dominated by an increase in the aggregation of low value goods, up £102 million (20 per cent). Goods with a total value of less than £750 and total net weight less than 1000 kgs can be exported as a single consignment.
- The increase in exports of Mineral fuels on November 2017 was led by China and Germany, up £257 million (91 per cent) and £111 million (more than double) respectively.
- The decrease in exports of Precious metals on last month was dominated by Switzerland, down £1,071 million (78 per cent).
- The decrease in exports to the USA on last month was led by Arts and antiques, down £329 million (60 per cent).
- The increase in exports to Bahrain on last month was led by Aircraft, up £59 million from £1.3 million.
- The increase in exports to the UAE on November 2017 was led by Precious metals, up £176 million (more than eight times in value).
- The decrease in exports to China on last month was dominated by Mineral Fuels, down £144 million (21 per cent).

Exports of Mechanical appliances to USA up 64% on November 2017

Exports of Mineral fuels to China up 91% on November 2017

Exports of Precious metals to Switzerland down 78% on last month

# Imports

## Country Analysis

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

Partner Country	November 2018 Total (£ millions)	Change from October 2018 (%)	Change from November 2017 (%)	Rank October 2018	Rank November 2017
Germany	5,943	-2.2	0.0	1	1
China	4,564	-3.0	16.8	2	2
USA	4,182	2.5	24.4	3	4
Netherlands	3,861	2.4	3.4	4	3
France	2,597	-1.3	2.4	5	5
Belgium	2,341	3.0	9.6	6	6
Italy	1,780	-7.2	4.8	7	8
Norway	1,602	-12.8	-9.6	8	7
Spain	1,300	-0.2	5.4	9	10
Irish Republic	1,282	3.7	-3.4	10	9
Others	16,834	0.7	6.4	-	-
<b>Total non-EU</b>	<b>22,302</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>23,985</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>46,287</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

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

- Compared with last month the order of the top ten import partners (ranked by value) remained the same. Compared with November 2017, the order changed slightly. Most notably, the USA went up from fourth to third place.
- Four of the top ten import partners increased in value compared with last month, and seven of the top ten import partners increased in value compared with November 2017.
- Germany remained the top import partner country, despite experiencing a decrease on last month, down £135 million (2.2 per cent).

Top import partner Germany down 2.2% on last month

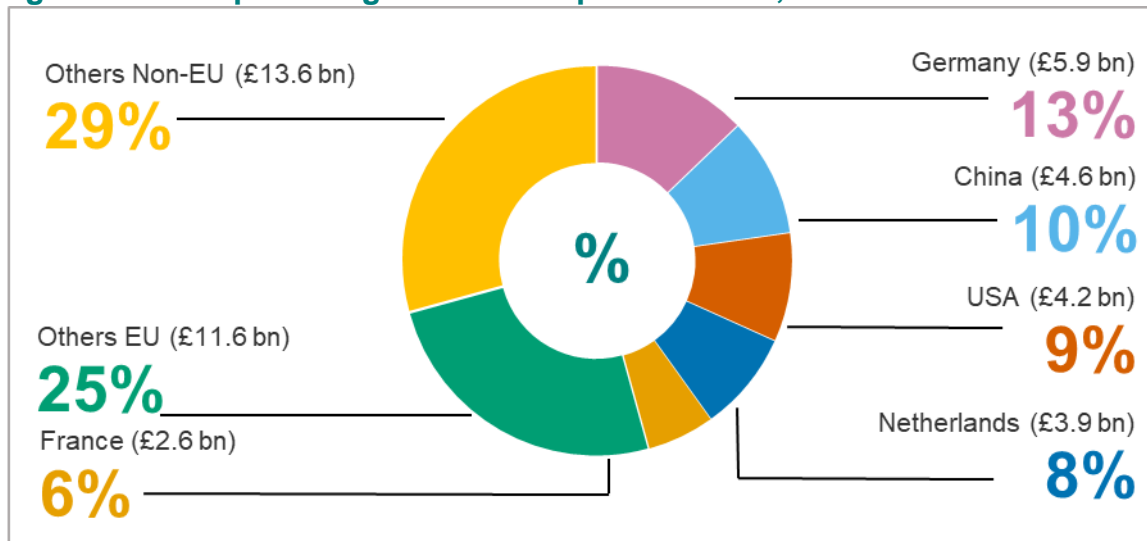


- Canada (11<sup>th</sup> place) experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £353 million (39 per cent).
- The USA experienced the largest value increase on November 2017, up £822 million (24 per cent).
- Norway experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £235 million (13 per cent).
- Switzerland experienced the largest value decrease on November 2017, down £691 million (59 per cent).

Imports from Canada up 39% on last month

Imports from Norway down 13% on last month

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



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

- Germany accounted for 13 per cent of the total value of imports to the UK, a slight decrease on November 2017.
- China had the second largest proportion of the total value of trade, accounting for 9.9 per cent, an increase from 8.9 per cent on November 2017.
- The top five partner countries accounted for 46 per cent of total UK import value this month, an increase from 45 per cent in November 2017.

Germany accounted for 13% of total UK imports

## Commodity Analysis

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

Commodity Description	November 2018 Total (£ millions)	Change from October 2018 (%)	Change from November 2017 (%)	Rank October 2018	Rank November 2017
Mechanical appliances	6,020	-4.9	2.9	1	1
Electronic equipment	5,046	4.9	6.7	3	2
Motor vehicles	4,829	-6.1	9.4	2	3
Mineral fuels	4,687	8.1	22.4	4	4
Precious metals	2,874	22.1	17.3	5	5
Others	22,830	-3.2	2.8	-	-
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>46,287</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2018 data is provisional

- The ordering of the top five commodity groups for November 2018 remained the same, when compared with November 2017. Electronic equipment rose from third to second place, and Motor vehicles fell from second to third place on last month.
- Mechanical appliances remained in first place, despite experiencing the second largest decrease on last month, down £311 million (4.9 per cent).
- Precious metals experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £521 million (22 per cent). It also experienced the second largest increase on November 2017, up £424 million (17 per cent).
- Mineral fuels experienced the second largest increase on last month £352 million (8.1 per cent). It also experienced the largest value increase on November 2017, up £858 million (22 per cent).
- Motor vehicles experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £315 million (6.1 per cent).
- Arts and antiques experienced the largest value decrease on November 2017, down £206 million (60 per cent).
- The top five import commodities accounted for 51 per cent of total UK trade in goods imports this month. This was an increase from 49 per cent in November 2017.

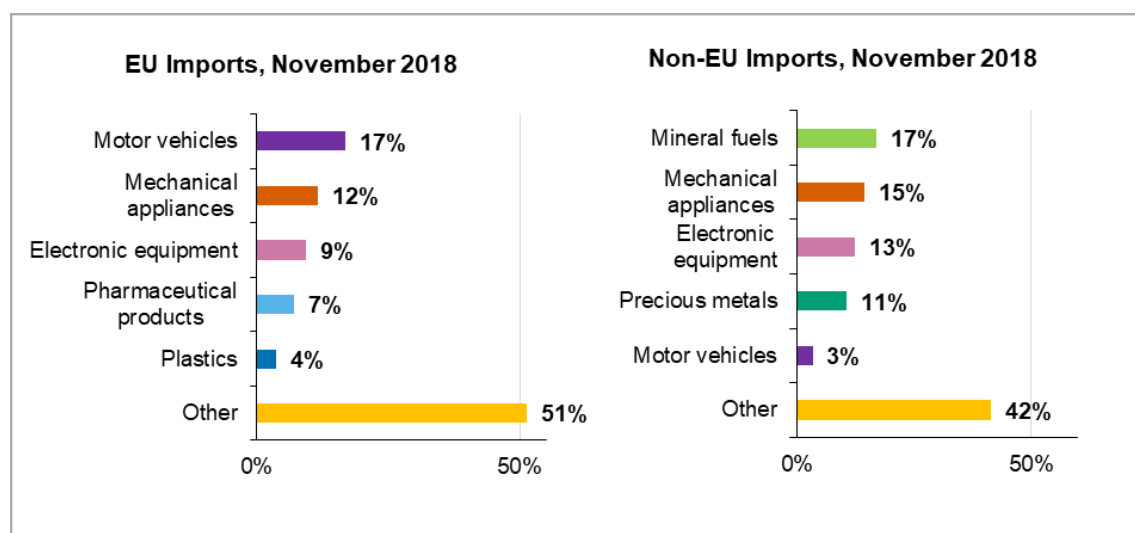
Imports of Mechanical appliances down 4.9% on last month

Imports of Precious metals up 22% on last month

Imports of Arts and antiques down 60% on November 2017

## 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 all in the top five import commodities for both EU and non-EU countries.
- The decrease in imports of Mechanical appliances on last month was led by the USA and the UAE, down £133 million (13 per cent) and £126 million (56 per cent) respectively.
- The increase in imports of Precious metals on last month and on November 2017 was led by Canada, up £340 million (64 per cent) and £373 million (75 per cent) respectively.
- The increase in imports of Mineral fuels on November 2017 was led by the USA, up £515 million (more than four times in value).
- The decrease in imports of Motor vehicles on last month was led by France, down £53 million (14 per cent).
- The decrease in imports of Arts and Antiques on November 2017 was led by Switzerland, down £205 million (86 per cent).
- The decrease in imports from Germany on last month was led by Aircraft and Motor Vehicles down £102 million (51 per cent) and £46 million (2.6 per cent) respectively.
- The increase in imports from the USA on November 2017 was led by Mineral fuels, up £515 million (more than four times in value), and Precious metals, up £328 million (more than double the value).
- The decrease in imports from Norway on last month was dominated by Mineral Fuels, down £214 million (13 per cent).
- The decrease in imports from Switzerland on November 2017 was led by Precious metals, down £300 million (81 per cent).

Imports of mechanical appliances from the USA down 13% on last month

Imports of Precious metals from Canada up 75% on November 2017

Imports of Aircraft from Germany down 51% on last month

Imports of Precious metals from Switzerland down 81% on November 2017

## 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 January 2019 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 November 2018. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU and EU data for 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 November 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 November 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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