

External merchandise trade statistics for August 2018

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (September 27) the external merchandise trade statistics for August 2018. In August 2018, the values of Hong Kong's total exports and imports of goods both recorded year-on-year increases, at 13.1% and 16.4% respectively.

In August 2018, the value of total exports of goods increased by 13.1% over a year earlier to \$376.3 billion, after a year-on-year increase of 10.0% in July 2018. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 16.4% over a year earlier to \$428.5 billion in August 2018, after a year-on-year increase of 14.0% in July 2018. A visible trade deficit of \$52.1 billion, equivalent to 12.2% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in August 2018.

For the first eight months of 2018 as a whole, the value of total exports of goods rose by 9.9% over the same period in 2017. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 11.8%. A visible trade deficit of \$373.6 billion, equivalent to 12.2% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in the first eight months of 2018.

Comparing the three-month period ending August 2018 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of goods increased by 0.2%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods increased by 1.6%.

Analysis by country/territory

Comparing August 2018 with August 2017, total exports to Asia as a whole grew by 12.0%. In this region, increases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in particular Malaysia (+42.5%), Vietnam (+21.5%), India (+18.2%), the mainland of China (the Mainland) (+13.6%), Thailand (+8.9%) and Singapore (+7.8%). On the other hand, a decrease was recorded in the value of total exports to Taiwan (-24.2%).

Apart from destinations in Asia, increases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations in other regions, in particular the United Kingdom (+31.2%) and the USA (+17.9%). Concurrently, a decrease was registered in the value of total exports to Germany (-1.1%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Malaysia (+79.0%), the USA (+31.4%), India (+22.0%), Korea (+20.8%), Thailand (+16.7%), the Mainland (+16.0%) and Japan (+5.5%).

For the first eight months of 2018 as a whole, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in particular the Mainland (+12.3%), Singapore (+11.1%), the USA (+10.3%), the

Netherlands (+10.1%), Germany (+9.1%) and Thailand (+8.7%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of total exports to India (-14.1%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Malaysia (+90.3%), Korea (+21.6%), Taiwan (+12.8%), the Mainland (+9.9%), the USA (+9.4%) and the Philippines (+8.3%). On the other hand, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of imports from India (-14.1%).

Analysis by major commodity

Comparing August 2018 with August 2017, increases were registered in the values of total exports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$26.1 billion or 21.2%), "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$6.5 billion or 9.9%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$4.2 billion or 26.1%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases were registered in the values of imports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$24.9 billion or 18.1%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$9.9 billion or 32.3%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$8.8 billion or 44.9%).

For the first eight months of 2018 as a whole, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$163.9 billion or 18.8%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$42.6 billion or 16.9%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$23.9 billion or 18.4%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of total exports of "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$15.3 billion or -11.8%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$172.6 billion or 17.4%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$56.6 billion or 26.1%) and "petroleum, petroleum products and related materials" (by \$16.3 billion or 35.8%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of imports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$1.4 billion or -0.3%).

Commentary

A Government spokesman noted that the value of merchandise exports registered double-digit year-on-year growth in August, along with the

continued expansion of global economic activities. Exports to many major markets, including the Mainland and the US, recorded further notable increases.

However, the spokesman commented that, while the impacts of the US-Mainland trade conflicts on Hong Kong's exports were seemingly limited thus far, they are likely to turn visible in the period ahead. If the trade conflicts are to escalate further, the global economy and Hong Kong's exports would face more notable downward pressures. The Government will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Further information

Table 1 at the annex presents the analysis of external merchandise trade statistics for August 2018. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2015 to August 2018, and Table 3 gives the seasonally adjusted series for the same period.

The values of total exports of goods to 10 main destinations for August 2018 are shown in Table 4, whereas the values of imports of goods from 10 main suppliers are given in Table 5.

Tables 6 and 7 show the values of total exports and imports of 10 principal commodity divisions for August 2018.

All the merchandise trade statistics described here are measured at current prices and no account has been taken of changes in prices between the periods of comparison. A separate analysis of the volume and price movements of external merchandise trade for August 2018 will be released in mid-October 2018.

The August 2018 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in August 2018 and will be available in mid-October 2018. Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp230.jsp).

Enquiries on merchandise trade statistics may be directed to the Trade Analysis Section (2) of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 5042).