

External merchandise trade statistics for June 2020

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (July 27) the external merchandise trade statistics for June 2020. In June 2020, the values of Hong Kong's total exports and imports of goods both recorded year-on-year decreases, at 1.3% and 7.1% respectively.

In June 2020, the value of total exports of goods decreased by 1.3% over a year earlier to \$305.6 billion, after a year-on-year decrease of 7.4% in May 2020. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods decreased by 7.1% over a year earlier to \$338.9 billion in June 2020, after a year-on-year decrease of 12.3% in May 2020. A visible trade deficit of \$33.3 billion, equivalent to 9.8% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in June 2020.

For the first half of 2020 as a whole, the value of total exports of goods decreased by 6.9% over the same period in 2019. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods decreased by 9.4%. A visible trade deficit of \$175.2 billion, equivalent to 9.0% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in the first half of 2020.

Comparing the second quarter of 2020 with the preceding quarter on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of goods increased by 5.8%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods increased by 0.3%.

Analysis by country/territory

Comparing June 2020 with June 2019, total exports to Asia as a whole grew by 2.1%. In this region, increases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations, in particular Taiwan (+21.6%) and the mainland of China (the Mainland) (+8.8%). On the other hand, decreases were recorded in the values of total exports to India (â€‘38.3%), the Philippines (-29.4%), Thailand (-20.1%), Japan (-17.9%) and Korea (-15.6%).

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 (â€‘36.2%), the USA (-21.4%) and Germany (-17.0%).

Over the same period of comparison, decreases were registered in the values of imports from some major suppliers, in particular the USA (-32.8%), Japan (-9.8%), Korea (â€‘9.3%), Thailand (-5.9%) and the Mainland (-5.8%). Concurrently, increases were recorded in the values of imports from Vietnam (+43.4%), Malaysia (+15.5%) and Taiwan (+14.5%).

For the first half of 2020 as a whole, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in particular India (-26.0%), the USA (â€‘23.9%), Germany (â€‘21.6%), Singapore (-19.3%), Korea (-12.5%) and Japan (-11.2%). However, year-on-year increases

were registered in the values of total exports to Taiwan (+10.7%) and the Mainland (+2.3%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of imports from some major suppliers, in particular the USA (-20.7%), the Mainland (â€‘13.6%) and Japan (-5.4%). However, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports from Vietnam (+48.0%), Taiwan (+15.8%), Korea (+7.5%) and Singapore (+4.2%).

Analysis by major commodity

Comparing June 2020 with June 2019, decreases were registered in the values of total exports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$6.2 billion or -29.7%), "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$4.4 billion or â€‘35.4%), "articles of apparel and clothing accessories" (by \$4.4 billion or -45.4%) and "photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks" (by \$3.5 billion or â€‘37.3%). However, increases were registered in the values of total exports of "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$14.7 billion or 12.3%) and "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$5.6 billion or 19.3%).

Over the same period of comparison, decreases were registered in the values of imports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$8.5 billion or â€‘51.1%), "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$6.3 billion or -29.1%) and "photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks" (by \$4.3 billion or â€‘43.8%). However, increases were registered in the values of imports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$5.5 billion or 11.5%) and "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$3.8 billion or 2.6%).

For the first half of 2020 as a whole, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of total exports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$61.2 billion or -17.6%), "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$33.3 billion or -40.3%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$31.9 billion or -28.5%). However, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports of "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$36.6 billion or 5.1%) and "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$13.7 billion or 7.3%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of imports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$43.5 billion or -13.5%), "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$42.5 billion or -44.0%) and "miscellaneous manufactured

articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$30.2 billion or -23.2%). However, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports of "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$22.8 billion or 2.9%) and "power generating machinery and equipment" (by \$10.1 billion or 23.2%).

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that the moderated year-on-year decline in merchandise exports in June mainly reflected a pick-up in exports to the Mainland. The low base of comparison in the same month last year also partly contributed. Exports to the US, EU and many other major Asian markets fell by varying degrees amid a deep global recession. For the second quarter as a whole, the value of merchandise exports fell by 4.3% from a year earlier, visibly narrower than the decline of 9.7% in the first quarter.

Looking ahead, the continued spread of COVID-19 in various parts of the world is still a key threat to the global economic outlook. The increasingly tense China-US relations have also added uncertainties. In face of a challenging external environment, Hong Kong's merchandise export performance will likely remain constrained in the near term. 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 June 2020. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2017 to June 2020, and Table 3 gives the seasonally adjusted series for the same period.

The values of total exports of goods to 10 main destinations for June 2020 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 June 2020.

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 June 2020 will be released in mid-August 2020.

The June 2020 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in June 2020 and will be available in mid-August 2020. 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).