

External merchandise trade statistics for October 2018

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (November 26) the external merchandise trade statistics for October 2018. In October 2018, the values of Hong Kong's total exports and imports of goods both recorded year-on-year increases, at 14.6% and 13.1% respectively.

In October 2018, the value of total exports of goods increased by 14.6% over a year earlier to \$383.7 billion, after a year-on-year increase of 4.5% in September 2018. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 13.1% over a year earlier to \$428.1 billion in October 2018, after a year-on-year increase of 4.8% in September 2018. A visible trade deficit of \$44.5 billion, equivalent to 10.4% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in October 2018.

For the first 10 months of 2018 as a whole, the value of total exports of goods rose by 9.8% over the same period in 2017. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 11.1%. A visible trade deficit of \$466.3 billion, equivalent to 11.9% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in the first 10 months of 2018.

Comparing the three-month period ending October 2018 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of goods increased by 2.0%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods increased by 1.4%.

Analysis by country/territory

Comparing October 2018 with October 2017, total exports to Asia as a whole grew by 14.1%. In this region, increases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations, in particular Malaysia (+37.9%), Singapore (+18.0%), the mainland of China (the Mainland) (+17.8%), the Philippines (+16.8%) and Korea (+14.4%). On the other hand, decreases were recorded in the values of total exports to Taiwan (-19.1%) and Japan (-8.3%).

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 (+11.6%), the USA (+10.3%) and Germany (+4.2%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases were registered in the values of imports from some major suppliers, in particular Malaysia (+30.0%), the Mainland (+18.0%), the USA (+14.8%), Korea (+13.8%), Japan (+13.1%) and Singapore (+10.7%). Concurrently, decreases were recorded in the values of imports from the Philippines (-8.1%) and Taiwan (-3.6%).

For the first 10 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 (+10.8%), Thailand (+10.4%), the USA (+9.5%), the Netherlands (+8.8%) and Vietnam (+8.4%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of total exports to India (-11.2%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Malaysia (+77.4%), Korea (+19.2%), the Mainland (+9.9%), the USA (+9.2%), Taiwan (+8.9%) and Singapore (+8.8%). On the other hand, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of imports from India (-13.3%).

Analysis by major commodity

Comparing October 2018 with October 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 \$25.7 billion or 21.4%), "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$14.8 billion or 21.7%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$4.0 billion or 21.1%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases were registered in the values of imports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$16.5 billion or 24.8%), "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$13.0 billion or 9.4%) and "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$6.6 billion or 21.4%).

For the first 10 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 \$206.4 billion or 18.4%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$46.5 billion or 14.3%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$30.0 billion or 17.8%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of total exports of "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$14.7 billion or -9.0%).

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 \$197.5 billion or 15.4%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$66.8 billion or 23.7%) and "petroleum, petroleum products and related materials" (by \$22.2 billion or 38.0%).

Commentary

A Government spokesman noted that the value of merchandise exports picked up to record a double-digit growth in October after a visible deceleration in September, with exports to many major markets (including the US, the European Union, the Mainland and many other Asian markets) showing

accelerated growth.

However, the external environment is subject to increasing downside risks. Global economic growth has lost some momentum lately. The impacts of the US-Mainland trade conflicts on Hong Kong's merchandise exports are likely to become more apparent in the coming months if the conflicts drag on or escalate. 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 October 2018. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2015 to October 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 October 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 October 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 October 2018 will be released in mid-December 2018.

The October 2018 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in October 2018 and will be available in mid-December 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).