

External merchandise trade statistics for February 2022

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (March 28) the external merchandise trade statistics for February 2022. In February 2022, the values of Hong Kong's total exports and imports of goods both recorded year-on-year increases, at 0.9% and 6.2% respectively.

As the trade flows in January and February of each year tend to show considerable volatilities due to difference in timing of the Lunar New Year holidays, it is useful to analyse the trade figures for these two months taken together.

Taking January and February as a whole to neutralise the distortion caused by the difference in timing of the Lunar New Year holidays, the value of total exports of goods increased by 10.6% over the same period in 2021. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 8.1%. A visible trade deficit of \$25.5 billion, equivalent to 3.2% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in the first two months of 2022.

In February 2022, the value of total exports of goods increased by 0.9% over a year earlier to \$313.8 billion, after a year-on-year increase of 18.4% in January 2022. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 6.2% over a year earlier to \$345.9 billion in February 2022, after a year-on-year increase of 9.6% in January 2022. A visible trade deficit of \$32.1 billion, equivalent to 9.3% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in February 2022.

Comparing the three-month period ending February 2022 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of goods increased by 5.6%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods increased by 4.6%.

Analysis by country/territory

Comparing February 2022 with February 2021, total exports to Asia as a whole grew by 4.8%. In this region, increases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in particular Taiwan (+40.4%), India (+39.5%), Singapore (+14.6%) and Vietnam (+10.7%). The value of total exports to the mainland of China (the Mainland) also increased by 1.1%.

Apart from destinations in Asia, decreases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations in other regions, in particular the United Kingdom (-64.8%) and the USA (-9.2%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases were registered in the values of imports from some major suppliers, in particular Taiwan (+49.7%), the USA (+21.6%), the Philippines (+16.3%) and Korea (+9.3%). Concurrently, decreases were recorded in the values of imports from Vietnam (-6.5%),

Malaysia (-3.0%) and the Mainland (-2.2%).

For the first two months of 2022 as a whole, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in particular India (+65.6%), Taiwan (+46.8%), Singapore (+33.7%) and Vietnam (+30.3%). The value of total exports to the Mainland also increased by 6.6%.

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Taiwan (+31.4%), Thailand (+20.5%), Vietnam (+13.5%) and Korea (+12.1%). The value of imports from the Mainland also increased by 8.0%.

Analysis by major commodity

Comparing February 2022 with February 2021, increases were registered in the values of total exports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$17.2 billion or 12.4%), "professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus" (by \$6.4 billion or 96.9%) and "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$2.5 billion or 8.2%). However, decreases were registered in the values of total exports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$18.1 billion or -33.8%) and "articles of apparel and clothing accessories" (by \$1.0 billion or -22.8%).

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 \$20.4 billion or 13.9%), "professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus" (by \$5.4 billion or 83.3%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$3.4 billion or 14.5%) and "petroleum, petroleum products and related materials" (by \$2.3 billion or 58.3%). However, a decrease was registered in the value of imports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$11.7 billion or -24.9%).

For the first two months of 2022 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 \$59.7 billion or 19.6%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$23.6 billion or 33.6%), "professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus" (by \$10.5 billion or 68.8%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$6.0 billion or 18.7%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of total exports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$26.7 billion or -21.9%).

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 \$43.2 billion or 13.5%), "office machines and automatic

data processing machines" (by \$19.2 billion or 35.6%), "professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus" (by \$8.9 billion or 59.6%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$4.8 billion or 12.1%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of imports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$17.9 billion or -16.0%).

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that taking the first two months of 2022 together to remove the distortion caused by the difference in timing of the Lunar New Year, the value of merchandise exports continued to post double-digit growth over a year earlier. Exports to the Mainland, the US, the EU and other major Asian markets all expanded further. Total merchandise trade value in January and February combined amounted to \$1,572.0 billion, up by 9.3% over the same period of last year.

Looking ahead, the recent situation in Ukraine will likely pose a drag on global economic growth through elevating international energy and commodity prices and aggravating supply chain and transportation disruptions. This may affect Hong Kong's export performance in the near term. The evolving pandemic, the pace of monetary policy tightening in major economies, and the development of China-US relations also warrant attention. The Government will monitor the situation closely.

Further information

Table 1 presents the analysis of external merchandise trade statistics for February 2022. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2019 to February 2022, and Table 3 gives the seasonally adjusted series for the same period.

The values of total exports of goods to 10 main destinations for February 2022 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 February 2022.

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 February 2022 will be released in mid-April 2022.

The February 2022 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in February 2022 and will be available in mid-April 2022. Users can download the publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode230.html).

Enquiries on merchandise trade statistics may be directed to the Trade

Analysis Section (2) of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 5042).