

External merchandise trade statistics for March 2022

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (April 28) the external merchandise trade statistics for March 2022. In March 2022, the values of Hong Kong's total exports and imports of goods both recorded year-on-year decreases, at 8.9% and 6.0% respectively.

In March 2022, the value of total exports of goods decreased by 8.9% over a year earlier to \$372.8 billion, after a year-on-year increase of 0.9% in February 2022. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods decreased by 6.0% over a year earlier to \$410.0 billion in March 2022, after a year-on-year increase of 6.2% in February 2022. A visible trade deficit of \$37.3 billion, equivalent to 9.1% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in March 2022.

For the first quarter of 2022 as a whole, the value of total exports of goods increased by 3.4% over the same period in 2021. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 2.9%. A visible trade deficit of \$62.7 billion, equivalent to 5.2% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in the first quarter of 2022.

Comparing the first quarter of 2022 with the preceding quarter on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of goods decreased by 2.9%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods decreased by 1.8%.

Analysis by country/territory

Comparing March 2022 with March 2021, total exports to Asia as a whole dropped by 8.6%. In this region, decreases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations, in particular the mainland of China (the Mainland) (-12.8%), Japan (-6.8%), Thailand (-2.6%) and Korea (-1.1%). On the other hand, increases were recorded in the values of total exports to Singapore (+24.8%) and Taiwan (+20.8%).

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 (-39.8%). However, the value of total exports to the USA increased by 7.0%.

Over the same period of comparison, decreases were registered in the values of imports from some major suppliers, in particular the Mainland (-19.9%), Japan (-7.4%), Thailand (-5.4%) and Vietnam (-3.3%). Concurrently, increases were recorded in the values of imports from Taiwan (+34.1%) and the USA (+17.7%).

For the first quarter of 2022 as a whole, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in

particular India (+45.8%), Taiwan (+37.0%), Singapore (+30.9%) and the United Arab Emirates (+20.7%). However, the value of total exports to the Mainland decreased by 0.9%.

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Taiwan (+32.4%), the Philippines (+10.8%), the USA (+10.7%) and Thailand (+10.5%). However, decreases were recorded in the values of imports from Japan (-2.7%) and the Mainland (-2.5%).

Analysis by major commodity

Comparing March 2022 with March 2021, decreases were registered in the values of total exports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$21.2 billion or -37.1%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$4.2 billion or -9.8%), "non-ferrous metals" (by \$3.8 billion or -41.2%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$1.3 billion or -7.2%). However, an increase was registered in the value of total exports of "professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus" (by \$3.0 billion or 34.2%).

Over the same period of comparison, 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 \$20.5 billion or -33.4%), "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$3.6 billion or -14.5%) and "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$1.7 billion or -4.9%). However, an increase was registered in the value of imports of "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$7.1 billion or 3.7%).

For the first quarter of 2022 as a whole, year-on-year 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 \$61.7 billion or 12.4%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$19.4 billion or 17.1%), "professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus" (by \$13.5 billion or 56.1%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$4.7 billion or 9.3%). 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 \$47.8 billion or -26.7%).

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 \$50.3 billion or 9.8%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$17.5 billion or 19.8%), "professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus" (by \$10.2 billion or

42.3%) and "petroleum, petroleum products and related materials" (by \$5.2 billion or 39.7%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of imports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$38.4 billion or -22.1%).

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that the value of merchandise exports turned to a year-on-year decrease in March 2022 amid moderating external demand and epidemic-induced disruptions to cross-boundary cargo flows between the Mainland and Hong Kong. A high base of comparison was also relevant. Exports to the Mainland and the EU fell, and those to the US posted decelerated growth. Exports to other major Asian markets saw mixed performance.

Looking ahead, elevated global inflation and monetary policy tightening of major central banks, as well as heightened geopolitical tensions will continue to weigh on the global economic outlook, posing challenges to Hong Kong's export performance. Nonetheless, the stabilised local epidemic of late should be conducive to the gradual alleviation of cross-boundary transportation disruptions and thus render some support. The Government will monitor the situation closely.

Further information

Table 1 presents the analysis of external merchandise trade statistics for March 2022. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2019 to March 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 March 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 March 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 March 2022 will be released in mid-May 2022.

The March 2022 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in March 2022 and will be available in mid-May 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).